

1 Peter 3:7

by John Gill

The sermon emphasizes the biblical responsibilities of husbands towards their wives, highlighting the importance of honor, knowledge, and shared spiritual inheritance.

Scripture: Proverbs 18:22, Malachi 2:14, 1 Corinthians 7:3, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 5:25, Colossians 3:19, 1 Thessalonians 4:4, 1 Timothy 5:8, Hebrews 13:4, 1 Peter 3:7

Topics: "Marriage", "Spiritual Leadership"

Description

John Gill emphasizes the importance of husbands dwelling with their wives in a manner that honors and respects them, highlighting the need for understanding and fulfilling marital duties according to knowledge of both the Gospel and natural law. He explains that husbands should treat their wives as the 'weaker vessel,' providing care and support, and recognizing their equal status as heirs of grace and eternal life. Gill warns that neglecting these responsibilities can hinder prayers and spiritual unity within the family, urging husbands to foster a loving and respectful environment to ensure their prayers are effective.

Transcript

Ver. 7. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them,.... "With your wives", as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; which not only included dwelling together in the same house, and bedding together in the same bed, but the whole of conjugal conversation, and all the offices and duties incumbent on men in a married state:

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, and the Christian dispensation, which no ways breaks in upon, but strengthens and encourages to the observance of things belonging to natural religion, and civil life; and according to that superior knowledge of things, which, generally speaking, men have to women; as also wisely, prudently, becoming their characters as men and Christians:

particularly giving honour to the wife; by speaking well of her, and respectfully to her, and by deeds as well as words; not only by clothing her in a decent and becoming manner, suitable to her station; but by providing everything honest and comely for her, food and raiment, a suitable maintenance, all the necessaries, conveniences, and delights of life, that are laudable and proper; in which sense the word honour is used in 1Ti 5:3 and this was agreeably to the doctrine of the Jews {q}, who say,

"let a man always take care wtva dwbkb, "of the glory of his wife"; for there is no blessing found in a man's house, but for the sake of his wife, as it is said, Ge 12:16 "and he entreated Abraham well for her sake": and Rabba used to say to the citizens, wkyyvnl wryqwa, "honour your wives", that ye may be rich."

And indeed this is what they promised in their marriage contract, which runs thus {r}:

"be thou unto me for a wife, according to the law of Moses and Israel, and I, by the word of heaven, or God, will worship, ryqwaw, "and honour", and nourish, and take care of thee, according to the custom of the Jews, who worship, and "honour", and nourish, and take care of their wives."

As unto the weaker vessel; so in 1Th 4:4 the wife is called a vessel, See Gill on "1Th 4:4", and here "the weaker"; being so for the most part, both as to strength of body, and endowments of mind; and therefore to be used gently and tenderly, and not be treated with neglect and contempt, or with inhumanity and severity; but as, in every state and condition, the strong are to bear the infirmities of the weak; so a man should bear with, and accommodate himself to the infirmities of his wife, and hide them as much as he can, and not expose them, nor despise her on account of them. It is a saying of the Jews {s},

"if thy wife be short of stature, bow thyself, and whisper to her."

The meaning of the proverb is, that he ought to suit himself to her capacity and weakness:

and as being heirs together of the grace of life; not of a natural life, and the good things of it; though husbands and wives partake of the same kind of life, and have a right unto, and share in the same necessaries of life; so Adam and Eve were partakers of the same life, and sharers of the same benefits; and which is a reason indeed why they ought to live lovingly together: but something more is intended; not the external gifts of the Spirit, which, unless in some few instances, are bestowed on men, and not on women; nor the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which are the means of grace and life; though men and women, called by grace, have an equal right to them, and enjoy them; see Ga 3:28 but grace here, and glory hereafter, are here meant. Some copies, as the Alexandrian, and others, read, "heirs together of the manifold grace of life"; God's own people, without any difference as to sex, as men and women, equally share in grace, as it signifies the love and favour of God; which is the same to all the objects, as to the date of it, which is from everlasting, one not being loved before another; and as to the quality of it, which is free, sovereign, special, discriminating and unchangeable, one being loved not with one sort of love, another with another; and as to the quantity of it, it not admitting of more or less; and as to the duration, which is for ever: and so they are heirs of it, as it denotes the blessings of grace; being equally heirs of, and sharers in electing, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace: and as it may intend the internal graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love; which as to their principles are the same in all the saints, though different as to the degree of the exercise of them: and which may be called "the grace of life"; or "living grace", as some copies and the Complutensian edition read, and so the Arabic version, because by it men and women, who were dead in trespasses and sins, are quickened; and in distinction to counterfeit grace, which differs as much from true grace, as the picture of a man from a living man; and because it lives for ever, and never dies, and gives a meetness for eternal life, which it springs up to, issues in, and is inseparably connected with. Moreover, by it may be meant eternal life and salvation, of which the saints, without any difference as to sex, are heirs of: so some copies read, "heirs of manifold grace, and life"; by the former, meaning grace here, and by the latter, glory hereafter; which is a life of vision of God, and uninterrupted communion with him; of perfection and pleasure, and which will last for ever; and may be called

the grace of life, because it is the free gift of God's grace: and agreeably the Syriac version renders it, "the gift of eternal life"; and the Ethiopic version, glorious life: and this is represented as an inheritance, being what belongs only to the children; and which they have not by their own works, as an acquisition of theirs, but by the free grace of their heavenly Father, and as his gift and bequest unto them. Now all the saints, of whatever state, condition, or sex, are equally heirs of this inheritance; for there is but one inheritance, one kingdom, one crown of glory, which all shall enjoy; and whatever disparity there may be, particularly between husband and wife, in their natural relation, there is none in the things of grace, and with regard to the kingdom of glory; and which is an argument why husbands should dwell peaceably and comfortably with their wives, and give all due honour to them, since they are upon a par in spiritual things, there being neither male nor female in Christ Jesus, and because they are now joint heirs of, and shall equally share in eternal life and happiness.

That your prayers be not hindered: as they would be were they not to dwell together; or should not the husband give honour to his wife, and take care of her as he ought to do: hence would arise strifes and quarrels, when they could not cordially, and to edification, join together in prayer; nor would such prayers, put up in wrath, be acceptable unto God, who requires that men should lift up holy hands everywhere, whether in public, or in private, in God's house, or in their own houses, without wrath and doubting. From hence we may observe, that family prayer is a duty incumbent on professors of religion, and great care should be taken that it be not neglected and hindered.

{q} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 59. 1. & Sepher Musar apud Drusium in loc. {r} Apud. Buxtorf. Chald. Gram. p. 389. {s} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 59. 1.

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