

# “Husbands, likewise...”

## 1 Peter 3:7

**Introduction** – Wives have been instructed to submit to their own husbands. This submission is to be an active work of the wife of deference, honor, respect, and for the sake of the Lord. But this does not presuppose that she is to live under a tyrant. There are more choices in the family government than simply tyranny or anarchy. Both the husband and the wife, looking to Christ for grace and as an example, seek to fulfill their roles before the Lord by living ‘likewise’, that is, in the same way they see Christ lived – and died.

**Keep in Mind** – As other passages make very clear, a husband cannot be silent about Jesus Christ.

**Abdication** – The central problem in our society today is the neglect of husbands in their duties. If we do not see recovery of godly family government, there will be no lasting recovery of civil or church government. And we will never see a lasting change in the family government until husbands repent.

**Always Preaching Christ** – What have we taught our wives and children? He is either teaching the truth or lies about Jesus Christ, but because of his office, he cannot stop teaching. Is Jesus Christ faithful? Does Jesus Christ sacrifice Himself with unconditional love for His Bride? A husband’s life answers these questions every day.

**“Husbands, likewise...”** – Husbands are not instructed to ‘submit likewise’, but they are told to imitate Christ ‘likewise’. In fact, everything commanded of the husband in this verse, Jesus Christ has done perfectly towards His Bride. And the acts of understanding, honoring, and reigning with His Bride have come at His great personal sacrifice and initiation.

**With Understanding** – It is almost proverbial, how men are known for misunderstanding their wives. But this does not give us license to laugh it off as grist for a good sit-com. It is another indication of our rampant abdication. This short phrase basically covers all the other teachings in scripture as to how a husband is to live. He must know his wife and what it means that she is his wife, he must know what it means that he is her husband, and he must know these things in light of the whole counsel of God. The Bible begins and ends with a marriage, and husbands must read the Word from Genesis to Revelation with an eye to their duties.

**The Weaker Vessel** – Men tend to despise weakness. Immaturity points to this verse to prove that women are weaker than men and then make cute comments. Tyranny uses the truth of this statement to dishonor and abuse women. But a man who serves the Lord Jesus Christ understands that just because a four-dollar hammer can destroy a priceless painting, it does not follow that the former is more virtuous.

**Giving Honor as to the Weaker Vessel** – Men filled with the Spirit are called to honor their wives as the weaker vessel.

Whenever they notice weakness, they are to honor her more. There is to be no competition with your wives, nor exploitation of your strength. And there is no such thing as only ‘honoring her in your heart’. It must show itself in the day to day trifles. This is where Christian manners, customs and common courtesy must be recovered in our society. And it must start with how a man treats his wife.

**Coheirs** – First, this means there is no status change for those who are in Christ due to gender (Gal 3:28-29). She is your sister in Christ, and so you must honor her as one of the members of ‘the royal priesthood’ (1 Pet 2:9). She was not made your ‘helper’ to do anything less than co-reign with you in your calling. Christian husbands are called to take dominion of the earth, and they are called to depend upon their wives to do so alongside of them.

**Hindered Prayers** – Prayer does help us live right. But notice, this passage teaches us that living right helps us pray. Malachi 2:13ff emphasizes this. It doesn’t matter how many tears you pour out before the Lord (men do love to pray), God remembers that He was a Witness at your wedding. If you deal with her in any treacherous manner (adulterer, mental adulterer, abusive, neglectful) God does not listen to you. Your disobedience is never excused because of your sincerity. Your sin is forgiven in repentance and faith. Your disobedience is not excused because you forgot your duties. Your forgetfulness is simply another sin to confess.

**Husbands and Wives (Lines of Submission, Final Authority)** – It may be important to look at all of vv 1-7 together for a moment. As we move from instructions to wives and then to husbands, we see lines of submission, not authority, emphasized. The most important question to be asked is not ‘am I in authority where I should be’, but ‘am I submitting where I should be’.

**Deputized Authority** – Because God is the only ultimate authority, there are times that citizens, slaves, and wives, are required to disobey their local authority. For a wife, this means that there are times when she must turn to the civil or church government, even if it means disobeying her husband’s wishes. “Chaste conduct” requires such, because a wife is in submission to God. In addition, a husband who understands why God gave him a wife, nurtures and pastors her (1 Cor 14:35, 2 Tim 2:15) in such a way that she becomes his greatest advisor, not his chattel-servant.

**Quit You Like Men** (1 Cor 16:13) - Husbands, be men. If you have been knocked down, by the grace of God, get up. Confess your sin, confess your pride, confess to your wife, and start leading her in righteousness. Only by the grace of God, but by the grace of God, you can have a glorious marriage, godly offspring, and covenant blessings to a thousand generations.

*Dave Hatcher – January 20, 2002*