

Husbands: In the Same Way as Christ

1 Peter 3:7a, You Husbands, in the Same Way

A Sermon by Chris Mueller

I am sure most of you have spent time on a river, like me. I have canoed, river-rafted, speed boated, river-boarded (which is a double-thick body board you use to surf through rapids), and inner-tubed down a bunch of different calm and rapid rivers. I have been on stretches that looked like lakes because they were so wide and calm. But I have also been on stretches of river that looked like giant demon-possessed washing machines, raging through narrow canyons where every drop of water was frothing white spray.

I have actually rafted through and down a collapsed dam which combined the thrill of a roller coaster with the terror of a class 5 rapid. And once I was trapped under a raft under the water, literally tied up in the ropes, and thought I was going to drown. My last thought before I was mercifully released from this death trap was this--Jean is going to kill me for dying. (I know, it doesn't make much sense when you think you're dying.)

One universal truth about any river is this: anything that is not powered by wind, gasoline or human muscle is going to float downstream with the current in the direction of the river. Unless you are stuck on the edge, on a rock, a sandbar or tree fall, you are going to flow with the current. Just stop rowing, turn the engine off, or pull the sail down and inevitably you will float down river.

This is also true of all the men in this room. Unless you've been saved and are continually filled with the Spirit, you are going to float down the current of worldiness and the flesh. And nothing demonstrates the need for you to be empowered by Christ and the Holy Spirit more than your marriage. Two saints who sin, pressed together in the closest possible environment, layered under the stress of communication, children, finances, home management, education, discipleship, health issues, ministry in the church, in-laws, witnessing to the lost and more prove the need for Christ and daily dependence upon the Spirit.

The current of this earth is too strong for any marriage to be heavenly. The pull of the flesh is too great for any marriage not to be filled with the Spirit. The flow toward self-reliance is too vast not to depend solely upon the Word of God for direction. You must turn to divine resources if your marriage is to glorify God, honor Christ, be a witness to the world, experience the grace of life, and be a joy to you. You must rely upon the gas of God, the wind of the Spirit, and the strength of salvation to actually swim against the current of this world and the rapids of your flesh.

If you choose not to daily rely on God's resources, then you'll automatically drift down the current of the world toward the towns of sin, trouble, rebellion, compromise and pain. But the good news is this--God designed marriage and God also provides the resources for marriage to work the way He designed. And when it does, God calls marriage the grace of life--the hot fudge on the ice cream sundae of life, the whipped cream on your caramel frappuccino, the best there is. And this is exactly what Peter points men to in 1 Peter 3:7.

Open your Bibles and follow along with your outline. Peter's letter is about how to stand firm when life gets hot. So when Peter opens his letter, he reminds his readers the way they stand firm is to live the realities of their salvation they have in Christ Jesus. The opening section of 1 Peter is all about living the Gospel and rejoicing in your salvation. To live as one who has been given salvation you could never earn nor choose for yourself. As believers, you've been

caused to be born again, internally transformed and given an amazing inheritance secured in heaven that will never be taken away. To live as those who deserved nothing and were given everything. Stand firm, don't float.

Midway through chapter two, Peter shocks us by stating that submission is also crucial in order to stand firm and not float. So first salvation in Christ, now submission to Christ is the path to standing firm in your faith and not drifting with the current. In 2:13, he tells all Christians to submit to the very government that most likely kicked them out of Rome for being believers and made them live in the frontier of Asia Minor, or modern day Turkey. Then in 2:18, Peter tells slaves to submit to their masters, even if they're harsh. And finally in 3:1, Peter tells wives to submit to their own husbands, even if they're unsaved and unreasonable.

But now in verse 7, Peter does something unusual. It's unusual because Peter didn't instruct Christian masters how to treat their slaves, or remind the government how to treat its citizens. But now in 3:7, Peter does tell husbands how to treat their wives. No authority has been addressed in Peter's instruction in authority/submission relationships until now with husbands. God wants believing husbands to know what it will take to swim against the current of this world in their marriages. God wants men to know the dependent effort they must give to their marriages in order to taste of the grace of life. God wants you single men to embrace the price you must pay in order for your future marriage to work the way God designed.

What is it? Look at verse 7 NASB, "*You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.*" The ESV is very similar. "*Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.*"

This single verse is packed with punch--let me make sure you don't miss some crucial introductory truths. Some of you wonder why there are six verses directed at wives, but only one verse directed at husbands. It is not because women need to discuss more than men. It is not because women take more time to emotionally connect. It is because . . .

First The Roman culture was harder on wives

Women in the Roman culture had no rights. One quote by Roman historian Cato summarizes it dramatically. He says, "If you were to catch your wife in an act of infidelity, you can kill her with impunity without a trial; but if she were to catch you, she would not venture to touch you with her finger and indeed, she has no right."

The husband who became a Christian would take his unsaved wife and children to church and the cultural expectation would be that they would follow him and his God. The wife who became a believer now married to a non-Christian would struggle greatly in Roman culture because she would be turning her back on household gods who were viewed as the source of blessing and peace for the Roman husband. She would also be rejecting the worship of the Emperor, which would put her in danger. And it may have been her faith that forced her entire family to have to leave Rome, which would make her husband angry.

She was in a difficult spot--free in Christ but with no rights, no law, no freedom and no protection from anyone, including her husband. So these verses give extra instruction to wives

(6 verses) simply because her situation was much more difficult. So how are Christian wives and husbands supposed to function in this kind of difficult environment--try really hard, work at it, act religious, be morally good? No, a thousand times NO!

Second The context teaches us the necessity of dependence

Peter just invested a chapter and a half telling his readers and us to live every day focused on the salvation we've been given by Christ. Live knowing you are sinners who deserve hell--knowing that God was so gracious to you, He called you even though you didn't and couldn't turn to Him on your own. Live knowing Christ took your punishment. Live knowing you desperately need His grace every single day in order to do anything that would please Him. And live knowing no Christian marriage can function the way God designed without genuine salvation saturating a couple with both the husband and wife filled with the Spirit every moment. Otherwise, no matter how hard you try, you cannot withstand the current of this world nor the pull of the flesh. But you say, one verse is not much to guide husbands into their dependent duties. Actually it is more than enough.

Third The amount of instruction doesn't diminish its importance

Even though it's only one verse, it is packed with marriage bombs. A bomb is a crucial, life-changing, marriage-altering truth. First Peter 3:7 is explosive Christian man juice. Look at verse 7 again and allow me to break it down for you. "*You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.*"

The reason you want to be here for the next four weeks, and why you wives need to make certain your husband is faithfully in church, and why you single men need to hear these manhood CliffsNotes is when you break this verse down into its basic phrases, under God's grace, it is going to move you men . . .

Verse 1 To FOLLOW CHRIST as your model for marriage

To be Christ-like--from "*you husbands in the same way*"

Verse 2a To BUILD A HOME with your wife

To be CONSIDERATE--from "*live with your wives in an understanding way*"

Verse 2b To KNOW your wife intimately

To be COMMUNICATIVE--from "*live with your wives in an understanding way*"

Verse 3 To PROTECT your wife

To be CHIVALROUS--from "*as with someone weaker, since she is a woman*"

Verse 4 To TREASURE your wife

To be an intimate COMPANION--from "*and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life*"

Verse 5 To GUARD your marriage

To be CAREFUL--from "*so that your prayers will not be hindered*"

Are you ready for this? We desperately need Christ and to be dependent upon His Spirit, and we need to know how to paddle, how to move upstream and not just float down the current of the flesh. First Peter 3:7 is how you dependently obey, how to steer your marriage toward God's will and experience the grace of life.

And Peter actually begins verse 7 with a difficult statement. I have read over twenty commentaries, and they either don't comment on this phrase or don't agree as to exactly what Peter means. Do you see it? Look at verse 7, "You husbands in the same way"--can you feel the controversy? In the same way as what?

1 No one suggested that Peter was saying you husbands submit in the same way wives do--promoting a mutual submission, since that would contradict Sarah's example in verse 6 of obedient submission demonstrating respect by calling her husband lord. Plus it would disagree with the rest of the New Testament on the roles of men and women and undermine the character of the Godhead.

2 Some suggest that "in the same way" is referring to verse 1, when he says "*be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the Word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives.*" The implication in verse 1 is that even though some unsaved husbands are disobedient to the Word, these wives are obedient to the Word. So verse 7, in the same way you husbands are to be obedient to the Word of God as well, and I believe there's some merit with that view.

3 Some view verse 7, "*You husbands in the same way*" as referencing the exact phrase in verse 1, "*in the same way you wives,*" telling us that in the same way wives have denied themselves in order to function in their roles as wives, so husbands need to deny themselves in order to function in their role, and I also believe that view holds some merit.

4 But I believe the best understanding of "*You husbands in the same way*" is pointing to the exact phrase in verse 1 "*in the same way wives,*" which points to the example of Christ at the end of chapter 2. Just like Peter pointed wives to look at their Savior in order to know how to deal with an unbelieving and possibly harsh husband, Peter says in the same way, you husbands look to your Savior also. Look at the way He initiated our salvation. Look at how He sacrifices for us. Study how He responded to His suffering and you will know how to husband your wife. Do you get it?

In the same way as the wives are told to look to Jesus, in the same way you husbands are to look to Jesus as your example. Depend on Christ for salvation, depend on Christ for your growth, depend on Christ for your power, and follow Christ as your example. Watch how He paddled, and you paddle the same way. If you want to make progress upstream in becoming like Christ, then follow the pattern Christ left for us. If you want your marriage to be saturated with God's blessing, then follow Christ's example. Plus in a similar manner, learn from the instruction given to the wives as they follow Christ.

#1 In the same way Christ used His authority

Do you remember how Peter described how Christ responded to the unjust, harsh mistreatment He received at the hands of His own creation at the end of chapter 2? Look at verses 21 to 23, *“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.”*

No one has more authority than the King of all Kings and Lord of all Lords. No one has more power than the Creator of the universe. No one has more moral high ground than the perfect Son of God. No one has more right to judge than the one who never sinned. Yet look at how Christ responded to unfair treatment, cruel people and unjust suffering. Sinless, innocent, perfect Christ yielded to sinful, guilty, imperfect men. And Christ denied Himself without grumbling, without retaliating, without threatening and without doubting.

So husbands, in the same way, deny yourself, do not abuse your authority as head, do not bark orders, do not lose your temper, do not force obedience, but follow the example of Christ who died to self. And why did Christ die? Verses 24 and 25 of chapter 2 tell us, *“And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. 25 For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”*

He died for us, just like you are to die to self for your spouse. That is the heart of a godly man—a passion to be like Christ in every way. A desire to follow Christ’s example, even when your circumstances are unfair or your wife is not supportive. This is exactly what Paul calls for in Ephesians 5:25, *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”*

Paul commands you to continually love your wives just like Christ loved you and completely gave Himself away. Does your wife know without a doubt that you are completely and totally hers continually? Does she know that you would do anything you could for her? Does she know for a fact that she has your heart and there are no competitors? That is your job--why?

The heart of a Godly man is to imitate his Savior, following the example of the innocent one who suffered for our guilt, mimicking the perfect one who bore God’s hateful wrath for our sin, doing in a small way what Jesus Christ did for us in a big way. The only way any man here can hope to fulfill His role as a husband now or someday is to keep His eyes focused on Christ and what Jesus did for us. Men, you must put on glasses, and one of the lenses is Christ, and the other lens is the Gospel--that is the only way you will know where to paddle and the only way you’ll resist the steady current headed toward flesh-ville, proud-a-topia and selfish town.

Now when Peter uses the phrase, “you husbands in the same way,”—“in the same way” means “also” or “continuing on the same area of discussion.” I believe Peter is also referring to what he just taught the wives in verses 1 to 6. “In the same way” refers to the example of Christ, but also how the wives were to imitate the example of Christ--that relates to the role of men as well. Just as women are to focus on Christ and learn submission, so men are to focus on Christ and learn to submit to God’s Word concerning the role of the husband. Are there truths in verses 1 to 6 that men must embrace? Yes! What are they? Men become Godly husbands.

#2 In the same way a wife obeys the Word of God

Remember verse 1, *“In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives.”* Peter implies to Godly wives, even though your husband is disobedient to the Word of God, you wives be obedient to the Word of God. No spouse is Godly who does not obey the Word of God in all things. No Christian is filled with the Spirit who does not obey the Word of God. Mature Christians are those who live under the Word of God in all areas.

In the same way, husbands too are to be obedient to the Word of God. In order to fill out your role as a wife, women must deny themselves and follow God's Word in submission, and in order to fulfill your role as a husband, men must deny themselves and follow God's Word in headship. Turn over to Ephesians 5:22 to 33 to review God's clear teaching on how a husband is obedient to the Word of God in his role.

Paul just taught the Ephesians the importance of total dependence upon God by being saturated in the Word of God, confessing sin, serving and sharing in order to be filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18. That sets the stage for Paul to instruct the first century household made up of husbands and wives, children and parents, slaves and masters. Paul starts with the most important relationship then, and the most important relationship today—the marriage. Then invests most of his focus on the husband, explaining the role of the man in marriage, which is as the . . .

First Leader

Verses 22 to 23, *“Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.”* A spiritual leader is a man who assumes responsibility for his wife, his children and his household. You plan spiritual direction, you model spirit-filled attitudes, you initiate the Word of God being seen and heard, and you pursue Biblical priorities and willingly sacrifice first in order for Christ to be exalted in your home.

You're the leader, called the head. The word head has to do with “the buck stops with you,” or “you're the point man.” You're the captain of the ship--if the engine breaks, it's your responsibility to get it fixed. If the ship heads a wrong direction it is your fault--you're the leader, but you are also the . . .

Second Lover

Verses 25 to 27, *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”* Paul commands husbands to continually sacrifice for your wife the way Christ continually and fully gave himself away for us. A spiritual leader is a man who's learned to be a servant to His bride. He is a leader, a lover and a linker.

Third Linker (not stinker)

Verses 28 to 33 confuse people, but Paul is clearly talking about a husband and wife being one, linked together in an intimate oneness that was planned from the beginning. Look at verse 28, *“So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself.”* “They're one. A spiritual leader is a man who has bound and

meshed his heart with his bride's for life. He delights in her, rejoices in her strengths, covers her weaknesses, owns her hurts, bears her pains, celebrates her victories, and is one with her in every way possible.

He leads her, loves her and links with her. This is how a man obeys the Word of God toward His wife. Like a wife submits, a husband leads, loves and links. He doesn't bark orders, but models Christ-likeness, initiates Biblical direction, takes total responsibility, sacrifices for each member of the family, and is one with his bride.

Single men, spiritual leadership is not telling others what to do, it is being like Christ. Single women, spiritual leadership is not a guy who can pray or talk about Jesus, but a man who is responsible and like Christ. He will do these three things—look for them.

Christ initiated--Christ did not wait for us to respond or want salvation, he initiated and so do spiritual leaders. They initiate and pursue obeying the Word of God.

Christ planned--the entire Old Testament proves Christ planned and Godly men are those who plan. If they can't marry you for three years, they have a plan to pace that relationship. If they can't afford something they need, they plan finances. They plan.

Christ sacrificed Himself--and the Godly man knows how to be a servant, which involves work, hardship, sacrifice, difficulty, and inconvenience. If a man doesn't serve, do not marry Him, no matter what he says, he is not Christ-like.

In the same way wives are to obey the Word of God, so husbands are to obey the Word of God the way Christ obeyed the Word of God and thankfully transformed our hearts to want to obey the Word of God and provide the power through His Spirit to obey the Word of God. So you can be the spiritual leader God intends for you to be and not float, if you have Christ and depend on His Spirit. Men also become Godly husbands . . .

#3 In the same way a wife prioritizes behavior over words

The end of verse 1 and verse 2 say actions speak louder than words—“*they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.*” Men, talk is cheap--you keep telling her you love her, but Christ says if you love her, you will show her. Leading, loving and linking are primarily actions and the truth of any great love is proven by action, deeds, behavior and faithfulness.

The three main ways single men defraud single women is with:

1 Too much time too soon--instead of a gradual increase, immediately spending more time than a married couple, giving the heart a false sense of permanent commitment and almost always leading to moral compromise

2 Too many gifts, usually that are too expensive

3 Inappropriate words--I love you--how many kids do you want--what kind of wedding are you hoping for--how do you want to furnish our house . . . after the fourth date

Men are to prove their love for their wives with deeds over dialog, by taking responsibility for the finances, taking the lead in discipling the children and being a servant to their wives. Men need to prioritize your behavior over your words—if you promise to fix that faucet don't drift, do it. Men also become Godly husbands . . .

#4 In the same way a wife has an internal focus

It is not just as tough for men as it is women, but almost. Men want to look good--either super thin musician types or male model types or sharp dressed men types or super muscled athletic types . . . men are working hard to look good. Sadly we have a generation of so-called Christian single men who float from church-to-church called the [Abercrombie & Fitch](#) men, looking for cute Christian gals. These are men who do not have the right focus, the focus that Peter challenged the women on in verses 3 and 4.

“Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.” Don't cruise, depend on Christ.

Like the women, become a man of internal character. How can you tell? This is a man who loves Christ and shows it at work, at church and at home. What you see is what you get. The secret to raising children as a pastor is to be the same at church as you are at home--otherwise you raise hypocritical Pharisees, sneaky rebels or the worst . . . HPK's (hellraising pastor's kids). Learn from the challenge to women to have an internal focus. Finally, men also become Godly husbands . . .

#5 In the same way a wife models others

In verses 5 and 6, Peter reminded women to look at models to imitate. *“For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.”*

Later in 1 Peter 5, the apostle will challenge young men to submit in humility to their elders. *“You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”* Don't float out there on your own, follow the example of others. Like Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.” Or like Hebrews 13:7 says, *“Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.”*

Learn from, model after, be teachable to, ask questions of, follow and submit to your spiritual elders--the men who shepherd the flock. Learn from them, follow the examples God gives you. Plus learn from the examples of those who have gone before--Edwards, Spurgeon, Luther, Calvin and Shackelford. And most importantly, like the women, turn to the examples in Scripture and learn how to be a spiritual leader from Paul, David, Timothy, Caleb, Joshua, Moses, Jonathon, Nehemiah and more.

Christian men, stop floating down the current of this world and living in the flesh. Depend on Christ, His Spirit and His Word to fulfill your responsibilities in marriage, at work, with your children, and at your church in the same way as Christ (in 2:21 to 25), and in the same way Christian wives humbly seek to obey Christ (in 3:1 to 7). Several challenges arise from God's Word--let me close with five . . .

1 Marrieds, did you catch the challenge?

There is nothing you can do to make a great marriage. You must turn to Christ first, then moment-by-moment depend on His Spirit in order to follow the Word of God to become the spouse God intends for you to be. But once you cultivate the habit and humility of dependence, which is another way of saying living by faith, then you will see God do great things in you and through you toward your spouse, which will result in tasting the grace of life in marriage.

2 Singles, did you see your list?

You don't know who God has for you, but until the day you say I do, you are to pursue the best. Who is the best spouse for you? It is today's outline--it's a list.

- 1 One who depends upon, pursues and loves Christ more than you
- 2 One who dependently obeys God's Word above all things
- 3 One who proves their faith by their deeds over their words
- 4 One who is a person of internal character more than external appearance
- 5 One who is friends with the most Godly of their peers, and pursues being influenced by the most Godly examples in their midst

3 Men, will you start your pursuit?

Men in general have a proclivity to coast, to float, to just let it all happen. When God says, empowered by the Spirit of God and only according to the Word of God, men are to pursue, initiate, plan and sacrifice. Men, where is your plan? Besides provision and possibly sharing in the schooling of your children, where is your plan and pursuit of your wife--goals to achieve, character to be developed, ministry to others to grow in? A man of God pursues, do you?

4 Christians, do you own the priority?

The focus here is not marriage, but Christ and the Gospel, the Spirit and the Word. God must do the work, Christ must get the glory, and the Spirit must empower your efforts or it will all be for nothing. We have some beautiful Christians here--but to be honest, what you see is the Creator who made them and the Savior who saved them and the Spirit who has shaped them into those beautiful people. And the priority for you is to keep your relationship with Christ fresh and strong, to stay close with Him, to delight in Him, depend on Him and trust in Him. Christ is what makes a marriage--a husband and a wife who love Christ above all and show it in their pursuit of Him. Marriages known for great love have not lost their first love, Jesus.

5 Moralists, do you see the danger?

There are all kinds of people going to all kinds of churches and many of them are not saved. The Bible says in the church there will be wheat and tares and you can't tell them apart in this life. Some of you have been trying to live the Christian life in your own strength--you prayed a prayer once to accept Christ, but that doesn't mean you are born again. If you are truly saved, then not only do you understand you are a sinner who stands condemned for your sin before a holy God and Christ alone took your punishment by dying in your place, then rising from the dead. Don't stop there--when Christ saves you, He transforms you, giving you a new heart that wants to obey Him and empowers you to obey Him and causes you to want to follow Him no matter what. If that is not you, turn to Christ today--let's pray!