

Last week we continued our studies in 1 Peter, as the Apostle continues to exhort God's people to Godly living based on who they were – pilgrims of the dispersion who were just passing through this world.

We need to be constantly reminded of who we are, as described in 1 Peter 2:9,10 (READ). Again, this is an incredible description of who we are – we have been chosen by God Himself, we are a royal priesthood, in that we have direct and immediate access to God through the Lord Jesus Christ. We are a holy nation, we are separated from the world and the ways of the world, and we are a special people ... a peculiar people.

It is as result of this incredible description of who we are, that Peter then continues with a series of exhortations as to how we should live in the world around us – he tells us how we should live before an unbelieving world, how we act in relation to those in authority over us, and how we should we react in the face of our sufferings as Christians.

Last week we looked at one of the more controversial passages of the Scriptures, that being the responsibility of a wife to submit to her husband – especially an unbelieving husband, so that she can be a witness to him.

Lest anyone misunderstand me, it is not a passive submission, but an active one. Husbands and wives are both one in Christ – and we will see more of this today – but God has ordained that the husbands be the head of wife, just as Christ is the head of the church.

We read in Ephesians 5:22-25: *“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,...”*

We said that while God commands the wife to do something very hard, that is, to submit to her husband, He asks the husband something even harder – and that is that the husband be willing to die for his wife.

If you think that the wife is to be some doormat for the husband – as the feminists would have us think, and as some religions, such as Islam teach, listening to the description of the woman of God from Proverbs 31:10-31: *“Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil All the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax, And willingly works with her hands. She is like the merchant ships, She brings her food from afar. She also rises while it is yet night, And provides food for her household, And a portion for her maidservants. She considers a field and buys it; From her profits she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, And strengthens her arms. She perceives that her merchandise is good, And her lamp does not go out by night. She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hand holds the spindle. She extends her hand to the poor, Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of snow for her household, For all her household is clothed with scarlet. She makes tapestry for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, And supplies sashes for the merchants. Strength and honor are her clothing; She shall rejoice in time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her: “Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all.” Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a*

woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, And let her own works praise her in the gates.”

Look at those concluding words: *Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.* We see here in Proverbs is a Godly woman who is into textiles, cooking, real estate and wisdom, among other things. So ladies, do not think of the Biblical directives as negative, but rather as something positive and honoring to God.

And that brings us to the one verse that we will look at today as Peter directs his exhortation to husbands – 1 Peter 3:7: *“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”*

Here we see a number of things as Peter addresses his comments specifically to husbands. Notice what he says: *Husbands, likewise ...* in the same way that we are to act as Christian citizens, husbands are to act the same way towards their wives. In other words, we are to respect them and honor them, as we do those in authority over us, and as we submit to those who might be our masters.

So much for the inferior status of women in the kingdom of God, as some would have us believe. Again, remember, even though God tells women to submit to their husbands, it is as to the Lord – not because they are in any way inferior to their husbands or to men in general.

Remember, no one treated women better than the Lord Jesus Christ. He included them in his inner circle, when at the time women were just about cattle as property. So always remember that as you read the scriptures.

Peter goes on as he tells husband to *dwell with them with understanding*. Now, I will have to tell you, if any man tells you that he fully understands women – he is lying! But, what husbands should be doing is understanding their wives needs, their desires, their goals, their strengths and their weaknesses, as best they can.

As the husband does this he will give honor to his wife. Remember, as I told you last week the wife is never commanded to love her husband, but the husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her, that is the church.

Again, remember that in the 1st century, wives were considered property, a little above cattle. They were not entitled to respect or honor. Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ changed all that by including women in his inner circle of friends, and giving them the honor that they deserved. Remember, it was the women in our Savior’s circle, that first discovered the empty tomb.

This is what Peter is tell the pilgrims of the dispersion ... telling those who have trusted in Christ as Savior and Lord – as to how husbands are to relate to their wives – they are to honor them.

And he tells them that they are to do this because of two things. First, is because they are, as he says, *as to the weaker vessel*. Again, this does not refer inferiority, or the fact that they are less than a man. Men and women are different. That is obvious.

Here, it refers to one of those differences. It refers specifically to their physical strength. I know that the feminists do not want to hear this, but women are not as strong as men. PERIOD. They cannot run as fast as

men – why do you think they have separate times for men and women in races. They cannot hit a golf ball as far as men – why do you think they have men’s tees and women’s tees, which are closer to the hole. And generally, why do women compete against other women, and not men? I could go on and on.

But this in no way implies an inferiority or a sub-serviant nature. It is simply a matter of physical strength. And that is why men are to honor their wives and to protect them. That is why I believe that women should not be in the military, especially in a combat situation. Time does not permit us to flesh that out, but throughout the scriptures men are supposed to protect women, not have them protect them.

The second reason, that I referred to last week, is that women are *heirs together of the grace of life*. There is a fellowship in the faith that goes beyond gender – we are all one in Christ. As we read in Galatians 3:28: “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*”

So again, while there is a biblical order between men and women, it in no way implies inferiority. As I said last week, it was based on the order of creation.

Peter then gives us a reason for his exhortation to husbands: *that your prayers may not be hindered*. If the husband does not honor and respect his wife ... if does not treat her as an fellow heir of the grace of Christ if he does not try to understand their needs, their desires, their goals, their wants, etc – then quite simply his prayers will be hindered – meaning that his spiritual relationship to God will be affected.

Again, as we have seen so often, there is a specific purpose as to why God has given us many practical instructions on how to live in the world around us.