**Giving Honor to the Weaker Vessel**

*1 Peter 3:7*

**Introduction**

1. Marriage is to be understood as an institution belonging to God, and bestowed to His creatures as a blessing, but also a stewardship:
	1. The roles we find ourselves filling in marriage are governed by a distinct pattern within the Bible.
	2. Spouses are not at liberty to treat their counterpart in any way they please but are bound by the dictates of God’s law concerning marriage.
	3. Both the husband and the wife have unique roles neither of which the other can fill, yet they are complimentary. (Equal in importance, but not in substance.)
	4. For this reason, it is imperative that each understand their own role, but also the role of their spouse to fulfill their God-given duty.
2. **1 Peter 3:7** gives brief, yet forceful instruction for husbands.
	1. This text is rejected by many today due to the extremely hostile views toward scriptural principles.
	2. We must examine ourselves lest we are affected by these negative views of scripture.
		1. A proper understanding of these principles within the context of scripture is invaluable in our inoculation against these hostile views.
	3. It is imperative that we understand the truth concerning marriage, and that our roles are reflecting what the scripture says they ought to be.
3. The Text in Context
4. Trials of Suffering as a Christian
	1. Hope – **1 Peter 1:3-5** (kept by power of God through faith)
	2. Faith tested – **1 Peter 1:6-9** (end of endurance is the object of hope)
		1. Hope brings us through the trial – rejoicing in trial.
		2. But it is harsh – ***“grieved”*** – *lypeō* – to distress (STRONG)
	3. Suffering – *paschō* (12x in 11 vv. In 1 Peter)
		1. ***“endures grief, suffering wrongfully.” (2:19)***
		2. ***“you do good and suffer” (2:20)***
		3. ***“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example” (2:21)***
		4. ***“when He suffered, He did not threaten” (2:23)***
		5. ***“suffer for righteousness' sake” (3:14)***
		6. ***“suffer for doing good” (3:17)***
		7. ***“Christ also suffered once for sins,” (3:18)***
		8. ***“Christ suffered for us in the flesh” (4:1a)***
		9. ***“he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin” (4:1b)***
		10. ***“let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody” (4:15)***
		11. ***“suffer according to the will of God” (4:19)***
		12. ***“after you have suffered a while” (5:10)***
	4. Always suffering for doing God’s will, suffering for evil is viewed negatively.
		1. Call to obedience – **1 Peter 1:14**
		2. Call to holiness – **1 Peter 1:15-16**
		3. Grow in word – **1 Peter 2:2**
		4. Come to Jesus (living stone, offer spiritual sacrifices) – **1 Peter 2:4-5**
		5. Proclaiming praises of God to world – **1 Peter 2:9** – praises – *aretē* – Excellencies (things worthy of praise)
		6. Abstinence from lusts, honorable conduct – **1 Peter 2:11-12**
		7. THIS WILL INCLUDE HOLDING TO GOD’S WILL IN OUR VARIOUS RELATIONSHIPS, REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
5. Relationships and Obligations
	1. Civil government (submission) – **1 Peter 2:13-17**
		1. No qualifying statement concerning the conduct of the government.
			1. A.D.64-68 – Nero as king – suffering due to him disputed, but likely a contributing factor.
		2. ***“for the Lord’s sake…as bondservants of God…Fear God”*** – What God desires/requires is submission to gov’t which exists by His appointment.
	2. Servant to Master (submission) – **1 Peter 2:18-20**
		1. Good, gentle, but also harsh – submit
		2. ***“conscience toward god…commendable before God”*** – the submission continues to come from a desire to serve God.
	3. Wives to Husbands (submission) – **1 Peter 3:1-6**
		1. Submission to the husband.
			1. Even to unbelievers.
			2. ***“even if”*** – i.e. not a narrowed focus on only those with unbelieving husbands.
				1. General – submit to your husbands, and have this character.
				2. No exception – ***“even if”*** they are unbelievers (follows context, gov’t, masters) – May be part of the suffering you endure.
			3. **(vv. 1-2)** – through fidelity to God which includes submission in your role as wife, they may be won to Christ.
		2. **(vv. 3-6)** – the inner adornment that is pleasing to God **(vv. 3-4)** is specifically used in application to the submissive role in marriage **(vv. 5-6** – ***“For in this manner”***).
			1. One who is a wife cannot be pleasing to God without submitting to her husband.
			2. ***“trusted in God…being submissive to their own husbands”*** – submission to husband shows trust in God.
	4. Husbands to Wives – **1 Peter 3:7**
		1. More brief, but no less forceful/important.
		2. ***“likewise”*** – i.e. following the same context of relationships in marriage – YOU FULFILL YOUR ROLE.
		3. In such a hostile environment of trials and sufferings husbands play a pivotal role in marriage.
6. The Text – Giving Honor to the Weaker Vessel
7. Conduct Befitting Submission to God – ***“that your prayers may not be hindered.”***
	1. Following the context of living acceptable lives toward God – submission to gov’t (**1 Peter 2:13, 16**), submission to masters (**1 Peter 2:19**), submission to husbands (**1 Peter 3:4-5**).
	2. How one dwells with his wife affects his standing with God (good or bad):
		1. Prayers not be hindered.
		2. ***“your”*** (plural) – not husband and wife together – ***“Husbands”***
		3. Prayer – a facet of fellowship – **John 15:7** (“if you abide”); **James 5:16** (righteous man); **1 John 3:22** (keep commandments)
			1. Necessity – **1 Thessalonians 5:17**
			2. Especially in context of suffering – **1 Peter 5:7**
		4. Hindered – **Isaiah 59:1-2** (will not hear); **John 9:31**
			1. Blessing of prayer shows how much God cares for us – willing to hear of His creatures needs, for express purpose of condescending in action of serving care.
			2. Cutting off the blessing of prayer due to improper treatment of wife shows how much God cares about the wife, and marriage.
8. Treatment Knowledgeable of the Wife and the Word – ***“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding”***
	1. ***“understanding”***– *gnōsis* – ***“according to knowledge”* (ASV, KJV, YLT)**
	2. NOTE: Wife’s conduct in submission a response to God’s instruction.
		1. **1 Peter 3:2** – in context concerning influence to obey the word.
		2. **1 Peter 3:4** – precious in sight of God.
		3. **1 Peter 3:5** – submission a form of trusting in God (His design).
	3. Knowledge of:
		1. Creation/design of wife – **Genesis 2:18, 21-24; 1 Corinthians 11:8-9, 11-12**
		2. Obligation to her – **Ephesians 5:23, 25, 28-29**
		3. Knowledge of her – desires, goals, strengths, weaknesses.
			1. NOTE: ***“one flesh”*** – sharing life together.
			2. **Knowledge of the following (weaker vessel – physical, fellow heirs – spiritual) 🡪**
9. Fellow Heirship Deserving Honor – ***“and as being heirs together of the grace of life”***
	1. NOTE: This, among many other things, shows the “weaker” description not to be one of inferiority.
		1. Peter’s words should take aggressive objection away from the honest reader.
		2. Scripture harmonizes, and the “honor,” along with the “heirs together” are not eclipsed by “weaker vessel.”
	2. Created in God’s image – **Genesis 1:27**
	3. No gender distinction in Christ – **Galatians 3:26-29** (NOTE: ***“sons”*** – does not say, “and some daughters” – all heirs/birth rights.)
	4. Marriage not in heaven – **Matthew 22:30**
	5. Paul’s estimation of women in the church (many think of Paul as being demeaning to women, and Peter the same way):
		1. **Romans 16:1-2** – Phoebe
		2. **Romans 16:3-4** – Priscilla
		3. **Romans 16:6** – Mary
		4. **Romans 16:7** – Junia (of note among apostles)
		5. Honored them by announcing their great labor in the Lord for brethren of all time to read.
	6. NOTE: Does not imply equality of earthly roles.
		1. Yet, those roles carried out with this understanding of equality of spirit in Christ.
		2. A difference in role does not amount to inequality or inferiority.
10. Weakness Understood as Deserving Honor – ***“giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel”***
	1. ***“giving”*** – *aponemo* (ἀπονέμω, 632), “to assign, apportion” (apo, “away,” nemo, “to distribute”)… In the papyri writings it is said of a prefect who “gives” to all their dues. (VINE)
		1. “The word means, literally, to portion out, and is appropriate to the husband as controlling what is to be meted out to the wife.” (Vincent’s Word Studies)
		2. “to grant that which is appropriate in a relationship, assign, show, pay, accord” (BDAG)
	2. ***“honor”*** – *timē* – a value, i.e. money paid, or (concretely and collectively) valuables; by analogy, esteem (especially of the highest degree), or the dignity itself (STRONG)
	3. ***“as to”*** – *hōs* – (3) marker introducing the perspective from which a pers., thing, or activity is viewed or understood as to character, function, or role, as (BDAG)
	4. I.E. THE PHRASE, “WEAKER VESSEL,” IS NOT USED PEJORATIVLEY, BUT IS POSITIONED SO TO EMPHASIZE THE WIFE’S VALUE.
		1. Consider – **cf. 2 Timothy 2:20** – vessels for honor and dishonor.
		2. Valuables are often fragile, delicate, and in need of greater protection.
11. The Weaker Vessel, and the Honor Due Her
	1. NOT – inferiority of any kind, spiritual, moral, character, etc.
	2. Physically
		1. ***“wife”*** – *gynaikeios* (1x) (ADJ) – feminine (STRONG); womanly (VINE)
			1. Greek order – “as to the weaker (ADJ) vessel – to the wife (ADJ) – giving honor”
			2. Two adjectives, one explaining the other – weaker because feminine.
		2. Vessel (body) – one of two:
			1. Husband is a vessel – **cf. 2 Corinthians 4:7** – all are weak.
			2. Weaker – comparative to husband.
		3. That women are created different than men, physically weaker being a part, is simply a fact.
			1. **Genesis 2:18** – ***“comparable”*** does not mean same.
			2. “wife” speaks to this simple truth – womanly, feminine.
		4. Giving honor:
			1. Not exploiting her physical difference but honoring, protecting, cherishing it.
			2. Providing – **1 Timothy 5:8**
			3. Protecting – **Ephesians 5:25, 28-29**
	3. Regarding Authority
		1. Wives have been given the role of submission – **Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; 1 Corinthians 11:3**
			1. Context – **1 Peter 3:1, 5-6**; Obeyed – **Titus 2:3-5**
		2. Abuses of authority – **1 Peter 2:18, 20** (Harsh masters); **1 Peter 5:2-3** (elders, dishonest gain and lording it over the flock)
		3. Giving honor:
			1. Authority expressed through service – **Ephesians 5:25-27**
			2. What does the wife need? – **1 Peter 3:7** ***(“understanding”*** – *gnōsis*)
				1. Seek to understand her – COMMUNICATION.
				2. Where Christ knows exactly what we need, HE STILL COMMUNICATES OUR NEEDS TO THE FATHER AS MEDIATOR.
			3. Backing her authority in the home (honoring her before children) – **1 Timothy 5:14** (manage the house – *oikodespoteō* – to rule a house, VINE); **Proverbs 1:8-9** (law of your mother)
				1. Children raised in a godly home will know who the head is.
				2. That head must show through support the authority and deserving respect of the mother.
			4. Using authority to aid her in being the best she can in what God called her to – **Titus 2:4-5**
			5. Standing firm in decisions for spiritual well-being – **Joshua 24:15** (It is not the wife’s job, but the husbands.)
			6. Acknowledging her value in submissive support – **cf. Ephesians 1:22-23** (She must be viewed as her husband’s fullness.)
	4. Emotionally (can be considered in the context of physical difference – women are made different, and this includes a sensitivity of emotion – a positive in being the caring wife and mother God calls her to be)
		1. Peter specifically exhorts the wife to overcome fear – **1 Peter 3:5-6**
			1. Fear/terror can strike any, and is a sin for all (men or women) – **Revelation 21:8** ***(“cowardly”*** – *deilos* – timid, fearful)
			2. Not given a spirit of fear from God – **2 Timothy 1:7** (context of encouraging Timothy in face of suffering)
		2. Consider the call to bravery:
			1. **1 Corinthians 16:13** – a call for all Christians.
			2. ***“be brave”*** – *andrizomai* – (from *aner*, “a man”) “to play the man,” (VINE)
				1. ***“quit you like men” (ASV, KJV); “act like men” (ESV, NASB); “be men” (YLT)***
		3. Consider her position of submission, especially in a context of tribulation – **1 Peter 1:6-7; 3:5-6** – faith being tested through trial, submission to husband expression of trust in God, but also in opposite action of fear and terror.
			1. Sarah not perfect in this – consider her decision to give Hagar to Abram to have a son.
			2. Abram not perfect either – instead of calming her doubts and fears about the son of promise, and bolstering her trust in God, he approved of her suggestion.
		4. Giving honor:
			1. Giver her reassurance, and a reason to submit without fear.
			2. Bolster her faith, and encourage trust in God (can only come through your displayed trust in God).
			3. Do not use position of authority to strike fear, but opposite:
				1. **(v. 6)** – ***“terror”*** – *ptoēsis* (1x) – (1) act of causing someone to be intimidated, terrifying, intimidation (2) experience of being intimidated, fear, terror (BDAG)

“cp. Odyssey 18, 340-42 on the theme of women frightened by a superior figure.” (ibid.) (i.e. male in authority)

* + - * 1. **Cf. Hebrews 2:10, 14-15** – Jesus used His authority to dispel fear.
				2. HUSBANDS ARE TO HONOR THEIR WIVES THROUGH PROVIDING A PLACE OF CONSOLATION IN SERVICE TO GOD.

**Conclusion**

1. Husbands have a great obligation to honor their wives.
2. This honor can only come through knowledge of their wives personally, but also in relation to the word’s revelation of their role and position.
3. Their described “weakness” is not a negative and is not to be exploited. It is to be honored, cherished, and protected.