**1 Peter 3:1-7 Serving in Marriage**

This morning I’ll be looking at how Peter lays out the biblical context for what our marriages look like in these passages.

In the previous weeks, Peter started a “birds eye view” of the context of living out our relationships with our government, then narrows it down to the relationships we have with our master’s (bosses), and now we are finally coming into the home.

We’ll be reading verse by verse through these passages; There is so much to be said in these few verses, but I will do my best to keep in tune with time and pray that the Holy Spirit does the work with what is talked about this morning. (Pray)

The key to understanding the context of these passages is found in 1 Peter 2:21-25 “21For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 24He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 25For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”

Prior to this, as we saw in weeks past, Peter has been talking about serving (in work, and government).

 Our service is not found in the “doing” but in response to what was done for us

 So, why do we follow in his footsteps? Because we have been reclaimed by our Shepherd.

 We should have been reviled, we should have suffered, and ultimately rejected.

 But as verse 24 tells us, **He** bore our sins for us, so that we might live, should we believe.

And in our belief we walk in Christs footsteps as a natural outpouring and understanding of the gospel, to which Peter describes in the relationships in our community, work, and now as we’ll see, marriage.

Now, I probably don’t need to tell you, biologically, God made men and women very differently. Specifically, advances in science have allowed us windows into the inner workings of the male/female brain. This basically shows the functional image of how a male (left) and female (right) brain fires for a set of tasks. What to take note here: notice that the male brain has very little crossover to the other side, while the female brain has a ton of overlap from the left vs. right brain. An easy way to think of this is like this: Men operate with “boxes”; very good and efficient with one thing at a time. We also have a “nothing” box, so gals, when you ask us what we are thinking about and we say “nothing” it’s very true. Women can multitask and tap into other sensory areas of the brain like nobody’s business. This is also why women can see things differently (Chromalisk/Magenta; guys just see pink).

So God has definitively made us unique from one another and we need to practically keep that in mind in our relationships with one another.

Keep this in mind as well: does our western view of marriage work?

Statistics of marriage in the U.S., divorce rates (University of Minnesota Historical and Sociological Dept. as of 2015):

Percent ever divorced: 22% Women, 21% Men

Projected divorce rate: (estimation of likelihood, cohorts at certain time periods): currently 52.7% averaged

 Currently a projected falling number; Why? Less people getting married in the first place

Overall: something is broken in our view of marriage. Where did this brokenness begin? Genesis 3 in the partaking of the forbidden fruit. Man and Wife lived in harmony until sin and pride entered into the world.

Single folks: as we walk through these passages today, don’t check out on this. Peter gives us a glimpse into what should be sought after in a spouse and the themes of relationship building, not just when we’re married.

1 Peter 3:1 “Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives,”

 “likewise” reference to previous examples and to what we just looked at in 2:21-25, service/submission

 “be subject to your own husbands”: there it is! Fella’s here’s your ammunition! (wrong context).

-actually, this passage gets grossly misused and abused than many others in scripture (slavery vs. submission)

-Peter is not referring to wives being slaves to your husbands (“I want my dinner on the table”, etc)

-again, the reference is to demonstrate submission toward your husband; as seen in previous examples of submission towards those who govern you, your boss, etc. This doesn’t mean that he walks all over you, that’s not biblical manhood. Submission is respecting the role of the husband.

-submission is the key here. Peter is painting a picture of a gospel centered woman who walks in the footsteps of Christ; who was submissive to the will of his father and service of others. Christ cried tears of blood with worry about what he knew needed to happen on the cross, but he submitted to the will of the Father because he had faith in God and intimately knew him.

-While submission to the husband exists, in this example, women must understand that submission to God is ultimate

-Ladies, in circumstances where you are asked to act outside what God would want for you, submission to the Lord is the default; Your first submission is to Christ, lovingly discouraging the context/request made by your husband and always pointing back to why you are refusing (it’s outside of God’s will).

“so that if some do not obey the word they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives”

-this can be in reference to relationships where the spouse is not a believer, or those who are in blatant disobedience to the Lord

-Being won in this case, does not mean that your actions alone are going to win them over for Christ, but rather conduct is blameless and demands attention towards the gospel

- Practically: guys, does nagging/badgering help? It may get you off your butt to get the job done, but you bet there is resentment.

-This resentment breeds strife and ultimately does nothing to point towards the grace that was given towards us.

-so what works better?

 1 Peter 3:2 “when they see your respectful and pure conduct.”

-There is something to be said about a wife who uses actions of grace and submission to lovingly encourage her husband. It flies in the face of what would be the norm (argumentativeness to achieve what one wants). Now, there can be a disjoin when only one person understands the gospel and its application here. But a servant heart can demonstrate more than words when you ladies are crying out for help around the house.

-This can be a very powerful thing; this is the setting of the tone of the house

-From a guys’ perspective: I can be very quickly disarmed by Abbie when I truly see all that she does for me, the kids, and beyond. Because, let’s be honest, a guy’s input is pretty minimal. Take grilling get-togethers for example: guy’s burn some meat on a grill and the spouse does everything else. Way to go dude!

-The Servants heart speaks volumes. The hospitality gifting of women.

-Peter goes on to explain…

1 Peter 3:3-4 “Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— 4but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.”

 -Ladies, true beauty lies from the imperishable beauty with which God created you with.

-Our culture has tried to shift that beauty to that of the external and constantly make you feel not good enough

-Facebook, magazines: skinnier the better; if you don’t look perfect, here are $100’s of makeup options to get you there.

-Also, as a subtle power play to gain a sense of superiority over men; guys are dumb. We fall into the trap of this “beauty” and become ensnared to it. We can also be lead astray by it. (Proverbs 7: temptress)

-But, the hidden woman (her soul, spirit) is what speaks louder than any of these external things. Some of you may have even known, or live with, a woman of God who exemplified this. (Sue and Mark from Redeemer, glioblastoma; wisdom and unshakable love for the Lord).

1 Peter 3:5-6 “For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands,”

-Hope in God; not in your circumstances, your husband, your children or the other material “hopes” of the world. These are good things, pray for them, that they may know God as well. As such, hoping in God leads us to Christ, and subsequently to a servants’ heart.

6as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.”

-Gen 18: Sarah in her quiet conversation with God in the tent, refers to her husband as “Lord”; The guy who would later convince her to be his “sister” so that he could save his own skin in the sight of Abimelech. Sarah hoped in God who brought her and Abraham together in the first place.

-This hope in God breeds a fearlessness. Fearlessness of the future and circumstances. Wives set the tone. If you are fraught and fearful, how do you think your husband feels/responds?

-My worry with finance and the future: Abbie’s constant remindful nature of how God has his hand on us.

So, Women set the tone of the house.

Alright guys; one passage (whew, right? Let’s see…)

1 Peter 3:7 7Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with youof the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

-“Likewise”; the application of everything we just discussed. Our foundation as followers in the footsteps of Christ. Submission here again, but in a different way.

-“Understanding”: so, who understands their wife? Nobody understands their wife!

-Peter is telling us (husbands) to know our wives. How do we practice continually understanding our wives? We date them, we talk with them, we listen.

 -We don’t “tell them what to do”, or “control them”

-We hear their hurts, how their day went, what they like/don’t. We continually get to know them more and more. We continually pursue our wives.

-“showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel”: take this what you will, but men are just built stronger than woman are. There’s no professional intermural football leagues (even though the Bears could seriously use some form of talent right now). But that’s ok, because gals you basically got everything else. We talked about these unique wirings earlier with our examples of the male/female brain.

-We tend to get focused on the weaker vessel bit, but miss that we are to show honor to our wives

- How do we honor? We take the lead. But in our leadership, we give, we are submissive. An illustration: is it really important what color the new car is? Or what type of tile is in the bathroom? Or where we go out to eat on a Friday night? Submit these things to her. But the important stuff, in the Biblical leadership of the home, that’s our role fellas. We protect our wives, our children, physically, but most importantly, spiritually.

-Husbands must be initiators in the home: Devotional time, prayer time. These rhythms can be a struggle, but they are necessary (Abbie)

-We can also pursue our wives by giving them space; give them a Saturday without the kids (it’s ok, that deer is probably going to be hanging around for another weekend).

-When we (husbands) abdicate this aspect of honor, a void for our spouse exists that needs to be filled. This is where frustration can arise on her part, out feeling the need to bridge her responsibilities with those that you are missing.

 -“Since they are heirs with you in the grace of life”

- Men and women are equal. We’re wired and gifted differently, to be sure. But our qualities come together to serve our God.

-God made woman our helper (paraclete – comforter, advocate, interestingly the same word used for Holy Spirit), and as such we should honor Him and them in that. We have the same eternity to look forward to.

-God chose your wife to be a queen of the universe. Keep that perspective in mind with her.

-“so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

-What does this mean? I think this means the opposite of what we just discussed. Guys, if we aren’t leading our wives, honoring them, encouraging them in the Lord, there begins to breed a disconnect. If we dishonor our wives in this way, we are, in fact, dishonoring God. Now, God loves us, but he may keep us at arms distance with our own relationship with him until we start living out our new identity to our Shepard and stop living in the sinful ways of our past. This may feel like a distance from God, difficulty in prayer, the Holy Spirit gnawing at us, or just a feeling of empty, hopelessness.

-Men, we honor our wives and lead our home because it’s the role that God has fit for us and, most importantly, how we example the grace that has been extended to us.

A lot of what we talked about this morning can be seen as “do this and you’ll have a great marriage”. These examples of submission can even be gleaned from secular work and Marriage help books (230k on Amazon currently). The root of what Peter is saying here is not in the “how”, it’s in the “why”.

We are all sinners. We have all rebelled against God and his commandments and as such, deserve the punishment that was given to him. But as we saw in 2:24, Christ took our sinful nature to the cross and our God called us out of that darkness.

Ephesians 5, one of the key scriptures on Husbands and Wives says in verse 22: “wives submit to your own husbands”. Why? “as to the Lord” and in 25: “Husbands, love your wives”. Why? “as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”.

The redemptive gospel of Jesus Christ is our life changing reason for this picture of marriage that we just looked into. It’s because of him that we have a new identity, which when we truly begin to live out, demands explanation.

We walk in freedom now, knowing that he is our Shepherd. The walk isn’t perfect, as Jesus’ was, but we have solace in that our God overlooks our faults because of his Son and the redemption that was achieved on the cross.