

The Life-Giving Power of Authentic Masculinity

Our Identity in Christ

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Amen, please turn with me in your Bibles to 1 Peter 3. 1 Peter 3. We're looking at verse 7 this morning. So blessed by what you shared, Ron, in Sunday morning Bible study, but even just really hit powerfully at the word you said just a moment ago, thought of the impact of having someone say to them, "I don't want anything from you." You know, just say that to a state senator, state representative, "I'm here, it's Ron, I don't want anything from you," and how they find it hard to believe. You know, that's really, that is really the message and attitude of faithful Christian living. When we meet with unbelievers, when we believers because of the fullness of Christ, we don't need anything from anyone else, we can really have a posture of true giving and serving. We can have that kind of a resting, because if you think about it, every unbeliever is always looking to get something from someone, even the love that an unbeliever has, and you know this was true of you and me before we got saved, every time we extended some kind of love or affection, there was a fish hook in it. We were wanting to get something back. But in Christ, we still have to fight against that old nature. We can still act that way but in the fullness of who we are in Christ, we really have the opportunity in all that we are in Jesus to go into the world and say, "Really, I don't need anything from you. I'm here to serve you so that you might know my Savior." What a tremendous opportunity we have in the Lord. Thank you so much, brother, for that word, and isn't it exciting to know that he's down there ministering to people like that and pray for him and we're so honored to have you as a part of our ministry, deeply honored to have you as a friend and a brother, and your family as well, getting to know them more a little bit this morning. What a blessing. Especially pray for them during January, February, and March when the session is, pray for them all the time but if you think about it, when the new year comes, really start praying hard for their whole family because that is Ron's time where he is just covered up with ministry from daylight to way after dark. And so anyway, thank you for your prayers for our brother and his family.

I also want to say before I get into the text, I want to mention I did receive some feedback from last week's sermon. I talked about some things that were difficult, a little controversial in talking about the previous passage about women and the beauty of God's design. It was called "Let God be God" and the blessedness of letting God be God and living our lives according to his design, even though it seems at first glance odd and different. And so, of course, that conversation, I mean, sermon, I was making the point

that so what the world often thinks has an appeal on the front end, but when you look underneath the surface, it's just death and destruction, and even though the Christian message on the front end at times looks odd, out of place, in reality, it always brings life. And part of what I did is I talked about transgenderism and transgender surgery, and some folks expressed as good Bereans, a few of you reached out to me and said, "Hey, I think maybe you crossed the line and just consider that." And so I'm considering it. I haven't been able to do all the work that I want to do on it because the sermon didn't get posted until yesterday or last night or this morning, and I like to look at the transcript. So I haven't had an opportunity to do that, but I'm going to do that. So just pray for me for wisdom on that. Thank you for feedback I got. I appreciate deeply my brothers and sisters who took care enough to reach out and express that concern. So thank you very much and I'll have more on that hopefully next Sunday.

Now, this morning, 1 Peter 3:7, we're going to look at, we're going to read it in context again. We're still looking at the beauty of God's design and the six verses that we've previously read speak about the role of the wife in the relationship, and we considered those under the title, if you remember, if you were with us, the evangelistic power of feminine beauty. We talked about that under two messages before that message last week about the letting God be God. We said, look at the evangelistic power of feminine beauty that in this section, Peter is calling believers in the first century to a lifestyle that is so radically different than the world and we saw that in the key transition verses in the book, chapter 2, verses 11 and 12. He says in chapter 2 verse 12, keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles. Keep your behavior beautiful among the Gentiles so that they will, by your continued good works, they will go from being slanderers of you to those who glorify God; that is, they look at your life and they think at first you are a nut and you are hurting them by your radical way of living, but as you continue to live that way, the beauty of it will shine through to some whom God is working in, and they will go from being slanderers to being worshipers of Jesus Christ right alongside you if you live faithfully in the role that God has given you.

And so he talks about femininity, beauty in verses 1 to 6, and then he turns to masculinity, and so today, the title of the message is, "The Life-Giving Power of Authentic Masculinity." The life-giving power of authentic masculinity. He's talking about the role of the husband in the relationship, that's the specific focus. Christian husband, how is he to live? What is he to do? How is he to characterize or how is his leadership to be exercised? What is the character of his shepherding of his home? And as he does that, I think he's defining for us what it means to be a man in some sense. It's an indirect, inferential thing that we draw out of the text, but I think that you can see, as we said in previous messages, the talk about what a woman is in the marriage relationship, though it's different when you're not married in some sense, there's still principles there. And essentially what you see as you look at the whole of Scripture is that masculinity in its essence is about leadership. It's about taking initiative. It's about being willing to take risks. It's about starting the movement. It's about leading toward the vision and having a sense of calling. Femininity in general is about supporting that masculine leadership. Now, it happens beautifully in marriage, but there's a sense in which it happens in the church, and there's a sense in which it happens with singles as well, that men are to see

themselves in some way as leaders, that some are more prominent in their leadership because of the station that God gives them, but all men should be about initiating, looking for vision and initiating and making an impact. And in a sense, all women, and again, there's some blending of this. It's somewhat complex. What's it look like? But the principle is there that women in general need to be looking to come along and support and help what is happening and have an attitude of bringing their help because that's what the woman in Genesis 2 was, she was a helper suitable. So that's kind of a big picture for a moment. Now we're going to drill down this morning on the issue of what masculinity is supposed to look like.

I chose the title, "The Life-Giving Power of Authentic Masculinity," in part, I did it with a sense of being aware of a common phrase that I guess I heard the first time maybe five, 10 years ago, and many of you have heard it, toxic masculinity. That is masculinity that poisons, masculinity that destroys and tears down. And of course, the view of the world is always out of kilter with the Scriptures. Even in the best of times, culturally, there's still, the world system is still driving against the mindset that we see in the Scriptures. Now, in our day, it's becoming more pronounced and so this idea of toxic masculinity, that is that, you know, the problem in our world is patriarchy, the hegemony that we're under is about oppression, and so masculinity is a social construct just to allow men to oppress women. This is kind of the mindset that undergirds so much of the media and the educational system and there's a kernel of truth, certainly, that masculinity, as God has intended it, has great impact, and ungodly, sinful masculinity is toxic, just as sinful femininity is toxic. Not because femininity or masculinity are the problem, because sin is always toxic. Sin destroys. It's God's design that is beautiful and true masculinity and femininity are glorious and beautiful because they are the creation of Almighty God. They're his idea and they're perfect when we express them in alignment with his word. And praise God, we have his word, it tells us how we can do this, and we have a Savior who through faith in him can empower us to live this way. Through union with Christ, you can be the man God wants you to be, through union with Christ, you can be the woman God wants you to be for his glory. It's all about Jesus. It's all about dependence upon him. There's nothing in us, as we prayed earlier in our confession of sin, in our heart there's nothing good apart from what Jesus has done and what he is doing. But he's sufficient.

So the life-giving power of authentic masculinity. I'm going to read verses 1 to 7, and we're focusing in on verse 7. 1 Peter 3:1,

1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. 3 Your adornment must not be merely external braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if

you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. 7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, we praise and honor You and we acknowledge that You are the Creator of all things, You are the giver of every good and perfect gift. You do all things well. The world that You made is very good and we thank You that You made man, male and female to image You, to reflect Your glory, and there's aspects of man, aspects of woman that bring nuances of understanding of who You are and the glory of all that You are. Help us as we consider this passage to hear from You and to realign our thinking from the worldly ideas that we've imbibed, from the damage that maybe experiences in our lives have created in our thinking, wounds that still hinder us. Let the word shine its light into our souls, especially for all the men that are here, Lord, every little boy, every man, may we aspire to be like You created us to be. And for the women that are here, may they see the beauty of masculinity and be encouraged that they can also aspire to be what You created them to be. And may You be glorified, Lord Jesus, because You are worthy. And we pray in Your name. Amen.

So the life-giving power of authentic masculinity, verse 7, that the focus here is on husbands, "You husbands in the same way." And what he does here is he essentially, I think we're going to see there's two main points in how husbands are to exhibit masculinity, and I think we're going to see, like I said, there's application to you. Even if you're a single man, if you learn from these principles and you understand what it really means to be a man, you can practice these in every arena of life.

Now, what we're going to see is there's two key verbs in this verse. The first is, I'm reading the American Standard, "You husbands in the same way live with your wives." That's how most of the translations translate that first verb, "live with"; NIV, "live with"; ESV, King James, "dwell with." And the idea is of residing with, living in the same place together. It's interesting, he doesn't start off saying what we're going to see is know your wife. He starts off with live with your wife as you live with your wife and he's getting at the fact this is everyday life and that's why he chooses this verb, because I'm going to make the point that the whole theme of the message is know your wife. In fact, it's really study her, okay? That's the main thrust of this verse. But he starts to say study her by first saying as you are living with her, according to knowledge, in an understanding way, the NASB says, as with a weaker vessel. So the idea is as you are living with her, do it according to knowledge. Study her. That's the theme of today's message. How does masculinity impact the world? It studies those around it. It knows and searches to understand the needs that are around it, and it meets those needs. I'm going to show you that in the way that this man lives with his wife, and then next week, Lord willing, we'll see the second participle in this verse, in verse 7, is in the New American Standard says, "show her honor. Show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life." NIV says, "treat them with respect." In the ESV and King James, they'll say, "showing honor, giving

honor." So we're going to talk about honor her. Today, the theme is study her. That's the theme of the message. Next week it'll be honor her. So we're going to have three points in today's message on "study her," okay?

What does it mean to study your wife? I said that, you know, when you think about the world and its misunderstanding of the evil of patriarchy. Even though, like I said, there's a grain of truth and a kernel of truth in the sense that, yeah, they look at masculinity in sin can do incredible damage. Incredible damage. Think of the abuse and all of the horrors that men can inflict on their families and inflict on others. But God has not created man that way and so we shouldn't throw out the baby with the bathwater. Masculinity is something good and necessary. So the world we know is getting it wrong but sometimes in this confusion, I mean, you see in evangelical Bible-believing churches, a lot of confusion about masculinity, femininity. In fact, I read one commentator who said, this passage, 3:1-7, because of the thing that we've talked about, Abraham, you know, she obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, that this passage is functionally, this is what the commentator said, is functionally removed from many evangelical canons. That is, they treat it as if it's not in the Bible anymore because they never want to preach on it because they don't want to deal with those verses. They are. I mean, it sounds odd on the front end, right? So I'm talking about it sounds really odd. And as I said last time, I think the present application is not to ask your wife to call you lord. In fact, we're going to talk about what you and I as men are to do today, which is to really not even be worried about that at all. We're to be worried about our responsibility to serve, not whether they are treating us the way they're supposed to treat us. That's between them and God. And now there's a place where as brothers and sisters in Christ, we correct each other, but I think what happens among reformed evangelical circles, that is those who believe the Scriptures to be authoritative and accept a passage like this and say, it's got to be in the canon and the working canon of what we're looking at, they tend and we can tend, we can tend to focus so much on leadership and authority. Isn't that an easy temptation? And I confess it is to think about our authority and to unwittingly overemphasize it, to take pride in position. Think about how insidious pride is, how ready it is to always rear itself, and so in reaction to the world's rejection of authorities, we in our circles can tend to overemphasize it rather than see what Jesus does and what the New Testament does is tell us that authority is to be exercised in meek and humble service, to be just like Jesus.

So Christian husbands sometimes can if you ask if I were to ask you who are believers here today and who are married, if I ask you and I said, "What's your role? What is your role in the marriage?" I wonder how many of us might say, "My role is to lead my family." I mean, that's accurate, right? "My role is to exercise loving, shepherding authority over my family." That's accurate too. That is true. But how many, and think about this, I say this as I'm pointing my finger right here in such a clear way, how many would say when you ask that question, "My role is to be the servant of all under that God has placed in my care. My role is to be a humble servant of those who God has placed in my care." It cuts against the grain of our flesh and our pride.

This is what Peter is saying here. He says to the man, it's interesting, think about the husband and wife hearing this message for the first time. You know, in Asia Minor when

this letter was beginning to be distributed, when Peter wrote to all the various places we've talked about, 63 AD, and they're hearing it, and you think about that man sitting next to his wife, and he hears, "Be submissive to your own husbands," and he is trying to not elbow her. And then, you know, you're dormant, he's not so worried about that, I don't think, you know, okay, okay. Let it be in the hidden person's heart, a gentle and quiet spirit. He wants to, yeah, "You know, I'd like you to have a more quiet spirit." In this way in former times the holy woman also who hoped in God used to adorn themselves being submissive to their own husbands. "Amen." You know, he's probably trying to restrain himself if he's wise, if he's newlywed he may be just blowing it by just being all up all into the message, right? "Yes! Yes! Yes!" You're going to have a fun week or month coming up, brother, right? But when it gets to just as Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him lord, I mean, you know, in his heart, "Yes, this is what I, this is what I need for my wife. I need this from my wife." I mean, you know, it sounds so odd at first, maybe at first he's thinking, "This is too weird, but I do really like it. It sounds good." But I want you to note that the whole issue of authority is only talked, the instruction is just to the wife. There's no instruction to the husband that says make sure your wife submits to you. Make sure your wife calls you lord, obeys you. No, you and I as men are not to be preoccupied with seeing that our wives have this kind of attitude. We're to be preoccupied with seeing ourselves as servant leaders who care tenderly for those under our care and exhibit that in the way this verse talks about.

What he says to the husband, it's as if in a sense, I love this, it's kind of like when Jesus was talking to Peter after his resurrection and John was standing by. John was always kind of wanting to hang around. He was the disciple whom Jesus loved. He's the one writing this account, John 21:15 to 17 is when Peter gets the recommissioning, and then after that, right after he says, you know, "Do you love Me?" Yes, Lord, you know that I love you. Yes, Lord, you know that I love you. Yes, Lord, you know that I love you. "Feed My sheep, feed My lambs, feed My sheep." And then he says, you know, "When you were young, you used to go where you wanted to go and you did what you wanted to do, but when you're older, you're going to be led where you don't want to go and you're going to stretch out your arms and follow me." And Peter understands that what he's saying is you're going to be led as a prisoner and you're going to die with your arms stretched out just like Jesus did. You're going to be crucified. And that's how Peter died. He also was crucified. Peter hears that and, you know, Peter's always wanted to say what's on his mind. He says, "What about John? What about him. I want to feel better knowing.... misery loves company so if I've got to go that way, what about him?" And Jesus says to him, think about this, Jesus looks at Peter, the Lord of compassion and grace, who is a sympathetic high priest who meets us in our weakness, who cares about what we feel, he says to him, "At this moment, what you need to do is, Peter, I was talking to you. What business is it of yours what I do with him? You follow Me." That is the call of discipleship. The call of discipleship is don't worry so much about what Jesus is doing with John, worry what Jesus is doing with you. And this supremely needs to be our focus, men, as we look at this passage.

What Jesus is doing with our wives is between Jesus and them. I understand that we love each other enough to speak the truth in love and there's places for you to say, "I really,

honey, I really feel like you're not respecting me appropriately." And you may have to come back and deal with that. I mean, that's appropriate. But it's so much less necessary than us learning this. If you get this right, it's amazing how it's going to take care of the other part anyway, but the focus always is on you and me following Jesus to do what he's called us to do and what he's called us to do is to be servants. You know, Jesus modeled this. Matthew 20:28, it's actually interesting, that verse is the end verse of the Great Commission. Matthew 28:20 is the Great Commission, "Go into the world and make disciples of all nations." 20:28 says, "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many." But when you look at the immediate context to that, what's Jesus saying here? The disciples had an argument because James and John, their mother, of all people, came to Jesus and was wanting to make arrangements for where they were going to sit in the kingdom. She must have been an interesting lady. And he responds to her and deals with that. And next thing you know, the disciples are like rebuking them. "What are you guys doing with your mother coming to do this? What's wrong with you guys?" I mean, they're just letting them have it. In verse 24 of Matthew 20, "In hearing this, the ten became indignant with the two brothers." That's the argument going on. "But Jesus called them to Himself and said." Now this is right before, this is on the eve of the triumphal entry. This is roughly ten days before he is going to the cross, inside that, maybe eight only. "But Jesus called them to Himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'"

Think about that. The Son of Man, the greatest man, the God man, fully God, fully man, the Messiah, the King that God has installed upon Mount Zion, the man that is bringing an end to the reign of sin, the champion of all champions who is delivering the world from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of God, this man did not come to be served. He came to serve. The character of his, the exercise of his authority and dominion came through laying down his life in service and Jesus says, "This is the character of leadership among My people." If you want to be great, become servant of all, become slave of all. Don't worry about your dignity and your honor, whether people are respecting you. Isn't that convicting? I know it is for me. Jesus was not preoccupied with how people saw him. He was preoccupied with serving his Father and seeking the lost, loving, tenderly caring for those under his care as a shepherd.

And so that's the example then that Peter has heard and Peter has seen, and Peter applies this to the marriage relationship. He says this is how it's to be in marriage in Christ. Yeah, wives are supposed to be following. As a wife, you're supposed to get in the boat with your husband. Think about that, a rowboat, and it's just a metaphor, get in a rowboat with this man who doesn't know what he's doing? Yes, with this man who doesn't know what he's doing because God knows what he's doing through this man. and you you bring all your gifts to it, you tell him you're a helper suitable. He needs you. He needs you more than he knows he needs you. You're supposed to say, "Honey, I think we should go that way. I think the waterfall is that way, I mean that way. Let's go that way, not the

waterfall." And he says, "No, I think it's not." And you need to say again, "I really think it is, honey. Can we pull out the map and look?" But if he keeps on, I mean, every analogy breaks down at some point. At some point, you should jump out of the boat, swim to shore, and see if he'll follow you. In this particular analogy, it doesn't carry all the way through but the idea is that you're to have a disposition that says, "I so trust God that I'm willing to affirm him and from a position of under his authority, continue to make a godly appeal to him, trusting that God will work in this." And as you do that, you're exhibiting the beauty and glory of God's marriage design and the beauty and glory of femininity as God intended it to be.

So now, think about that, God says to the woman, "Get in the boat." He doesn't say to the man, "Woman, get in the boat." He doesn't say to the man, "Make sure your wife is in the boat," because I think a lot of times what we want to do as men is so we say, "Get in the boat, honey, stop rocking the boat, row the boat. I got it where we're going. You just row. I got it." And any pushback we take as an insult, right? "I know where I'm going." I mean, think about how men, isn't it funny how slow we are to read instructions, or for younger people, there used to be things called maps, M-A-P-S, that you could pull out and open up and you would look at to see where you were going. And I can remember in our marriage of 37 years, there were times where Patty would be asking me to, "Hey, get directions or ask about this or whatever," and I'm like, "No, I'm going to figure it out on my own." And she's thinking, "I'm in this boat with this guy who doesn't know where he's going." And she was gracious to try to keep reminding me to do that. There was a place, "Get out the map, look."

But God doesn't say to you and me as husbands, "Make sure they're in the boat and they're quiet and they're cooperating." He's like, "I don't even want to talk to you about that. I want to talk to you about how you are serving that woman who's in your boat." That's what Jesus wants to talk to you and me about, every man in this room. How are you caring for the woman that God has placed in your boat? Even if she's tempted to get out of the boat and she's swimming away, how are you even viewing that? He says, listen, what you're to do for caring for her is you are, first of all, to study her. That's the theme of this morning's focus on this passage. Study her. It comes from that phrase we talked about or that clause "living with your wives in an understanding way." That's what the New American standard says, and the ESV says virtually the same thing identically. The King James says, "dwelling with them according to knowledge." Actually, I like that a little better because I think "understanding way" sells it a little short because literally in the text it says, it's a Greek present participle, "live with." It actually could be read, "Husbands, in the same way living with your wives." It doesn't even say wives, it says "living with them," is the implicit thing. He's clearly talking about wives. He just talked to the wives, talking to the husbands. "Living with them according to knowledge." So you're to be continually living with them according to knowledge as the weaker vessel since she's a woman.

This is the first, I think this all goes together in this first thing, study her. God says, "I don't want you worried about whether she's doing what she's supposed to do. You focus on you doing what you're supposed to do." And what we're supposed to do is study our

wives and the first thing I want to note is there's three points to this message now and it describes adjectives, describe the duty that we're called to, our study. First of all, it's to be point number 1, a continual study, a continual exercise. I mentioned the word "live with, living with according to knowledge," rather than even just like knowing your wife. He doesn't say knowing your wife. He says living with her according to knowledge. The idea is he's saying, look, this is to be a part of everyday life, and "living with" is the Greek present which means continuous action, not so much present time is the emphasis. It is present time but the emphasis of the Greek present is the kind of action, continual ongoing action is what present means. So it means always doing this, and the idea of "living with," wherever you are, whatever you're doing, this is the work. This is what it means to lead. This is what it means to be a man. It means you're studying. Continually studying. It's not something that's occasional. It's not something that it's just merely regular. I mean, that would be good. I mean, I think it's actually a good discipline that we should do, you know, we regularly pray, we regularly, it'd be a good thing weekly or even daily to kind of think about this issue. I mean, you should do it every day, "How's my wife doing?" But from time to time, more extensive time on that and prayer and asking the Lord, "How's she doing? What are her needs? What's happening in our life right now?" It's a continual exercise or a continual duty to study your wife.

The second thing is it's an essential duty. An essential action. He says, "live with your wives according to knowledge," and I'm drawing this from the key word "knowledge." He uses the word here, a Greek word which speaks of present and fragmentary knowledge. Live with your wife, be living with your wife according to knowledge. The idea is according to a present and fragmentary knowledge. He could have used a word which spoke of more fullness of knowledge. which I think would imply possibly that you can get it figured out. I think one of the reasons he uses this word is you will never figure out your wife completely. As I've lived longer, I think I know my wife so well. I know her so much better than I used to. We know each other so well. We can finish each other's sentences and stuff like that, but I still marvel at what I'm learning about her and what I still don't understand. You know, it's a joke among men, right? I mean, you'll never fully understand the beauty of what a woman is and there's something glorious about that. That's part of the adventure of marriage. When you get married, now it's beginning. Now you get an opportunity to study this human being. There's something about the way God has made a woman. There's a complexity and a beauty and a breadth and a glory that a man doesn't have. We're just like, we want to do things. We want to accomplish things. "Look, come on, I've got stuff, we got to get stuff going. Get in the boat because we've got to go. We've got to get this thing done." And the Lord is saying, when you're in the boat, yeah, you're supposed to be getting things done. You're not supposed to let her not help you get things done. She's your helper. But the way you're going to do that is you're going to be stepping back and looking at her consistently to see how she's doing. You're sort of taking spiritual vital signs.

Now think about that. If you're doing something, some task like some, think of a really great physical challenge or maybe a better example is astronauts, they're flying into outer space and they're hooked up to systems that tell people back in Houston exactly what's going on in every part of their body. I mean, like this is an important task and we've got

to keep a total watch on everything that's happening with you because it's essential that you are where you are. Your role is so important. He's saying that's how you live with your wife. We're going to talk about this, honor is the second part of this, and that's for next week. But he's saying she is so essential to the task. You must keep glued to the fact of how is she doing? What is her respiration? I don't mean literally, of course. What is her blood pressure? What is her pulse? What is that spiritually and emotionally? How is she doing? How are these circumstances, these changes, these things that have happened, how are they impacting her soul? To live with her according to knowledge, to be living with her according to knowledge is to have that kind of a mindset and a focus. You're studying her. It's a continual study, but it's an essential study. You don't know her. Your knowledge is fragmentary. If you try to go on what you know, woe is her and woe is you.

One of the biggest problems for men is we think that when we're young men, especially, and it still stays as older men too, we're supposed to know. I mentioned you don't ask for directions, right? Because why? Because I'm trying to project an image that I know what I'm doing. And some people actually, some guys are actually proud enough to think they know what they're doing and they don't, and other guys are proud enough to know that they don't know what they're doing but they're going to act like they know what they're doing. So all guys are acting like they know what they're doing whether they think they know it or they're just acting it. But when it comes to knowing your wife, there's just no way. You just don't know her. You don't know what you need to know.

But to to serve her well you have to understand what's going on in her heart and you've got to study this. It's interesting. Turn with me to Ephesians 5, the other key passage on marriage in the New Testament. It parallels 1 Peter 3:1 to 7. In the same way, it starts off with the role of the wife. Verses 22 to 24 talks about wives being subject to their husbands as to the Lord, that is being submissive. Husband is the head of the wife, verse 23, as Christ is the head of the church. Skipping on down though, verse 28, "So husbands ought also," well, verse 25, love your wife sacrificially as Christ loved the church, verse 28, not only sacrificially but with sensitivity. Verse 28, "So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church." He says, listen, what you're called to do as a man is to love your wife as Christ loved the church and Christ loved the church the way that we love our own bodies. You're to love your wife as your own body. That is, you take note of what's going on in your own body. You're continually aware of that. I mean, think about that. You feel a headache coming on. You think about that, "I've got a headache." You may or may not take action on that, but you definitely consider it, goes through your mind, "I may take an Advil. Or maybe I have a headache pill that I take." Your stomach hurts. You think about that, "I wonder why my stomach's hurting." You're aware of that. You take action on that.

He says love your wife in the same way you love your own body. Be so sensitive to her needs, to her emotional state, to the things that are happening, to her physical needs that you're aware and you're serving and I love how he says this in verse 29, "for no one ever

hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it." You nourish and cherish your flesh, he says, nourish and cherish your wife.

This idea of nourishing is an interesting word. It occurs twice in the New Testament, once in verse 29, "nourishing and cherishing it as Christ does the church," and then again, in chapter 6, verse 4, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord." The same verb form is here, the same verb as "nourish." "Bring them up" is the same word and it speaks about nutrition. It speaks about specific nutrition. The idea is, in fact, it can be the application, it can be nursing, a mother nursing her baby. She's giving that child exactly what it needs, but it also speaks of nutrition. You think about that. You know, one of the things we see in modern day and you may be someone who's doing this and our family has been blessed by it, we're focusing a lot more on nutrition for health than we used to. It's a movement, isn't it? Praise the Lord. I think America got a little caught up with the medical profession, the wonder of pharmacology, and the pendulum swung too far. There's a pill for everything. But a lot of times all you need to do is eat right, exercise. But if you eat the right thing, suddenly you don't have the problem you used to have. There are certain vitamins and minerals in certain foods that if you eat them, it will change your experience. It will change your health. That's the idea of this word. There's a need and you give the body exactly what it needs to restore it to full health. He says, nourish and cherish her. Nourish is doing that. It's assessing what is the need and giving her exactly what she needs. That's the role of a husband. I think that's what he's talking about here, and that's what he's talking about in 1 Peter 3:7 when he says, "live with your wives according to knowledge."

You need to know her. It's essential. She cannot thrive the way God wants her to if her husband is not fulfilling this role. Now, obviously, my wife knows so much, and I know very few of you in this room as men would think you know more about nutrition than your wife. I want to meet you if you do. My wife has studied all the stuff on that. She's been telling me for years, "You need to do this, you need to do that." I'm like, "Yeah, yeah, whatever." And finally, as I get older, I'm like, "Yeah, you're right." I keep coming back to her. I'll look at something on the internet and I'll read it and I'll say, "I just read this cool thing about it." She's like, "I've been telling you that for five years. Finally, you listen to this guy, now you're ready to believe it." She's been telling me. So I know that we're not really, the nutrition, again, the analogy breaks down, but he's saying, listen, you men, you and I are supposed to assess the emotional needs, the physical needs, the spiritual needs of our wives and to do everything we can by God's power and grace to meet those needs. You see, we're not sitting there saying, "Shut up and row the boat." We're saying, "Honey, how are you doing? How is this affecting you? Are you doing okay with, I mean, there's a lot of things happening, I've just been thinking, I just stopped and thought through all that's happened in this last month or this last six months, you know, and I thought about how much that's impacted you. Please tell me, how are you doing?" And listen, actively listen. Don't just ask and quickly hoping for a check, "Okay, check that, now I can go on." No, draw it out of her. "I really want to know." Even if I can't fix it, and this is the hard part for men, when we find a problem and we want to fix it. If we can't fix it, we'd rather not know about it. Isn't that right? You ignore it, maybe

it'll get better on its own. How many of you practice that? I know that's a lot of my strategy for dealing with a lot of things. God say, no, that's not the way you lead. You attend to the need. Even if you can't fix it, you know someone who can. And sometimes it's just going to be something we're going to have to pray through and it's not that we can fix the problem, but God will give us the grace to walk through the problem. "And I'm here, honey, to help you lean on Jesus because He's the only one that can really get us through this problem and I'm here to just remind you of that and love you in that."

That's what we're called to do. It's essential. It's continual. It's essential. Second point, essential, and the third point, it's a consequential duty. It's really interesting when he says, back in our text, 1 Peter 3:7, "living with your wives in an understanding way as with someone weaker since she is a woman, as the weaker vessel," is how some other translations translate it, and it's actually a little better than the New American Standard did here. The word "vessel" is there, and "weaker" is there. As a weaker vessel.

The word "vessel" is used in a number of different ways in different places in the New Testament. Sometimes it means merchandise or an instrument. Usually in the singular it means a container or a jar, a bowl, a vase. A vessel is something that you fill with something else. It's used in 2 Corinthians 4:7 to speak of, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels." He said the treasure of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, that is saving grace, a new heart, a new life. We have this treasure, this relationship with Jesus, the fullness of the Spirit. We have that in an earthen vessel. He said our bodies are clay pots. Our bodies are earthen vessels. They're like a clay container, a bowl, a pot. And so when he says weaker vessel, I think what he's doing, he's talking about her body. Some will say this is about the weaker position in authority. I don't think that's the major emphasis here. I think the major emphasis here is he uses the word "vessel" to say it's not a weaker position, she actually has a weaker body. Her physical vessel is weaker. Now, again, this stuff at first glance, it's offensive to some women when you hear that, right? I mean, the feminist movement has tried to lead our society to pretend there's no difference between men and women but there clearly is. You can pretend like reality is not reality, but it doesn't change reality.

Weaker vessel, it's speaking of the physical body and, listen, it's speaking of it, he said you're to live with, you're to you're to study her, you're to really attend to her because she's weaker and it doesn't mean in a demeaning sense. We we hear that in pride, in vanity of humanity we think that weaker we tend to look down on, but the miracle of what God does as you look at his word, God doesn't look down on weakness. He tends to exalt weakness. I love what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:7. Remember when he has the thorn in the flesh and he finally says, "I have learned to glory in my weakness for when I am weak, then I'm strong." It's weakness that brings strength. And even in 1 Corinthians 12, when you talk about these very spiritual gifts, he speaks about weak spiritual gifts, weak brothers and sisters who at first glance appear to be weaker, but in reality, he says, are more essential and more to be honored than the other gifts. There's a complexity there. I think he's thinking about people who maybe who have disabilities and who can't contribute much. On the front end, you look at it, you think, what can they contribute? What is their gift? How are they helping the body? You know how they're helping the

body? Everybody in the body is coming around serving them. Everybody in the body is becoming more sensitive, more broken over the condition of this fallen world, more loving, more able to serve, and you see that weaker vessel is actually resulting in great glory and honor to Christ.

So don't judge by human eyes, judge by the word of God, and so God says weaker and at first glance you can say, well, men are bigger, their muscle mass is more, their bone mass is larger, they're taller. Yeah, of course. And a woman does need to be cared for, she needs to be protected. But there's something beautiful and glorious in the weakness. The weakness I think is related in a large part to being the one who bears children. I mean, think about that and the weakness that comes. We have some ladies in our church that are pregnant. Praise God, we've had so many babies born. Like every day you find out somebody else is pregnant. Awesome. And what a joy that is for the body of Christ to see the Lord expanding our families, people who love Jesus and want to raise their kids to love Jesus. But you think about, you know, one of the things that I've heard from a couple of recent folks is that, you know, morning sickness. Those of you who are dads, if your wife had morning sickness, you can remember that. That's when you were trying to do whatever you could at every moment to find some way that you could feed her something and she would not get sick. And you learned, like I did, I didn't eat pizza for one whole year. I couldn't come home with it on my breath. We didn't order pizza, and we used to love pizza. It was like a regular, you know, once a week or something we'd call Domino's. Not that year. I mean, it was only about six months of morning sickness, but it was six months of memory of the morning sickness. No, no pizza still. Jonathan's here, but he can't have pizza. Well, he couldn't have it anyway. He was still too small. He didn't smell a pizza until he was five months old, though.

But you think about how that comes, you know, the Lord has made it that way, but what's happening in a woman's body? Hormones are creating things. I mean, she is nurturing a human life inside of her. That baby has its own complete system, its own blood type, its own contained complete human system growing inside of a woman and her body is adjusting. It's like this incredibly complex, delicate system that God has made and it's very different than what a man is, and that there's a weakness about it, but there is a glory about it. Wow. And then she has the baby and her body adjusts afterwards, and sometimes women struggle with postpartum depression because of the massive changes that are going on in their bodies. I mean, massive changes. Now caring for a newborn. Their body made to feed that baby. Isn't that amazing?

He says, you have a woman, you have a wife, she's the weaker vessel because she's a woman. She's literally, it's an adjective that says womanly. Only time it's used in the New Testament. And think about that, all that physical stuff brings all those hormone changes, they bring, like I mentioned, postpartum depression. They bring tremendous emotional challenges to that woman. Just the regular monthly living of a man and woman together, you see that there are things that a woman deals with that a man never deals with. Emotional challenges. And God says, don't despise it, serve it, care for it, nurture it. Stand in awe of it, in one sense, to give glory to God and thanking him for giving you this treasure. The idea is it's like you're carrying around this priceless vase. She's a weaker

vessel. She's this priceless vase. And you know, guys, we all have our own patterns. Some of you guys are more neat than others. Some of us are more like me. You get in the car, you kind of throw stuff in. You know, I've got my briefcase. I throw it in. I don't like set it in the same way. Some guys are like that you set it in the same way. That's wonderful. I'm not criticizing you, but I'm saying generally we tend to be where we're a little rougher with stuff, right? We're just rougher. It's just the way we are. We just go through life being rougher. He says, don't be that way with this precious gift that I've given you. Don't treat her with that kind of roughness and callousness. Treat her like a treasure because that's what she is. She's the weaker vessel. You're going to have to study how to care for her. It's not going to come natural to you. Don't think you can just wing it. You've got to study her, attend to her, care for her and if you don't, it's consequential. It's going to show up. If you don't care for her, she's the weaker vessel. She's going to break easily. That's the implication. She's fragile. You will do damage to her beautiful soul. You and I will do that. How much I've done to my wife through the years that I was such a dumb oaf and I wasn't tenderly caring for her. I wasn't appreciating the beauty of what God had given me in my precious wife. And so, we're supposed to not be that way but if we are, it has impact.

This is what husbands do. This is what men do. This is what men are supposed to be like. Men are supposed to be, masculinity is a sense of you look around for needs and you meet them. Think about this. In chivalry, a man should be looking to who he can open the door for at Quick Trip. Some of you do that really well, I know that, especially the older guys. You young guys, you need to be that way. When you're going into Quick Trip or wherever it is, Racetrack, my favorite but anyway, wherever you're going, we have one right there too actually, but wherever you're going, you're thinking about people and how can I help? Is there a need that I can meet? That's very manly. Now women actually notice needs better than we are. That's why God says, "Notice needs. You're busy thinking about where you're going, what you're doing. Look around you for needs. This is what I really made you to do. Look around for needs and meet them. Care about people. And then you have, I've given you this beautiful woman who's going to help you see them way better than you ever did by yourself." And if you nourish her and she's in the boat and you realize it's all about meeting needs, meeting pressing needs for the glory of God, that's what the Christian life's to be about and you start living like that, you're being a man. Now listen, single men, you don't have a wife, yes, but you're still supposed to meet needs and there are people in the body of Christ, there are people at work, there are ladies that can help you in friendship to know how to do that and you just go out there and you meet needs. Look around you, "What can I do to help?"

And that's authentic masculinity and when people see that they go from saying masculinity is toxic to saying biblical masculinity is life and this makes the gospel so appealing to people. They slander you as evil doers because you think you're supposed to open the door. Sometimes it's going to happen, right? You open the door at Racetrack or Quick Trip, you may get an insulting, you know, especially now when there are no differences between men and women, according to everybody out there, right? And these poor kids are growing up with that. They're believing that. But you just go ahead and do it anyway. "Hey, it's not about, I'm just trying to help. I care about you. How you doing?"

We do that and the gospel light is shining. This is what Jesus did. This is how he lived. Think about this. I mean, think about how Jesus is. And so we can introduce them when they see that this is a perfect opportunity, "The reason that I stopped to open the door is because I serve a God who meets needs." Jesus was the ultimate need meeter.

I love the story of the night before Jesus was crucified, John 13, John's gospel. The way he introduces it, he describes what was going through Jesus' mind. John 13:1, "Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father," think about that, "Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He's going to leave this world, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." Verse 2, "During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him." Jesus knows, "I'm going back to the Father." Jesus knows, "There is Judas possessed by Satan, ready to destroy Me." He's sitting at the table. "Jesus," verse 3, "knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands," all authority in heaven and earth is given to Jesus Christ, knowing that "He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded." Jesus with all of that on his mind, think about that, all that he has to do, all that lays before him, he looks around and there's a bunch of men with nasty smelly feet that need to be washed before this meal and he takes the lowliest position of a man, a foot washer, the lowest slave would do this duty in the house and Jesus lays aside his garments of a rabbi, the honorable garments of the rabbi, he has only his undergarments on and he washes their feet like a lowly slave.

That's what masculinity really is. That's what your Savior is like and he can make us like that. You may be like me, a selfish husband preoccupied with your agenda so much of the time, but through union with Christ, you stop being proud and you become humble. "What's the need? What can I do? How can I help?" When we become like that, the world will take notice and they'll want to know how you got to be so different and you can say, "It's not me. It's Him. It's Jesus."

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, how grateful we are for the gospel. We stand amazed that the Lord of glory would leave glory to come into this world and to serve us. We feel like Peter who said, "Lord, don't wash, You can't wash my feet." But you said if we don't let You wash our feet, we don't let You wash us, we have no part in You. So Lord, we do want You to serve us. We thank You that You did everything necessary on the cross to save every single sinner that has ever lived. You did enough to save any sinner that will come to You right now. And Lord, You're calling us to be not only Your children through faith in You, but repentance and turning to Christ by faith, You welcome us in, You wash us, and now You give us a whole new joy in living and serving others just like You. I pray for every man in this room, Lord, that You would help us to search our hearts, to lay down our pride, to lay down our vainglory and all of our foolishness, and to gird ourselves like Jesus and become servants. We pray this in His name and for His glory. Amen.