

Submission and Headship 1 Peter 3:7

7 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.

Austin began his sermon on this passage with an in-depth and detailed explanation of the biblical concept of headship as it pertains to the husband and wife relationship. This is a very important discussion because we live in a day and culture where most people reject the idea of headship in almost every area of life, and in marriage in particular.

We should be quick to acknowledge that the idea of headship has been tainted by abusive headship in almost every area of life: politics, religion, work, education, and the home. Many people reject headship because they do not wish to be victimized or victimizers as a result of the poor exercise of headship.

The desire to be rid of abuse is right and good. We should all be passionate to make that desire become a reality. But just because headship is abused in a fallen world does not mean that headship is bad. In fact, the key fact about the goodness of headship goes to the point of where God ordained it in the creation story. God established the husband as the head of the wife *before* sin had entered the world and tainted the marriage relationship. When the New Testament apostles speak of the husband as head, what they are giving is a command to go back to the goodness of creation *before the fall* and to lead the marriage in a good and perfect sort of way.

The proper Christian response to doubts about the headship of husbands should not be to *reject* something that God created as right and good. Rather, Christians should live out our calling in Jesus Christ to *redeem* that which is fallen so that it can once again be *restored* to its place as a good gift to men and women.

The Christian idea of headship is exemplified in Jesus Christ's relationship with the church. Jesus Christ leads a church in such a way that he serves her, sacrifices his life for her, and does all things for her good. In other words, Christ's headship and his submission are not mutually exclusive and neither are a husband's.

We have spoken a lot about the idea of submission, since that is the theme not just of this verse, but of the entire passage in which 1 Peter 3:7 sits. Submission is a key to living a Christian life in *every* sphere of influence. But nowhere is submission more in view than in marriage. A marriage honors Christ when both man and woman are submitting their own lives for the good of the other.

Austin gives us 5 keys from 1 Peter 3:7 for a Christian husband to faithfully live out the principle of submission in marriage.

- 1) Understanding that the leadership of his marriage is not for his glory but for his wife's.
- 2) Seeing his wife's needs through her eyes.
- 3) Viewing and treating his wife as the most precious entity in his life outside of God.
- 4) Realizing that his wife has the same standing before God that he does.
- 5) Understanding that how he treats his wife necessarily affects his relationship with God.

Discussion Questions

- **In what ways has the concept of headship been abused?**
- **How do you understand the way that headship is supposed to function within a marriage?**
- **Why do you think this is so controversial?**
- **How does a proper Christian doctrine of headship protect against abuse?**
- **What is servant leadership and what is it not?**
- **Husbands- how have been challenged to serve your wife through this message?**
- **Husbands- how has God used marriage to help conquer your ego?**
- **Wives- how can your status as "the weaker vessel" be translated into Biblical strength?**
- **Singles- what lessons from 1 Peter 3:7 do you think help you to live more Christ-like as a man or woman?**
- **What do you think is meant in 1 Peter 3:7 when it says "so that your prayers will not be hindered?"**