



# KING'S CHAPEL

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## Daily Devotional - 1 Peter Study

Week 4 - Day 4

### Approaching God

**Read Isaiah 55:10-11** - *As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*

**Prayer:** “Father I am grateful today that though your Word is sometimes difficult to understand and apply, it also powerful and effective. Thank you for the many ways your Word and Spirit have produced fruitfulness in my life both in ways I can recognize, and ways I cannot. Your word brings life, makes things new, reshapes, redeems, cleanses, and purifies. Lord, do that with my thoughts, emotions, and deep desires today, according to your great purposes for me. Amen.”

### Husbands & Wives - Part 4

Yesterday, you learned that God has assigned to husbands the marital role of headship, meaning leadership or authority; and to wives the role of submission, meaning that they are to cooperate with and follow their husband's leadership. These roles are a departure from the sinful pattern of conflict (*rule* and *desire*) recorded in Genesis 3:16. They are, in fact, a return to the harmony inherent in the creation order of leader and helper, which is made possible again in Christians by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The wife's role of submission does not imply that she is less valuable than her husband since she voluntarily submits to him as one equal to another, just as Christ submitted to the Father. And just as Christ was exalted for His submission, so husbands are to give their wives greater honor. Today you'll take a closer look at a husband's primary responsibility concerning his wife – love. Love is the key measure of a husband's headship.

### Bible Reading & Meditation

**1 Peter 3:7 (NLT)** - *In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.*

**Ephesians 5:25-33** - **25** *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.*

**Matthew 20:20-28** - **20** *Then the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus with her sons. She knelt respectfully to ask a favor. 21 “What is your request?” he asked. She replied, “In your Kingdom, please let my two sons sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left.” 22 But Jesus answered by saying to them, “You don't know what*

*you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink?" "Oh yes," they replied, "we are able!" 23 Jesus told them, "You will indeed drink from my bitter cup. But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. My Father has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen." 24 When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. 25 But Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. 26 But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. 28 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

## **Read: The Role of Husbands: Servant Love - God Designed Marriage Part 4**

Today we are examining what it means for a husband to bear his role of headship well. To answer this, let's turn first to Jesus' teaching on the right use of authority in Matthew 20:20-28. In this passage, the mother of James and John brought her boys to ask a favor of Jesus: They wanted to sit at His left and right hands in His kingdom. Basically, they were asking for the places of highest honor and authority, believing they were worthy of that position (v. 22). When the rest of the disciples caught wind of this, they were naturally angry. Imagine how you would feel if you were one of those ten, knowing that James and John had been secretly maneuvering to gain authority over you. This could have created a divide among the disciples, but Jesus used the occasion to teach His disciples how authority should be wielded among His followers. First, he singled out the bad example of the Gentiles, meaning the Romans who ruled over the Jews at this time, *"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them"* (v. 25). The verb translated *lord it over* in this verse literally means to *subject by force*. The Romans exercised dominion and authority by creating fear of their power by force of arms. Jesus said this is not how authority should be used among His followers. He used Himself as an example of how Christians should wield authority, *"...the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve..."* (v. 28). In other words, the person holding authority must exercise that authority as a servant-leader who inspires those who follow, not by using force or fear.

Let's apply this principle to a husband's headship in marriage: He must exercise his authority with a servant's attitude toward his wife and by leading her in such a way that inspires her trust. He must never attempt to force her submission by making her afraid of emotional or physical consequences. He should not be defensive about his position or aggressive in exerting control. He should lead with love, following the example of Christ's loving leadership of His church. Paul describes Christ's love for the church this way: *"Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her...that he might present the church to himself in splendor."* Eph 5:25

Using Christ's example, Paul is teaching husbands that love for one's wife is essentially an act of self-sacrifice motivated by a desire to sanctify her. It is a commitment to her based on the will of God which, though it is not based on emotion, is often supported by emotion. It is primarily oriented around her spiritual benefit, nourishing and edifying her. And, just as a man gains personal benefit from caring for his own body, so also husbands usually gain an indirect benefit by devotedly caring for their wives (5:28-29). But regardless of personal benefit, *Christ-like love for one's wife is the essence of a man's husbandly duty: It is how he fulfills his role as head in marriage.* The right and spiritual exercise of his authority in marriage is a life of servant-leadership demonstrated by Christ-like love in action. Men, do you believe this? Do you embrace it? Think of your wife (or future wife) and the quality of your love for her. Are you committed to loving your wife

as Christ loves His church, setting aside your own needs in devotion to her spiritual benefit? Will you lead with love in such a compelling way that it inspires her trust and submission?

If so, how will you put love into action? This all sounds very theoretical so far, doesn't it? For a start, Peter gave you a practical hint when he advised husbands to "...live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel..." (1 Peter 3:7). Peter's point about living in an understanding way (literally, *according to knowledge* in the original language) is that husbands must be sensitive to the unique nature and needs of one's wife. Husbands can so easily treat their wives with a contemptuous disregard for her needs. Such disdain belittles her and chills her trust in you; but sensitivity of words and actions honors her as the unique treasure that she is, warming her companionship and devotion to your loving leadership. Living with her in an understanding way means that a man should never speak to or treat his wife as he would another man. It also means that he will gladly provide the tangible reminders of esteem and devotion that she occasionally needs – the note, the flowers, the date, and the earnest reminders that "You're on my mind. I'm yours alone. I'll never leave you."

But what if you no longer feel love for your wife? The first answer to that question is, "Are you willing to love your wife?" Jesus commanded that we love even our enemies. How is this possible? Remember, love is primarily a choice, a commitment based on the will of God that is put into action. So it is possible to choose to love one's wife, even though the *feelings* of love are absent. This is an example of unconditional love. No matter what has happened between you that may have cooled your attraction to her, no matter how undeserving she may be of your love, you can still choose to love her. Often, and thankfully, feelings of love return, and marriages can be rebuilt from ashes when two spouses are committed to loving one another. But what motivates your willingness to love your wife? Your love for God. What empowers your love? The grace of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Wives, what if you no longer feel loved by your husband? What if he doesn't live with you in an understanding way? If his words or actions have broken down your sense of trust so that you no longer feel emotionally safe being open with him? The briefest of answers are first, to keep yourself safe. God never intended you to be exposed to abuse. And secondly, if abuse is not in the picture, don't respond by resisting his leadership in your home. Consider this: just as Christ calls a husband to love a difficult wife unconditionally, so He calls a wife to submit to a difficult husband unconditionally. Why would you do this? For the love of God. How could you do this? By the power of the indwelling Spirit.

Husbands and wives, offering unconditional love or submission may sound counter-intuitive, but conditional love never created submission in one's wife, nor has conditional submission ever created love in one's husband. He has given you His Spirit. He has freed you from sin by Christ's work on the cross, so that by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in you, you can have power to obey even when it doesn't seem likely to "pay off" in your marriage.

*"Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them"* (Colossians 3:19). No exceptions, men. You are the servant-leader who sets the tone in your marriage. Inspire her trust by honoring her. Win her submission with Christ-like love. Treat her with such understanding that proves you value her unique nature just as she is.

*Today's reading was adapted from "The Journey" discipleship curriculum produced by Perimeter Church*

## Questions for Study

- Look at the passage in the Matthew 20, how does Jesus describe a wrong use of authority? How does Jesus' teaching in this passage apply to a husband's role in marriage?
- According to the passage in Ephesians 5:25-33, what are the two examples Paul gives for how a husband should love his wife? If married, what might this look like in your marriage? Where does the power come from for husbands and wives to love one another the way the bible describes?
- According to our passage in 1 Peter, how should husbands treat their wives? What does that look like when you pull all of our passages together?

## Close in Prayer

Husbands, don't hinder your prayers by failing to honor your wife (in action and attitude) as a fellow heir of eternal life. Pray that God would show you specifically what it looks like to love your wife with sacrificial, servant leadership. To go first in sacrifice and serving. Wives, ask God to help you submit to your husband in a God-honoring way.