

GIVE HONOR TO THE WOMAN

I Peter 3:7

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Intro: THE SELF-ESTEEM PROBLEM

- A. God commands us "...not to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God *who gives us all things richly to enjoy.*" I Tim 6:17
 - 1. God wants us to enjoy life and find pleasure from obeying Him.
 - 2. Paul commands us to "*rejoice always, again I say rejoice!*" Phil 4:4
- B. Many Christians find it difficult to be joyful. Depression, low self-esteem, and discouragement are too commonplace.
 - 1. Women experience feelings of low self-esteem about being women more than men do about being men.
 - 2. Why is there a "gender gap" of as much as 5 to 1?
- C. Unique gender needs seem instrumental here.
 - 1. Male – "failure in reaching goals"
 - 2. Female – "feedback from the closest circle of family/friends in the last few days"
- a. Memorize this, men --- it explains so much of the "mystery."
 - b. When a woman in your life seems irritable or upset, ask, "Have I (or anyone in the family, friends, or co-workers) said something to put her down recently?"
 - c. This will help you to understand a woman's mood-shifts better.
 - d. If a man will just reflect on the lowest periods of his life, then he'll begin to understand how a woman can feel in only a few hours.

I. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

- A. **The solution:** two basic points from **I Peter 3:7**
 - 1. Husbands are to be *understanding and sympathetic* to their wives.
 - 2. Husbands need to demonstrate that they *honor* their wives.
- B. Doing these two things will solve the fundamental problem in female self-esteem. With rare exception, if the wife is unhappy about who she is, the husband has failed in his role to properly honor and respect her!!!
- C. Some feminists are offended by I Peter 3:6 where the wife is to *call her husband "lord."* The idea is to show **deep respect and look up to her husband**.
 - 1. "*Mutual admiration society*" --- Notice the "likewise" in I Peter 3:7. The husband is also to **esteem and look up to his wife!**
 - 2. With rules about authority, headship, and submission come rules about one's

attitude that must accompany a husband's authority.

3. Ideally, both should feel they got better than they deserved.
- D. To "dwell with them according to knowledge" (vs 7), husbands must cultivate a sympathetic spirit and *considerately* "live with your wives in an understanding way."
1. Gary Smalley says: "Men are like buffalos and women are like butterflies." Emotionally, a man must be careful not to run over his wife!
 2. Ex. The wife is hurt and needs comfort, but the husband belittles her for "being too sensitive." The Bible tells him, "as you assert your authority, do so in an understanding way."
 3. **Give her your shoulder, not your mouth!** When she hurts, use compassion and understanding! Answer *feeling with feeling, not with fact!!*
- E. To "give honor unto the wife as the weaker vessel" (vs 7) is critical.
1. This needs constant effort. Her sense of who and what she is can be lost in a few days if it is not reinforced.
 2. NOT RECOMMENDED: "Honey, I told you when I married you I loved you, and if I change my mind I will let you know!!"
 3. How is the woman "weaker" or more fragile?
 - a) She is emotionally the more sensitive and intuitive which enables her to carry out her GOD-given roles.
 - b) GOD "formed" man from the dust (Gen 2:7) -- the same word used for shaping clay pots and utensils. In contrast, GOD "fashioned" the woman -- an artistic term used by skilled craftsmen when sculpting the most intricate items in the temple.
 - c) What is displayed in your hutch with lights and honor? Vessels that are fragile or indestructible? (Ever see an iron skillet in a curio cabinet?)
- F. The phrase "heirs together of the grace of life" (vs 7) may simply be the happy home that God wanted for us, rather than just salvation.
1. A home in turmoil and an unhappy wife means little "grace."
 2. Honoring your bride will lessen the tension and change the tone.
 3. If the attitude is right, the husband's "prayers will not be hindered."

II. SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- A. **Tell her often** how much you love & appreciate her! ***Be creative!***
1. Make her feel valued and special every day if possible, not just on her birthday or Mother's Day. **Be specific:** "Our kids are surely blessed to have a mother like you. You take such good care of them!"
 2. Illustration: "Honey, do you like my dress?" Good answer: "That dress isn't half as good looking as you are!" Better answer: "That dress is beautiful, but I like what's in it a whole better!"
- B. **Tell others!!**
1. Before friends say, "This is my wife and she's all mine!" (Use continual positive reinforcement. What you told her three weeks ago is gone!)

2. Lavish praise and appreciation on your mother-in-law. Your wife will love the “sideways compliments”!
3. Some women only survive because friends or bosses tell them how valued they are. For others, the “paycheck” is their only validation. But GOD wants this honor and esteem to come from the **husband!!**
4. The verbal intimacy in the Song of Solomon provides the husband with a pattern to follow!!

C. Change your attitude if necessary!

1. If you think your wife “can’t handle it” or is “a space cadet,” it will be extremely difficult to honor her!!
2. **Watch sarcastic put-downs!**
Give her the benefit of the doubt. (Ex. She’s not nosey--just inquisitive!!)
3. **Don’t bark orders at her!** James Dobson says:
“A man may call his wife or daughter stupid or dumb and not mean it. The sad part is, a woman accepts and believes what her husband and father tell her.”
4. **Remember non-verbal disrespectful judgments.**
Rolling your eyes at her (or worse, in front of others) wounds her deeply.
5. **Gifts are important.**
 - a. “The little things mean a lot!”
 - b. The price is not important but the message *behind* the gift!
 - c. Buy her what she wants, not what you want or want her to have!
 - d. Random acts of kindness say, “You are important to me!!”
6. **Watch comparisons!**
 - a. Don’t compare her unfavorably to your mother or first wife. Accept and love her as she is!!
 - b. If you are always bragging on other women, she will be thinking, “What about me?”
 - c. Be careful not to make her feel “taken for granted!”

CONCLUSION:

- A. Men feel this is a “one sided” lesson. The lesson is for the woman this time and not the reverse. However, the woman as “the helper suitable” is literally “the answer” to the man.
- B. If you honor your wife and love her the way she needs to be loved, she will respond! GOD built her to be that way!!
- C. Remember, much of a woman’s self-esteem is based on the **positive feedback** she receives “from the closest circle of family and friends in the last few days.”

HONORING THE WOMAN

(Thoughts on I Peter 3:7)

Do you agree that this is a neglected emphasis in our teaching today?

How many lessons have you heard on “Wives, be in subjection to your husbands” versus “Husbands, honor your wives?”

How can we best restore proper balance?

Gary Smalley, in his book If Only He Knew, claims that *almost all marital problems can be traced back to the man not loving his wife like Christ loved the church.*

What is your reaction to this? Is this fair?

Can you think of a reason why men should feel thrilled about this?

Women are designed as “responders”. How they treat us is often a mirror image of how they *perceive* we treat and feel about them. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Where does your wife feel that she fits into your priorities?

Do you give your wife the benefit of the doubt and put her actions in the best light possible as a way to show love?

Will you make a commitment to pray more prayers privately and publicly, thanking the LORD for the important role that women play in the church and in the home?

To most women, the “little things are the big things.” Think of some little things you can do that will help your wife/daughters to feel loved and cherished.