

How to Treat Royalty

For Better or For Worse, Part 7

1 Peter 3:7c

Discussion Guide

Main Idea:

Christian men need to rethink the way they view and value their wives. Peter treats this topic with great seriousness because of the way that God views their relationship and the implications that come with their interaction. Christian women should be treated with honor not just because they are women, but because they are fellow heirs of the grace of life that comes through Jesus Christ. If men do not have this attitude of respect and honor for their wives, Peter warns that their own relationship with the Lord will suffer due to their disobedience and lack of compassion.

Discussion Points:

Peter tells Christian husbands that their believing wives are fellow heirs of the grace of life.

- What is an heir?
- What is it that Christians will receive as an inheritance?
- What are some Bible passages you can think of that use this same language of Christians inheriting something?
- What is Peter referring to when he mentions “the grace of life”?

At the end of Peter’s short excursus on marriage here in his first letter, he gives a warning of what will happen if men do not follow his instruction about how to treat their wives.

- What does Peter say the consequence is for not honoring your wife the way they deserve?
- Why would a relationship between two people have ramifications for their relationship with God?
- How could prayers be hindered?
- Is your intimacy with God impacted by other relationships beyond the marriage relationship?

Peter wants his listeners to be in a right relationship with God. Of course that starts with a belief in Jesus as their savior. Beyond that, it means following Christ’s example and instruction. All over the gospel pages, Jesus is shown to be praying in solitude or teaching others how to have that relationship with God.

- What is prayer?
- How is your intimacy with God affected through your prayer life?

Discussion Guide cont.

Christian husbands and wives are both called to make a concerted effort to show the gospel message through their marriage relationship.

- In what ways do personal experiences help us understand theological concepts?
- How does your marriage display the love of Christ for the church right now?
- Can the message of the gospel be clearer in your marriage by changing something?
- How does your marriage teach *you* about the kind of love that Jesus has for the church?

Gospel Connection:

When man sinned in the Garden of Eden, all were separated from God. There was a broken relationship from that point forward between the Creator and His creation. But God chose to glorify himself through the incarnation of Jesus Christ as a man who came to die for the sins of the world and defeat the slavery to sin that broke the relationship. Jesus made it possible to have redemption and peace with God because of his atoning sacrifice that he made on our behalf. This picture of the gospel is displayed also in a healthy marriage where a husband lays down his life for his bride. Peter wants Christians to understand the gravity of message their marriages project to the world. He calls for a high standard so that the gospel is clear in their lives and that God can receive the glory. To drive his point home, Peter reminds his audience that all who have accepted Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior have been adopted into the family of God and will therefore be heirs of the grace of life. Christians have been brought into the royal family of God and will one day be honored as such. In the meantime, Christians are called to look to that future state and rejoice in the gospel message by treating each other as royalty.

Practical Implications:

- Think:** Does the way you treat your spouse suggest that you view them as royalty? Are you submitting to your husband in a way that follows God's design of headship? Are you honoring your wife as a fellow heir? Think about how you can continually have the mindset and attitude to treat your spouse with the same kind of love and respect that God says they deserve.
- Pray:** Thank God for his glorious grace that has bought salvation and redemption for you through the blood of Jesus Christ. Ask him to remind you constantly of your new life in Christ and how you are to live for Him in every moment. Ask him to reveal to you where you are falling short of the standards He has. Ask him to teach you to love others as Christ does.
- Do:** Look for ways to especially honor your spouse this week. Take the initiative to treat your spouse as royalty. Make sure they feel loved both by God and by you.

How to Treat Royalty

For Better or For Worse, Part 7

1 Peter 3:7c

I have enjoyed recently coming across some stories of treasures hidden in attics and secret chambers; stories of inheritances totally unexpected and surprising. Stuff like a box of unopened baseball cards found in the attic by a nephew, now worth more than a million dollars.

Surprised heirs received a phone call that changed their lives. Like one Portuguese aristocrat by the name of Luis Carlos de ma Noronha Cabral da Camara – with a name like that you know he has got to be rich; or his mother couldn't decide.

Before he died he made out an unusual last will and testament. This article read that people do not, as a general rule, make wills in Portugal, but Portuguese aristocrats do.

Luis had never married and he had no extended family to speak of. The BBC News reported that late in life, he had met with his attorney and two witnesses where he was asked, of course, where the heirs of his estate were located. He reached for the Lisbon phone book, in the attorney's office and began turning the pages, pointing to names at random – without rhyme or reason – 70 names in all – and made them the heirs of his estate.

When he died, a few years later, 70 people were contacted. Many of them thought it was a scam and had to be convinced it was all true. Their name had been taken from a phone book and, without rhyme or reason, they were co-heirs with 69 other people to the estate of Luis Carlos de ma Noronha Cabral da Camara.

Can you imagine being the heir to someone – finding out by a phone call that you've been chosen by some millionaire to benefit as the heir of their vast estate? One of the greatest oversights in the Christian life is the fact that every believer has a future inheritance that would boggle the imagination. Every Christian

has inherited the vast estate of Heaven and all the riches of God, through our relative by faith – Jesus Christ.

The truth is, we go through life without hardly thinking of the fact that we are going to live as royalty; ruling and reigning in the coming, global kingdom of God.

But this truth must be a significant incentive in the mind of God – an incentive to act the part of an heir, here and now – because nearly all the New Testament writers, inspired by the Spirit of God, alluded to this fact.

James writes, *Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be . . . heirs of the kingdom (James 2:5)*

Paul wrote to the Roman believers, *We are children of God, and if children, heirs also . . . fellow heirs with Christ. (Romans 8:16-17)*

In legal terms, Jesus is not just your advocate and redeemer, but your brother. He is your elder brother in biblical terminology; He is related to you, since you, by faith, are now members of the family of God.

In Hebrews 2:11, we are told that Jesus is not ashamed to call us His brethren – that is, His brothers and sisters. And that's the staggering truth behind the announcement that James and Paul and others make as they inform us that we are co-heirs of Jesus Christ.

So, consider this your phone call ahead of time; you are being informed that you are a co-inheritor with Jesus Christ and you will share everything equally with Him in eternity, along with the other heirs who also belong to the family of God.

God wants us in on this family inheritance – this treasure; it isn't a secret; it isn't a random chance and it isn't hidden away in the attic.

Mark it down ahead of time. You have been informed – this is your future by faith in Christ.

Beloved, it won't be long before you and I are looking at each other and laughing and rejoicing and singing and praising God over who we have become and what we have been given and where we are going to live and how we are going to spend eternity as heirs to the riches and the splendor and the grace of God.

This is not a small-scale incentive for today. In fact, this happens to be something that God wants to use to transform our thinking and shape our perspective and encourage our suffering and infuse our persevering through the challenges and struggles of life.

Don't lose sight of your unbelievable, incredible inheritance.

That's how the Apostle Peter began his first letter – telling us about our inheritance that is reserved. It's being kept for us in heaven (*1 Peter 1:4*).

But now, later in his letter, if you turn back there with me to *chapter 3 of First Peter*, Peter brings this truth up again – the fact that we are heirs – only this time he uses it to challenge the thinking and the behavior of every married man in the Body of Christ.

1 Peter 3 and notice *verse 7. You husbands in the same way, live with your wives* – that is, make a home with your wives. This means, by the way, that men are homemakers too – literally, make a home with your wives – *in an understanding way* – that is, with kindness and consideration – *as with someone weaker, since she is a woman*. Peter doesn't write that she is weak, but that she is weaker; we studied the practical implications of the creation of gender in our last discussion. Now notice for today, *and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered*.

As we wrap up our study today of Peter's instructions to wives and husbands, Peter now delivers to every husband a daily assignment, a prophetic announcement, and a serious advisement.

1. A Daily Assignment

Notice first the daily assignment: *Show her honor* – stop there.

The present tense tells us to do this in an ongoing manner; this isn't on her birthday or anniversary. This is daily. You can understand this to mean, assign her honor.ⁱ

This is the only time this compound participle appears in the New Testament – it has the idea of assigning to someone something they are due.ⁱⁱ

It carries the idea of making an assessment of her value that ends up being really high. And this assessment isn't given because it's the nice-guy thing to do; it happens to be directly related to who she is.

And Peter is about to tell us who she is. Your believing wife is due an especially high value because she has inherited the estate of God as a fellow heir.

Some of you know that, this past summer, Marsha and I moved into an apartment for 4 months while we put our home through some major first-floor renovations. At the heart of the renovation was adding an elevator and building a library space, large enough to house my library of nearly 7,000 volumes. It's the first time in 20 years that my entire library is available to me in one location.

As a result of the added square footage, we had an appraiser come out to do an assessment as we prepare for refinancing. It was a young lady with tablet and tape measurer in hand. She was thorough and careful; she wanted to know everything we had added to the house – every upgrade and change.

Obviously, the higher the appraisal, the more equity value in our home. And so I'm telling her everything that is possibly good about our 19 year old home. I have the architectural plans spread out on the counter; I'm pointing out the width of this and the square footage of that.

I mean I was pointing out everything – the new ceiling fan, the LED replacement light fixtures in the living room. I didn't know if I was bothering her or not, but my first clue came when she told me it would be okay if I went back to work.

Listen, I am convinced that our home is not going to get the appraisal I think it deserves.

I'm probably going to spend the next 2 months complaining that she missed this and she missed that and she didn't take into account this and she overlooked that. My house is not going to get the appraisal I know it deserves.

So here's the question: is your wife getting an appraisal that God knows she deserves? He, through the Apostle Peter, is telling husbands to assign them honor; to give her the highest appraisal in the neighborhood. Show her honor to the highest degree!ⁱⁱⁱ

And get this – Peter isn't telling husbands to decide whether or not their wives have earned or deserve this high assessment; he is telling them to give them that kind of assessment daily – and act accordingly – simply because she is a believing wife.

Let me change the analogy for a moment and tell you that this word for *honor* was used in New Testament days to describe a great treasure or a valuable gemstone.^{iv}

So how do you handle this daily assignment of handling your wife like a valuable treasure? Well, for starters, if you have something you really treasure,

- It's going to be reflected in the way you talk about it

So how do you talk about your wife at work, on the golf course, in front of the kids, to your extended family? In fact, how do you talk about her to her?

- Further, it's going to be reflected in the way you provide for her

One Greek scholar pointed out the fact that this word to honor, in noun form, gives us the word honorarium – compensation.^v

It has a financial undertone to it, depending on the context, that has to do with money. The ladies are saying, "I like where this is heading; honey, wake up!"

One of the men in our church family sent me this recently – you'll enjoy the surprise ending. Doug Smith is on his deathbed and knows the

end is near. His hospice nurse, his wife, his daughter and 2 sons are with him in the bedroom waiting for his last breath.

He roused himself and asked for the nurse to write down his last wishes. He began: "To my son, Bernie, I want you to take the Mayfair houses. To my daughter Sybil, you take the apartments over in the east end. To my son Jamie, you take all the offices over in City Centre. And to Sarah, my dear wife, please take all the residential buildings on the bank of the river." And with that he breathed his last.

The nurse was just blown away by the generosity of these final wishes and she said to his wife, "Mrs. Smith, your husband was an amazing, generous, thoughtful man to have worked so hard and then to give you and your children all these properties." The wife replied, "Not really – he just had a big paper route." I enjoyed that more than you did!

Instead of simply referring to property or money, the word Peter uses relates to protecting and guarding and providing for her like you would protect and guard and provide for something you treasure.

You keep expensive jewelry in fabric-covered containers or drawers; you keep passports and deeds in safe places; you put special photographs in frames; you keep your rifles and your tennis racket and your golf clubs in safe places. You don't leave any of that stuff lying around.

You don't treat treasure carelessly. So, how are you protecting and guarding and keeping and taking care of your relationship with your wife? What value have you assigned her? And why does God believe she deserves honorable treatment? Why does God believe that your wife is worthy of the highest appraisal?

Well, Peter, a married man himself, effectively says, "I thought you'd ask that question, so let me tell you why."

Notice further in *verse 7. Show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life.*

2. Peter gives the husband a daily assignment and now he delivers a prophetic announcement

She has inherited equally the gracious gift of life. Most evangelical scholars take this inheritance context and connect it with chapter 1 to mean that Peter is wanting every husband to look down the road to that moment when his bride will be coroneted and seated as a bride of Christ.

She is a fellow heir – a joint-heir – of eternal life. In other words, your wife is a co-inheritor of a life that, in its fullest manifestation, will take place in eternity.^{vi}

Brothers, you are not just married to a woman; you are married to a royal heir who will live forever.

Peter is reminding every believing husband of every believing wife that he is actually chaperoning her on her way to that moment when he will hand her off to her Bridegroom and Lord. How are you taking care of a future member of the bridal party of Heaven?

As it relates to the gospel, your marriage is a partnership in the spiritual benefits of the gospel.^{vii}

While you husbands, as we have seen, have been given greater authority and accountability as the head of the home, when it comes to the gospel and spiritual privileges and eternal importance and a crown and a throne in the coming kingdom, husbands and wives are co-regents – co-heirs with Christ.^{viii}

When this statement was read in the first century assembly, I have little doubt that it caused quite a stir in the worship service. I can imagine women putting their heads together, whispering; stunned, surprised, excited, mystified at this prophetic announcement.

You need to understand that the gospel elevated women to an entirely new level they had never seen before. Anyone who tells you that Christianity has held women down doesn't know their history.

Travel back into Greek and Roman cultures where wives led quiet lives of misery. They had

no personal rights; they were without legal protection; they were exploited and given the most distasteful work in the household.

They were viewed by their Greek and Roman husbands as far beneath them in status and worth. The Athenian orator Demosthenes once said that mistresses were for pleasure and wives for raising legitimate heirs to the family name.

Even in the Jewish culture during the days of the apostles, Jewish women were treated terribly. They had no legal rights and divorce was rampant in the Jewish culture for just about anything a man might find displeasing.

In fact, Jewish men would offer a typical morning prayer that included the phrase, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who has not made me a Gentile or a woman..."^{ix}

Even today, in cultures without a Christian influence – such as Islamic countries – they continue the Greek and Roman view that women can be denied equal value and personal rights. The husband has the legal right to beat his wife for disobedience. Add to that the lack of legal fairness – to this day, inheritance rights are half, at best, of that of male heirs. And on and on it goes.

It will be the gospel that will make seismic changes in the value of a woman. One historian wrote that the birth of Jesus Christ was the turning point in the history of the woman.

The gospel commands a husband to love his wife like he loves himself – or better yet – like his Lord loves the church (Ephesians 5:25).

The gospel informs women that their inheritance in the coming kingdom isn't half or less than men; they are equally co-heirs in that coming, glorious kingdom (1 Peter 3:7).

What is the value of a woman? Peter is delivering prophetic announcement that changes her price-tag and any man's perspective on her value.

I read recently about a man who had inherited a blanket from his aunt and he had never thought much of it. In fact, it was usually thrown over a chair in the bedroom, rather casually, where it had stayed for years until the Antiques Roadshow came through Tucson.

His aunt had once told him that it had belonged to Kit Carson, but they thought she was a little looney by then and had no idea. Anyway, on a whim, he and his wife took that blanket to see if it was worth anything.

According to the article I read, the appraiser that day almost fainted when he saw the blanket. Although he couldn't prove it once belonged to Kit Carson, it did indeed date back to the early 1800's. It was an original Navajo creation and only fifty remained in existence.

The blanket was valued at \$350,000. The couple promptly sold it at auction and got \$500,000 dollars. I have read that people arrive at the Antiques Roadshow alone and leave surrounded by armed guards. What they had casually walked in with was now something to guard at all costs.

Make this kind of attitude your daily assignment; listen carefully to this prophetic announcement. Finally, take heed – Peter now delivers a closing and a very serious advisement.

3. A Serious Advisement

Husbands . . . 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.

Your prayers can certainly be understood as the prayers of the household or the prayers of the couple, but ***your prayers*** has a direct reference to the prayer life of the husbands themselves. Peter is assuming that every believing husband is going to want to be praying.^x

All this ***so that your prayers will not be hindered***. Wait a second. There was no stern warning given to women who refuse to submit to and respect their husbands; there was no closing warning to wives for failing in their responsibilities, so why then to husbands?

When we understand that the wife represents the mystery of the church united with Christ, but the husband represents the mystery of Christ

united with the church, we then understand that at her best, the wife is like the church. At his best, the husband is to represent Christ. Let that sink in. The husband represents God in the home. The stakes are then so much higher, his influence that much more critical, his failure that much more devastating.

Understood bluntly, husbands, if you don't care about your wife and care for your wife, God doesn't care about your praying.

So that your prayers will not be hindered.

The word Peter uses for ***hindered*** was a Greek word used for making a road impassable.^{xi} Enemy soldiers would blockade roads using boulders.

Paul used the same word to explain that he'd been hindered from visiting the Romans earlier (Romans 15:22); Paul told the Thessalonians that he had been hindered more than once in his efforts to return to them (1 Thessalonians 2:18); Paul further used the word to rebuke the Christians in Galatia when he wrote that they had done so well in their progress, but who was hindering them from advancing? (Galatians 5:7)

The word also carries the idea of cutting in or interrupting.^{xii}

There isn't any more serious divine threat than this, is there? That there could be the interruption of all the promises of prayers heard and answered?^{xiii}

Prayers are hindered; the Holy Spirit is grieved; the Enemy of the gospel is given opportunity to blockade the paths of spiritual progress and effectual prayer.^{xiv}

The man who sins against his wife by knowingly refusing to show her consideration and honor and kindness finds a barrier between him and God. In other words, don't go to God as if everything is alright if you don't care to go to your wife to make things right.

Imagine the implications – If you are not interested in listening to the needs of your wife, God isn't interested in listening to the needs in your life.

Your marriage is actually an excellent barometer of the reality of your Christianity. It doesn't matter what people say in here or at work – “what a wonderful Christian that man is.” That doesn't matter nearly as much as what your wife says about you in the home.

What is your wife's assessment of the reality of your Christianity? I can guarantee it has a lot to do with your assessment of the value of your wife.

If your marriage has a back door, don't ever go to God for an open door.

You see, according to Peter, your fellowship with God is related to your fellowship with your wife; out of fellowship with God means you will be out of fellowship with your wife.

We men know that all too well. We get out of fellowship with God and it doesn't take long before everybody in the household knows about it.

But here is Peter's point: when you act sinfully and proudly and selfishly and you don't care about living with your wife with courtesy and kindness, you get out of fellowship with your wife. Then you are, in fact, out of fellowship with God. Guaranteed.

Brothers, when you offend your wife, you offend God.^{xv}

This is a bigger deal than we thought. Are we partners with our wives or competitors? Is your wife your servant, placed on the planet to meet your every need, or do you view her as a fellow heir of the coming Kingdom – someone God has

allowed for you to chaperone with kindness, to Heaven.

Let's be honest. Because of our fallen nature, these 7 verses are an uphill climb. Wives will struggle with respecting and following the lead of their husbands; husbands will prefer their agendas and egos over the needs and feelings of their wives.^{xvi}

Marriage becomes competition rather than cooperation. One author wrote, domestic harmony doesn't come easy. Sometimes it feels downright impossible.^{xvii} Indeed.

Just don't give up. Rely daily on the power of the Spirit and die daily to the pride of self. Stay at it even through hurtful times and disappointing times – though there will be many.

Learn to confess quickly. Re-adjust the appraisal because it tends to slip and press on. Don't quit. You happen to be married to a royal son or a regal daughter of the King. And one day, you will witness the coronation of your spouse – a co-regent with Christ – and watch them and join them as we, the redeemed, take our places in the bridal party at the marriage supper at the Lamb and shout with joy –

I mean, it will be unrestrained, unbridled joy as we inherit the glory of God's presence and the wonder of God's Kingdom – and beyond that, eternal life!

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 9/17/2017 by Stephen Davey.

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