

The Home

Introduction:

It's a beautiful thing when a husband and a wife love each other and love God with all their hearts. If your faith is the most important thing about you, then it's important that a husband and wife share that faith in common. I believe a home built on the foundation of faith can be much stronger than any other foundation. Romance sizzles then fizzles. Good looks give way to the ravages of time and gravity. Money comes and goes. Shared hobbies are a lot of fun but interest and abilities change over time. Children can be wonderful, but eventually they leave home and leave just the two of you. What is the glue that holds you together then?

But what about marriages that don't have faith as that shared foundation? One of them is a believer. The other is not. One of them loves the Lord, is active in their church, strives to live their faith out in their daily life, but the other does not.

The person you love and live with can often be the hardest person to witness to. They know all your secrets. They see behind the Sunday morning smiley face that everyone else at church sees. They know all your faults, failings, and foibles.

How do you win your partner? How do you show the love of Christ to the love of your life?

This is Peter's driving concern in the first seven verses of 1 Peter chapter 3. Everything he says to wives and husbands here is motivated by that question— what is the best way to win an unbelieving spouse to Christ? This is apparent when he tells wives in verse 1, *“Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives . . .”*

This was a huge issue for the people who first read this letter. In the early church, the good news of Jesus was spreading rapidly, and new believers were being added to the church all the time, and obviously, many of these people were married. Husbands and wives make a lot of decisions together, but they don't always become believers together. Some of you here this morning became a Christian years before, or years after your spouse. You understand some of these challenges.

The Scriptures are very clear that Christians shouldn't marry non-Christian. Paul calls it being unequally yoked. The word-picture there is of a foolish farmer who yokes an ox and a donkey together. They are different animals with different strengths and different dispositions. They will fight with each other. They will pull in different directions. It will be very difficult to successfully plow a field. Some of us end up unequally yoked because when we're young and dumb we do young and dumb things. Not every decision we make when we're 18 or 21 is a good one. And some of us are dealing with the fallout of some decisions you made years ago.

Faith wasn't that important of a priority to you when you got married, but now it is. You believe. You serve. You worship, but your husband or your wife doesn't. There are numerous challenges. There are arguments about how the money is spent. You don't want money spent on things that are ungodly. Your spouse resents your hard earned money going into the offering plate at church. Where the time is spent is often just as much a sore spot. You disapprove of some of the highly sensual movies. Your unbelieving spouse is bitter about all the time spent at church. You have different hopes and expectations. Your definitions of a "happy" marriage are very different. They have different goals and approaches to parenting.

Body:

We looked at what he says to the wives last week. This week we want to consider the husbands. This is something that all of us who are husbands, or will be husbands someday, this doesn't apply only to Christian husbands whose wives don't yet believe. Don't think that just because your wife is already a Christian, you get a pass on some of this. There are no exemptions or exceptions. This is how all Christian men should treat their wives. And single guys, dating is a place to practice some of this stuff. Husbands should love their Christian wives as the daughter of God she is. Husbands should love their wives who are not yet believers as though they are already the wife he prays she will become. Here's what Peter says,

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

It's only one verse, but there are three very important things husband can learn here about being a good husband. I want to give you three "C"s to help you be the kind of husband your wife needs you to be.

I. Be Considerate

First, guys, Peter says, "*be Considerate.*" What does that mean? Well, the ESV translates it a lot more literally. It says, "*Live with your wives in an understanding way.*" "Understanding" speaks of being sensitive to your wife's deepest physical and emotional needs. In other words, be thoughtful and respectful. Love her in the way she needs to be loved. Don't just love her the way you think she ought to be loved, but be understanding and considerate enough of her needs, her hopes, her fears, her desires, so that you can give her the love she needs to thrive.

There's a trap that's really easy for all of us as husbands to fall into. And that is that to love our wives the way we want to be loved. We love her in our love language instead of her love language. We mistakenly assume that she will react and respond the same way we would. And we think, "I'd be happy with that, so she should be too."

Story of going Valentine's shopping for mom, and he buys her fishing tackle. I suggest he get her something she wants, so he bought her a cactus.

Men and women are different. That shouldn't be shocking news, but we live in a culture that is constantly lying to us telling us there is no real meaningful difference between the sexes. We live in a day when we have towering intellectual giants like Miley Cyrus telling us that gender is irrelevant. Google actually fired a senior software engineer for suggesting in an internal memo that men and women were biologically and psychologically different.

Gender is so much more than a social construct or insignificant biological distinctions. Men and women are different down to, literally, every cell in our body where our DNA wires us to be different. You see, women have two X chromosomes. Men have an X and a Y chromosome, or as women know it to be, a broken X. There's a missing piece. Ladies, you've always wondered what was wrong with your man, well, it's all the way down in his DNA.

In 2011, Lego did market research and discovered that 90% of Lego consumers were boys, so they launched various product lines for girls and they all failed. So, Lego conducted some research and made this earth shattering discovery— girls and boys play different.

An article from Fortune magazine states, "It took years of research to find out that girls enjoyed building just as much as boys and really just differed in what they wanted to build, and along with the colors in which they favored in their sets.

Following this research, the company introduced "Lego Friends" with female oriented colors, female characters, background stories and building sets for hospitals, malls, and houses. They were a big hit.

What does this mean for your marriage and what Peter says here? When Peter says we need to live with our wives in an understanding way, we need to be sensitive to her emotional and physical needs. We need to understand how God has wired her. For instance, we might want to show our love for our wives by suggesting a fun night out on the town— dinner, dancing, friends and the like, but what she might really want is a quiet night at home with a good book or a romantic movie just the two of you. You might suggest a family activity with the kids, but what she really needs is a sitter and get away from the kids for a few hours. You see guys, there are a lot of things we do that we think are loving, but we are so tone-deaf to our wives' emotional needs that we actually hurt the relationship. And this leads to conflict and stress in the marriage.

Husbands, ask your wives what they need. Tune in to their emotional wavelength. Learn their love language. If you're extroverted and she's introverted, you're going to have to translate that into how you show your love. If she's the extrovert and you're the introvert, you need to make that jump.

And wives, you can really help us here. Tell us what you need. Communicate it. Be clear. Be specific. Don't just give hints. Don't beat around the bush. Wives often fall into the trap of thinking that if we really loved you, we should just know. But we don't. We're men. We are not

wired emotionally and relationally like you are. You need to tell us. Remember we have that broken chromosome. You can't fix us, so you just have to work with us.

So, number one guys, be considerate. Live with your wives in an understanding way.

II. Be Chivalrous

Number two, men— *Be Chivalrous*. By God's design, your wife is to be the special object of your love and care. Now if you are looking at our verse looking for the words *be chivalrous*, you won't find them. I'm reading between the lines here. What you will find is this, "*Treat them with respect as the weaker partner.*" It's the idea communicated by the traditional concept of chivalry. We are to treat her with honor, respect and care. She is under your protection.

When Peter calls her the weaker partner, that's not an insult or a sexist put down. It doesn't mean weaker spiritually or intellectually or emotionally, but physically. It's what we were talking about just a moment ago— men and women are different. Overall, men have about 50% more muscle mass than women. Even the types of muscle we have are different. Guys have a higher percentage of what are known as Type 2 fast twitch muscle fibers. This allows us to generate more strength at a moment's notice, but they also tire more quickly. Women have more of the slow twitch muscle fibers which make them great at endurance. Sometimes Teresa tells me the only reason she married me was so that I could open jars. If that's what it takes to stay married to that sexy gal, I'll keep opening jars.

To say that women are the weaker partner doesn't mean that women are less important or less competent. We are each made in the image of God, we have equal value and worth in the eyes of God.

However, being equal does not mean equivalent. We are not the same, and we can't do all the same things the same ways. Men are better at some things, and women are superior at other things.

God gave us different roles to help us serve and provide for each other. God designed a wonderful, symbiotic relationship. A husband that understands and respects these differences will protect and provide for his wife. This is the main idea behind chivalry. Our culture once understood that it was a good thing to respect and honor ladies.

Now boyfriends just pull in the driveway and text the girl, and expect her to come outside. No respect, no honor, no chivalry. Some husbands are five feet from the restaurant door while the wife is still in the car. No respect. No honor. No chivalry. Guys, look for ways to be chivalrous.

Hold the door open for her. Wait for her and walk with her from the car. Offer her your jacket. Share your umbrella. Let her order first. Send her a text and let her know when you're leaving or that you got to your destination alright. Keep the texts and pictures you share between the two of you just between the two of you. Don't be bragging to your buddies. Honor her privacy and

honor your marriage bed. Stand up for her. Don't put her down in front of others. Remember special days and actually prepare for them. It's hilarious to go into Wal-Mart on February 14 and watch the endless stream of men who've put absolutely zero thought and preparation into Valentine's Day. I'm not pointing fingers guys. I've been there. I've done it too. We can do better than that. She's worth more than that. Actually, call her, or better yet, have conversation, don't text, when it's something personal and relational. Keep your cell phone put away when you're on a date. One last thing, and I need to make this church appropriate, but in your more intimate moments, remember it's not a race to the finish line. Take the scenic route. This is one time it's okay to let the other person win.

So, guys, let's be chivalrous.

III. Be a Companion

Finally, we are to ***Be a Companion***. Peter says she is a partner, a co-heir with him in the grace of life. Understand the significance of what Peter is saying here. Peter says she is a recipient of the life-giving grace of God just like you are. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved her, and how did he loved her by laying down his own life for her.

She may be physically weaker, but in God's eyes, she is your partner, she is your co-heir, she has equally received his love and grace, and you should love her as an equal, as a companion.

You are fellow recipients of the grace of God. You are equal partners in the marriage. Do you treat her as a partner?

Partner with her in parenting. Partner with her in your finances. Partner with her in your goals, and dreams and plans. I've noticed a frightening trend in marriages, and that is the subdivision of everything into his and hers. Certainly, you will naturally have different roles and different strengths. But really strive in your marriage to think in terms of ours. Not his, not hers, not mine, not yours, but ours.

You will each have your own interests. You like to fish. She likes to scrapbook. You like fantasy football. She likes to go antiquing. That's okay, but also be companions. She's not just your lover. She is your friend. She's not just the mother of your children. She is your partner. Share life with her, and develop mutual interests. Think about things you can do together.

These aren't just casual suggestions, or practical advice. According to Peter, they actually have a bearing on how God answers your prayers. Throughout this series, we've been talking about how we as Christians are a part of two worlds at once. We live here, but we belong there. We are a part of this world HERE, but we are defined by THERE. This is one place where HERE and THERE meet.

How we love our wives directly affects our relationship with God. How we understand her, how we treat her, how we view her will either open up your relationship with God, or close it off. If

you are considerate, if you are chivalrous, if you are her companion it will help your prayers. If not, Peter says it can hinder your prayers. Guys, your closeness to God is directly tied to your closeness with your wife. Brokenness with her leads to brokenness with Him.

Consider this passage as an invitation to not only be close to her, but also to draw close to your Creator.