

Series: "Saving Our Soul from Wasting Our Life"

Sermon: "The Good Life Husband"

Text: 1 Peter 3:7

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- It used to "bug" me that Peter organized the section of his letter we are studying together in the way he did.
- We have been considering a continuing discussion about *humble submission* by believers even to imperfect human authorities. We have seen that humble submission rather than the more natural, automatic response of rebellion is "*good*."
- By "*good*" here, Peter means it is a way of living that results in the Living Temple of God being visible. This visible display happens in a dark world that automatically rejects God's authority and is *repelled* by the very suggestion that he has any authority over their life.
- As I think about this, I picture the annual event when we all go to my Brandon and Stacy's house to have the countdown of the lighting of that year's Christmas lights. The display gets bigger and brighter every year. I wish I could say the same for the display of God's Living Temple in the world.
- Living out this "good" is what makes up the "good life" we can live as believers *together*. This "good life" is a life in contrast with the "wasted life" humans experience when they do not live for their created purpose of glorifying God in the world.
- What is "wrong with Peter's arrangement? Let me explain...He starts with the good-life admonition humbly to submit to *human governing* authorities. We have already covered some of the nuances and caveats of this truth so I will not do that again.
- Next, Peter gives the command for Christian *slaves* humbly to submit to even cruel masters. Again, we have already talked about what this means and how offensive it is to our current cultural morality.
- After these 2 examples of the humble submission versus fleshly rebellion, Peter offers his *perfect model* for this humble submission to authority even when it resulted in unjust suffering for him.

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- In verses 21-25 of the previous chapter, he describes the Lord Jesus's heart attitude and his actions resulting from his humble submission toward a very *unjust* human authority.
- Jesus did not retaliate. He made no threats. Instead, says Peter, the Lord entrusted—handed himself over—to God as he was mistreated.
- We saw that holy OT women did the same handing-over to God even as they humbly submitted to their imperfect husbands.
- Lord' willing, we will come back to that same idea in an interesting place, as Peter calls on younger people to trust God rather than demand what they want and might think they have a right to.
- After what seems like an ***interrupting interlude*** in what should have been, in my humble opinion, a neat list of 4 examples, Peter gives his 3<sup>rd</sup> example. Wives are humbly to submit to their fallible human husbands—even believing wives to unbelieving husbands.
- And now, for this morning, we have the 4<sup>th</sup> element of the list. Peter addresses ***husbands***.
- Peter, why did you break up the neat list? Why give 2 then interrupt and give 2 more examples? I believe Peter might respond: *"Sorry I didn't write this the way you would write this, Raleigh—nicely linear in order. But, Raleigh, I am a thoroughly Jewish man. My ways of writing—my style is thoroughly Jewish. Just as you have linear style baked into your writing, we Jewish writers have a style that you guys have labeled **chiasm**. We, just as naturally, write with a pattern of A-B-C—and then instead of D next as in a linear list, we reframe C with another B-A resulting in a very visible and powerful style for us... A-B-C-B-A.*
- We *Hebrew* writers do this to frame and give most emphasis to what is in the ***center***—here, that is the point C. Raleigh, do you remember

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what that point is? Ok, I get it! ***The example of Jesus Christ's humble submission is what you want us to see most clearly here.***

- These principles are not here to save or destroy democracy—to promote or reject slavery—or to give marriage counseling. These are here to say, "*The good-life that displays God's presence in a dark world is the life Jesus lived. The life Jesus lived was not a rebellious life in which he fought to claim his rights—rights that he deserved. His life was a humbly submissive life even when that 'good-living' resulted in unjust personal suffering—i.e., in less than comfortable outcomes.*"
- Thus, when Peter addresses wives and husbands, he is likely not making a statement about some innate, general **superiority** of males over females. This will be important to keep in mind when we read the single verse for today in just a moment or two.
- One other thing to keep in mind is how both the **admonition to the wife and the husband begin**. I only mentioned these words last week but I need to emphasize them now.
- Do you see them **in 3:1** and **7:1**? The phrase, "***In the same way***" "***...In the same way...***" begins each exhortation.
- If I am awake when I read those words, they should provoke my brain to ask, "***In the same way... as what?***"
- In this instance, that is relatively easy to answer. What was the example he just gave—rather **who** was the example? ***Jesus Christ of course. "In the same way as humble Jesus Christ, wives, be submissive to your husbands rather than rebellious."***
- Today we look at just 1 Peter 3:7 which, as I said starts with the same phrase. **READ 1 Peter 3:7.**
- Husbands, instead of demanding what you consider to be your rights ***deal with your wives in a humble manner being like Christ.***

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- Of course, Jesus' humble way of responding resulted in his making **sacrifices**. Husbands, there will be sacrifices for your wife if you live "*in the same way*" as Christ.
- This sacrifice—*even to death on a cross*—is the same emphasis Paul gives in the letter to the Ephesian church when he discusses the same matter.
- What does *Peter* emphasize here? There is another interesting translation in the NIV. "***In the same way, be considerate.***" "*Be considerate*" translates the Greek word for "***knowing something in an understanding way.***" The exhortation is to do life humbly with your wife *understanding* her—*especially who she is*.
- Guess what? To understand our wives, husbands, we will need to take the focus off our own needs as the priority for our life together. Good-Life humility entails putting someone else in front of ourselves.
- Peter says that we are to treat our wives with *honor or respect*. When you dig into this common word for *honor or respect*, you realize it was just used by Peter to describe the "***precious cornerstone,***" ***Jesus Christ,*** back in chapter 2.
- To live the good life that glorifies God and fulfills our created purpose, we husbands must understand our wives are "***precious.***" ***They are "valuable."***
- How so? Well, the ***first reason*** Peter gives is a tough one for me to understand. It is because my wife is, according to the NIV, the ***weaker partner.***
- First, let me clarify that the translation, "*partner*" is somewhat *interpretive*. The word in the text is more literally *vessel*—as in "*weaker vessel.*" It most often is used as a figure for a physical body but it does sometimes go beyond that as the NIV has interpreted.

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- It is true. Generally, women are **physically weaker** than men. In the same vein, generally, wives are physically weaker than their husbands. As I consider the reason for this truth here, this time, I conclude that maybe it is more simple than I sometimes make it.
- In a context of *authority*, that is the context we are in, strength or power—even if it is simply physical--can often be abused rather than be part of the understanding and honoring the one who has less physical power.
- Peter doesn't see this as making any wife innately less valuable than the a husband. I suspect that the more concrete force of the word for *vessel* is in mind. I think he is saying to honor or value your wife as the *precious, more delicate ceramic vessel* that is a beautiful work of art versus the husband who is like a rough, thick, heavier and less *beautiful* clay pot.
- We honor and protect delicate works of art because we understand their value. But we also know of their susceptibility to a misuse of power against them.
- Although Peter did not have to parallel Paul's admonitions to wives and husbands, this idea does just that. Paul put it in terms of *sacrificially caring* for a wife as a husband would for his own body.
- Peter also says a husband should treat his wife as precious—honor her—respect her—because she is just as much an **heir of the gift of eternal life** with as is he. They are indeed "**partners**" on the mission to glorify God TOGETHER as living stones in the Living Temple as the NIV inferred earlier—and maybe got it right in their *paraphrase*.
- If, these two things together teach us nothing else, they clearly teach us that husbands and wives are **different** and, they are also **sharers** in living out God's created purpose. Neither one is innately a superior or inferior creature in God's Creation.

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- I started to say this last week but I thought I would wait. If you ask for just my *opinion* as one human to another human, I tend to conclude that women and wives seem to be the generally superior creatures when compared to men and husbands.
- Mary is not even listening right now so I am not saying this just to win points with her.
- Peter's point is that husbands and wives are made differently in order to work together in making God's glory visible in a dark world.
- Maybe, most importantly for how this works out in real life, we need to go back to what he said at the beginning of this section on husbands. Husbands, in the same way as Jesus lived with *humility*, you should humbly work with living in ***understanding*** with your wife.
- This is not meant to be a "Oh! Poor little wifey" sense of understanding. Not at all! She was meant to be different from you. She is created that way on purpose by God's design.
- Husbands don't think that your likely physical superiority is the basis or the reason for your authority in this relationship.
- As I think about these truths and about husbands and wives, and their application in our lives, I can't help but also think about what Satan has done in our world to keep these truths from shining the glory of God.
- I'm also focusing on the book of ***Romans*** again in preparation to teach through it with some folks in Josh Billings church in New York in about a month or so.
- Maybe you recall that In ***Romans 1***, Paul describes the descent of humans trying to live life without God as a kind of inevitable ***downward spiral***. A person, and a culture of people for that matter, can never be in a holding pattern just a short distance from God. When we humans turn our back on God and live autonomously, we

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inevitably spiral into greater and greater sin and distance from even acknowledging God. *BTW: This includes us as believers.*

- Paul says when humans suppress the truth of God's nature and power as our Creator and as the Lord of all, we will not glorify God as we were created to do. When we fail to glorify God, which is our very reason for existing, it breaks our thinking about life, the world and reality. Of course it would! Leave the reality of God out of your paradigm and you no longer have a realistic paradigm for thinking.
- Given that our flesh longs for significance, apart from God and his true wisdom in our life paradigm, we have to proclaim ourselves wise apart from God. This is foolish, but we act as if it isn't. Our flesh loves playing the role of God. It feels good to be at the center of our own created universe even if that is not reality.
- As fools, we still feel that need in us for God and our created purpose of glorifying God. To fulfill this need, we create other focuses for worship. Idols can be anything from golden statues to famous rock stars. Some of us just make our own selves the idol. ***Everyone should bow to what we want and feel we need.***
- As this downward spiral of death and sin is happening, God says, *If that is what you want I'll give it to you.* Paul says he ***hands us over*** to the ways of life that are in keeping with our foolishness and a dead wrong understanding of reality without God.
- As we become our own idol, or we choose other created things as idols here is just some of the description of this handing-over. *It is recorded in Romans 1:22 ff.<sup>21</sup> **For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.** <sup>22</sup> **Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools** <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look*

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*like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.* <sup>24</sup> **Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.** <sup>25</sup> *They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.* <sup>26</sup> **Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.** <sup>27</sup> *In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.* <sup>28</sup> **Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.** <sup>29</sup> *They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips,* <sup>30</sup> *slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents* (AUTHORITY ISSUES START HERE!!!); <sup>31</sup> *they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.* <sup>32</sup> **Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.**

- Can you see a culture trending this way in our world today? What can stop such a trend? The *Crusaders* discovered people had to change from the inside out because the problem was not the sins they saw but the God-rejecting hearts that produced those sins.
- Sorry, there is not *legislative* answer, no *political* answer, *educational system* answer. **There is only the Gospel answer.**

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- That is the message we speak as a holy priesthood from the Living Temple of God. Can that work to change a culture, a society, a country? Ask **Jonah** who was ironically *disappointed* when those he hated repented from the heart and acknowledged God. That turned the culture of the city-state of Nineveh around for a time.
- BUT, I raised this line of thought for a different reason this morning. As you watch our culture without God disintegrate in its downward spiral what is one clear aspect of *that handing-over*?
- It is a culture that denies the reality of the Created purpose of God in men and women—husbands and wives.
- First, our culture destroyed what God intended by allowing men to dominate solely on the basis of greater physical power—nothing more than I am bigger and meaner than you!
- Then, the spiral led to the sexual perversions of God's plan, Paul calls "*natural relations*," being abandoned as the reality. Now that abandonment has led to a *confusion of gender* itself.
- All of this is an attack on God's Created design for women and men and then for wives and husbands.
- All of this is an attack on the glowing glory of God from his living temple because God cannot even be acknowledged by the fools and their utter foolishness if the "I-am-the-center-of-my-own-universe"—I am god delusion is going to work at all for them.
- Read **Genesis** again. Also, go past where we stopped (I hope to finish someday). Look at how often sexuality and sex are the issues. Why? Because the Enemy of God wants to destroy the human line of redemption by God and wants to do so by taking advantage of *human foolishness so easily followed in sexual matters*. He wants to stop the reality of the glory of God from shining in the dark world.

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- *My cultural rant is finished but my verse for today is not.* I wonder how many of us struggle with having a **productive prayer life** communicating in relationship with God. Probably, some of us have no problem with prayer at all. We just don't pray at all. Do we realize what this means about our relationship with the Father? Try not talking with someone in a relationship and see how close that relationship can be. I've experienced that destructive futility.
- Men, if you want one less potential hindrance to your prayer life—one less potential problem that can keep your relationship with God from flourishing—**don't get married.** [**Let's pray!**]
- There it is in black and white not even in red letters to confuse us. Husbands, when your relationship with your wife is not guided by this *Good-life*, purposeful way of relating to your wife for God's glory—Peter says clearly, your prayers will be **hindered**.
- The word for prayers is the one that describes what we call **prayer requests**. In other words husbands, there is a rare potentially *quid pro quo*—cause and effect truth here you can take to the bank. Fail to recognize and prioritize God's created purpose in your marriage TOGETHER, husbands, and that will impact your relationship with your heavenly Father and his answering your prayer requests.
- This should at least tell us husbands how important a piece of God's plan is our marriage relationship. Were you thinking that and acting on that basis this morning when she annoyed your I-am-the-center-of-the-universe trending thinking??!!
- Perhaps COVID convinced many young people it was time to get married. I have been very busy for some time now with a noticeable increased of requests for pre-marital counseling.
- That is counseling in which I am supposed to equip a young man and a young woman with all the absolute tricks to make marriage work

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perfectly for a lifetime. Most books on pre-marital counseling focus on things such as communication, sex, money and romance. I don't.

- I sort of talk about those because it is expected but I don't think that is what most young people about to get married need most in our time and culture.
- Most need **two truths** and I try to hammer these home over and over because they don't seem immediately important when young people are so in love in the moment.
- **Truth ONE**: God is real and needs to be a real—more than lip service—part of your marriage.
- **Truth TWO**: (this one is the hardest for most of them to see) Your marriage, as wonderful as it feels like for the two of you, is not actually for the two of you—*that*, is just a wonderful consequence.
- ***Your marriage is for God's glory together*** in a new way that you two separately could not accomplish but now can accomplish **together**.
- Having looked at Peter's instructions for Wives and husbands, I would say to you **wives and husbands** this morning:
- **TRUTH ONE**—No matter how long you have already been married, ***God is real and wants to be a REAL part of your marriage.***
- **TRUTH TWO**: ***Your marriage is not for you two or even just one of you*** as sometimes becomes the case with a selfish partner. Your marriage is for the glory of God TOGETHER,
- You are partners in a unique way as you are also part of his LIVING TEMPLE and HOLY PRIESTHOOD. Your partnership exists for shining his glory by living the "GOOD LIFE" Peter has described for husbands and wives and speaking God's REAL truth even when you suffer unjustly for doing that.

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- Wives—husbands—you are TOGETHER as a living and speaking image of God for this dark world even as it spirals more and more into sin and death.