

TITLE: "The Pleasure of God's Face: How to Honor Your Wife"

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 3:7

THEME: *Take heed of your wife or God won't take heed of you*

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Read Passage

I was studying this passage & wrestling w/how t/parts of this v. fit t/whole. And a Gk. noun came to mind (trouble!) -noun ΠΡΟΣΩΠΟΥ (face).

Connection was w/God's "face" & what it means to bring him pleasure.
{cite title}

The face is of imp. significance - esp. in near-eastern culture

Falling on the face is an expression of veneration (Gen. 17:3). Seeing a king's face means having an audience. To hide one's face is to suffer shame (today, we regularly see criminals on TV hiding their faces from t/news cameras).

As it relates to God ==>

For Him to hide his face, is tantamount to a withholding of his grace (Dt. 32:20).

Psalm 34:16 says that God turns his face against the wicked.

Ancient rabbis said that all people see God's face at the hour of death. The wicked see it to receive punishment; the righteous see the face of the Shekinah (his glorious appearance).

Revelation 20:11 And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence [προσωπων] earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

To be blessed is to have t/blessedness of His face shine upon you.

NUM 6:25 The \Lord\ make His face (פָּנָיו) shine on you, And be gracious to you;

PSA 31:16 Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant; Save me in Thy lovingkindness.

PSA 67:1 God be gracious to us and bless us, {And} cause His face to shine upon us

3x in Psalm 80 (vv. 3, 7, 19) O God, restore us, And cause Thy face to shine upon us, and we will be saved.

Every believer in JC has as his/her goal, having t/pleasure of God's face.

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face . . .

Revelation 22:4 and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

Words escape me to fathom what that will be like. To see His face. To have his pleasure & t/fulness of joy (indescribable) that will be ours (mine, yours) for all eternity!

True of every believer, male or female, single or married. But, I'm thinking of this specifically in regard to believing husbands.

I. The Pleasure of God's Face: How to Honor Your Wife

Consistent communion with Christ is a consequence of caring for your wife with consideration as God's co-equal creation.

"Take heed of your wife or God won't take heed of you."

Husbands, likewise, live with [your wives] according to knowledge, as with a weaker vessel—since she is the woman—and grant her honor as a co-heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers might not be hindered.

Begins w/Husbands; Ends w/Husbands {restate main point}

We're going to be addressing the main idea in the form of a question==>

I. The Pleasure of God's Face: How to Honor Your Wife

If you're married and want to have t/blessing of God - His face to shine upon your life & ministry for Him - You need to heed these 4 points.

A. Hear the Call - "*Husbands likewise*"

Husbands, likewise . . .

1. A call to every believing husband

a. The Word "likewise" brings our attention back to verse 1

Peter's not saying that husbands are to be submissive. He's simply pointing out that they have a responsibility as well. Husbands are duty-bound to their wives. We're still w/i t/greater context that began back in 2:13 (**submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution....**)

(1) In this entire passage (going back to 2:13) this is the only time that Peter addresses the one in authority

He doesn't address political leaders such as Kings and governors (but he does their subjects).

He doesn't address masters (but he does their servants).

BUT he does address husbands - this after spending six vv. addressing wives.

(1) I said that the word "likewise" doesn't infer that husbands are to be submissive

Partly true. While not in Peter's direct horizon in this passage, we know that t/husband is to subject himself to JC. Wives are to subject themselves to their husbands even as they submit to X. Husbands, while not commanded to submit to their wives, are subject to JC in all things.

Remember, that's TAP's point in 1 Cor. 11:3 ==>

But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

(a) There is accountability for us men – Even submission

JC is our direct Head & we are greatly accountable to him in our role in t/marriage. That accountability is so great that to neglect it is to lose communion w/God in our prayers (see that at t/end of t/v.) - we incur his displeasure & he doesn't hear us.

I. The Pleasure of God's Face: How to Honor Your Wife

A. Hear the Call

Second, (if you desire to pleasure of God's face) ==>

B. Heed the Command - "Treat your wife according to knowledge"

Husbands, likewise, live with your wives according to knowledge . .

1. I've chosen a literal translation of **κατα γνώσιν**

(according to knowledge). Follows t/KJV. Other translations opt for words such as "understanding", "considerately". Helpful, but misses the nuance of "knowledge."

NASB translates the word as "k." or "knowing" in the 26 of the 27 vv. where it is found (this the only exception - "understanding").

a. The word is important

Used in Luke 1:77 of "the knowledge of salvation"

Paul uses it in Rom. 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

2 Cor. 2:14 - "the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Christ"

Phil. 3:8 - "surpassing value of knowing Christ"

Husbands, likewise, live with your wives according to knowledge . .

.

This is a knowledge of truth; intimate, personal, knowledge. True k.

(1) Is this talking about a knowledge of your wife or of God?

IOW - are you to know all about the needs of your wife? Or are you to have a knowledge of God's will in your marriage? Answer? - YES!

These aren't mutually exclusive of each other. The English Baptist preacher & scholar of the 18th c., John Gill writes in this regard ==>

". . . according to knowledge; of themselves, and their wives, and the duties belonging to the conjugal state, and the laws of God and man respecting it; and according to their knowledge of the Gospel . . .

There has to be a k. of yourself // of God // gospel // & a k. of your wife.
I think t/main emphasis is there (where I'm going to put my main emph.).

b. We need to know our wives

General knowledge of the fact that she is a woman and thus has unique needs.

. . . as with a weaker vessel—since she is the woman . . .

(1) Women and men are different (different by design)

God has designed us to be different & to function differently.

In the early 1990's author John Grey published a best selling book entitled, "Men are from Mars, Women are From Venus." Mars and Venus are something like 75 million miles apart!

I look at our women here. They're getting ready for women's retreat and they're making little baskets with dried flowers in them. Most women love things like crafts, flowers. They like to talk about clothes, and decorating things. Our men get together & what do we do? We go out in the bush and shoot guns. This isn't simply cultural. We reflect God-designed differences.

(a) We're not the same

Yet, our godless, self-seeking culture has long been squeezing women into a mold that they're not made to fit into.

Sexualization of women (pornography, young women who are expected to have a sex drive like men - in reality, these younger women are trying to maintain their self-worth on the basis of the approval of others,

particularly men. What happens when these young women reach their 30s and 40s? They're depressed, burned out, they've had innumerable sexual partners, many have had several abortions, they are bitter. In short, they've bought the lie. You look back into the rear view mirror and you see a decade or more of bad decisions and dead ends, and you grieve!

Women are expected to be as strong as men & are encouraged to assume any and all roles that men fill. They are expected to be Aggressive & Arrogant. Independent & Insensitive.

Back in the 1970s, James Dobson saw the trend and wrote ==>

"An effort has been underway . . . to prove that men and women are identical, except for the ability to bear children. Radical feminists have vigorously (and foolishly) asserted that the only distinction between the sexes is culturally and environmentally produced. Nothing could be farther from the truth; males and females differ biochemically, anatomically, and emotionally. In truth, they are unique in every cell of their bodies, for men carry a different chromosomal pattern than women. There is also considerable evidence to indicate that the hypothalamic region, located just above the pituitary gland in the mid-brain, is 'wired' very uniquely for each of the sexes. Thus, the hypothalamus (known as the seat of the emotions) provides women with a different psychological frame of reference than that of men." [James Dobson, What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women, 114]

I was surprised to find that theologian Wayne Grudem in his commentary on 1 Peter added a footnote recommending Dobson's book, "What wives wish their husbands knew about women." Grudem noted the book as a resource on what it means for a husband to live with his wife according to knowledge.

I have t/book. My wife caught me reading it last night. Yes, "caught me." She declared, "It's about time!" Pub. in 1975. Some of chapter titles==>

* Sources of depression in women.

"Depression is not uniquely characteristic of women, but it occurs less frequently in men and is apparently more crisis oriented - they are less likely to experience t/vague, generalized almost unidentifiable feeling of discouragement that many women encounter."

* Fatigue and time pressure.

He talks about the overwhelming pressures of various obligations, "to do lists" that bombard the average wife and mother.

* Loneliness, Isolation, and Boredom.

Men tend toward being loners & rugged individualists. Women are by nature highly social. Friendships and attention are crucial. When those things are withdrawn, most women wilt like flowers deprived of water.

Something I've seen several times in my life. My parents have neighbors who are professed Christians. They've next door since I lived at home in the 1980s. Husband is what I would call a dysfunctional introvert. A loner. He avoids personal contact at all costs. If he's outside when you pull up to the house, he'll purposely go into the garage to avoid you. He doesn't go to CH & won't allow his wife to go, either. As for his wife (their second marriage), I'm told she was once a social butterfly. Over the years she has turned into a mole who sits at home all day while her husband works & stays home all night in t/company of her mute spouse.

I can't imagine what it must be like! How do you reach t/end of your life, only to look back at a black hole? No ministry on behalf of JC? Little or no social interaction? God hasn't designed any of us to live that way. A man may be content to get up, go to work, and come home only to repeat t/cycle day after day, but women die inside having to live like that.

* Absence of Romantic Love

Every woman dreams of a prince charming. A romantic, sensitive man who sweeps her off her feet. Usually he comes along only to morph into an insensitive, self-centered dolt after the wedding day.

It's amazing what little things like a nice complement (you look nice today), a hug & kiss w/o an agenda behind them, or fresh flowers do.

2. Phrase "live with your wives according to knowledge" resonates with intimacy

a. Verb $\sigma\upsilon\nu\omicron\lambda\kappa\epsilon\omega$

From $\omicron\lambda\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ (house or dwelling) + prefix $\sigma\upsilon\nu$ (with). "To dwell with."

(1) This is a term of intimacy & familiarity

Latin "cohabitant" - to co-habit. You don't just live w/anybody. Why one is to be married, in a covenant union, one man one woman, before one co-habits.

Need for unity, love, understanding, forgiveness.

Dwelling in intimacy. Being considerate of your wife's needs: emotionally, physically, spiritually, romantically.

* Financial Difficulties;

Which he calls, "The tyranny of things."

* Physiological problems (time of the month issues).

These are all things that husbands need to be aware of.

3. Beyond that general sort of knowledge, there is a knowledge that's unique to your wife

We're told that no two snowflakes are alike. No two wives are alike.

Each one of us men could get together and talk about our wives and outline specific differences that characterize each one as to their needs. One wife may be especially prone to discouragement; security; some are more independent; some had special physical or emotional needs; some may not handle stress well.

a. Men, You need to ask yourself two questions:

(1) *"What needs are unique to my wife?"*

Think about that a moment . . . Does she especially thrive when she feels loved & secure? Does she need occasional time alone (w/o t/kids)? What about t/time you spend alone w/her? Things you talk about? In what ways does she especially thrive spiritually?

Specific knowledge of her desires, goals, frustrations, strengths, weaknesses. Her emotional, physical and spiritual needs.

(2) *"how am I doing in meeting those needs?"*

Give yourself a grade . . . A, B, C, D, or ? To be honest, I have to give myself a C - I don't want to be "average." I'm resolving to do better.

I'll tell you what's key in this regard - TIME. You have to spend quality time w/her if you're going to live w/her according to knowledge.

What's the difference between a stranger, an acquaintance, and a friend? Time, effort, communication.

Communication . . . that's another difference between men and women. I can talk to someone on the phone for an hour & give my wife a one sentence summary of the conversation. "What did you talk about?" "We talked about different things." If it's the other way around, sit down and grab a cup of coffee.

That's okay -

Are you spending quality time w/your wife? Or, are you too busy w/your career? Or your hobbies? Or sitting in front of the TV?

I. The Pleasure of God's Face: How to Honor Your Wife

A. Hear the Call

B. Heed the Command - "Treat your wife according to knowledge"

C. Have Consideration - "Since she is a woman"

Husbands, likewise, live with [your wives] according to knowledge, as with a weaker vessel—since she is the woman . . .

1. Part of living with your wife according to knowledge is recognizing the fact that she is a weaker vessel

a. She is ἀσθενής

From σθενωω with the alpha privative (cf. σθεινωω used in 1 Peter 5:10).

(1) What does it mean that she is a weaker vessel?

One researcher outlines three areas where this may be true ==>

"Current research indicates that at least three basic female traits exist by which a woman may be perceived as weaker than the male. She tends to be less physically powerful, less aggressive, and less objective."

"In addition to these physical characteristics the presence of the male hormone (testosterone) accounts for much of the increased levels of aggression in men. This difference apparently plays a role in emotional response. Men have more distance from their emotions, and a great capacity to detach themselves from immediate reactions. Women respond to situations more immediately and spontaneously, finding it harder to distance themselves from the way they feel. Thus, a man more readily reacts to a situation with a response that is more purely mental or physical. The tendency to be less aggressive may make the female less confrontational in her behavior toward her husband and children, and to those outside the family." [Integrity of Heart, Skillfulness of Hands: Biblical and Leadership Studies in Honor of Donald K. Campbell, James Slaughter *Peter's Instructions to Husbands in 1 Peter 3:7*, 181-82]

Weaker doesn't refer to character or intellect. Doesn't mean inferior. She is weaker physically & often (not always) emotionally. (that's the interpretation t/Reformer Martin Luther took on this passage).

This is a creative difference, not a creative defect!

b. Peter uses a word only found here in the NT

It's an adjective that agrees with the words vessel and weaker. She is the woman. Literally, she is feminine (not masculine). Creative difference.

c. What happened to chivalry?

Chivalry was a term related to the medieval institution of knighthood. It's associated w/ideals of knightly virtues, honor & courtly love. The word is derived from the French word *chevalier*, indicating one who rides a horse.

Cf. "My knight in shining armor." Believed in the honor of God, cause of the innocent, and the gentle protection and care of women.

GEN 2:23 **And the man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."**

(1) Men are to be the protectors of woman

I'm expected to throw my body in front of t/speeding train or hungry bear.

Yet, today, chivalry is dead and women are masculine.

In 1999 a woman named "Sunshine" beat up a man named "mike" in a cage fight in Mesa, AZ.

Woman powerlifters who pump themselves full of male testosterone in order to lift weights that rival that of their male counterparts.

There seems to be something strangely perverse about it all. Something unnatural. It was recognized to be so until rather recently.

2. Isn't it interesting that as a society deviates from Christianity things turn upside down?

Right becomes wrong and wrong becomes right. Night/day. Abortion is a good thing, even a Constitutional right. Limiting sex & marriage to a man & woman is considered bigotry by humanists. Moral absolutes are taboo. Innocence of childhood is stripped away. Profanity is normal. Men are emasculated & women are masculinized.

We have to remember that ==>

24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, 29 that no man should boast before God. 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." [1 Corinthians 1:24-31]

God esteems weakness (humility). God is pleased to bestow honor and blessing on weaker vessels.

Matthew 5:3-5 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

1 Corinthians 12:22-23 22 On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; 23 and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor . . .

2 Cor. 11:29 + 12:10 {cite}

No dishonor in being the weaker of two vessels. The dishonor comes when we don't recognize it.

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D. Honor her Conversion - "Grant her honor as a co-heir"

... and grant her honor as a co-heir of the grace of life ...

Probably appositional, "the grace that is life." Eschatological life.

Aristotle taught that women were inferior to men in every way, except sexually. Aristotelean thought in this regard dominated Greco-Roman culture. Peter is arguing for their equality.

Galatians 3:28 **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

“Look at life for women before Christ. Classical scholars used to muse about ‘the glory that was Greece,’ but ancient Greece was glorious neither for slaves nor those near-slaves known as wives. An Athenian wife was not allowed to eat with her husband’s guests nor leave the house without male escort. Spartan women probably had more freedom, but were still kept ‘under lock and key’ according to the second-century biographer Plutarch. Greek men viewed women as inferior from birth (as in China today, baby girls suffered infanticide far more often than boys) and into adulthood. The great fifth-century dramatist Aeschylus had his chorus declare about women, ‘Evil are they and guileful of purpose, with impure hearts.’ Later, in Rome, husbands could divorce wives who went outside without a veil and could kill them for committing adultery. The historian Tacitus wrote that women were by nature cruel, and the humorist Juvenal thought that women were so low that ‘there is nothing a woman will not permit herself to do. Those customs and attitudes changed in Greece and Rome with the coming of Christianity.” [Marvin Olasky, “World Magazine,” July 19, 2003]

In Peter's day, husbands were generally uninterested in their wives as objects of friendship. They were housekeepers and bearers of legitimate children.

Wives share with their believing husbands the great salvation we saw in 1:3-9 {cite}.

Cf. the related word κληρονομία used in 1:4.

1. Grant her honor!

a. τιμή honor in the sense of precious or weighty

Homer, the ancient Greek author (not Simpson) said, "The greater the cost of the gift, the more the honor." [cited in Swindoll, 108]

Husbands are to respond to wife in such a way that deems her precious. Precious! She is praiseworthy in his sight. No arrogance, no overbearing attitude, no air of superiority, no intimidation. He is not to be rude, patronizing, or contemptuous. Grant her honor. Praise her in private and before others.

If you do that, if you

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1. Happy Consequence - "So that your prayers be not hindered"

a. This is referring to the prayers of the husband, not the wife

This exhortation bookends the vocative. Husbands ---- your prayers.

Husbands, likewise, live with [your wives] according to knowledge, as with a weaker vessel—since she is the woman—and grant her honor as a co-heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers might not be hindered.

b. I don't know about you, but I want God to hear me

I want the pleasure of his face to shine on me.

The very fact that Peter warns us ==>

... so that your prayers might not be hindered.

Means that this will happen if we don't treat our wives w/honor.

If we don't ==>

A. Hear the Call

B. Heed the Command

C. Have Consideration

D. Honor her Conversion

Then there won't be a ==>

1. Happy Consequence

God won't hear us. Our prayers will literally be cut-off or interrupted. The word is ἐγκόπτω "Used of soldiers digging trenches to slow a pursuing army."

Psalm 66:18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;
1 Peter 3:12 “For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,
And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who
do evil.”

The Pleasure of God's Face . . .

{Wayne Grudem article}

Consistent communion with Christ is a consequence of caring for your
wife with consideration as God's co-equal creation.

"Take heed of your wife or God won't take heed of you."