



**God's Divine Design Under Attack – Part 5**  
**Various Scriptures**  
**GCSP – 08/09/2008**

About 20 years ago, Connie and I had the privilege of taking a dream vacation to the island of Oahu. I don't remember how long the flight was from Chicago to Honolulu but I do recall how vast the Pacific Ocean was. Traveling at 400-some miles per hour, or however fast planes flew back then, we saw nothing but ocean for hours and hours. It seemed like you could not exhaust the immensity of the Pacific. How a plane could find some itty-bitty islands in the midst of this vastness was beyond my comprehension – and we were only flying over a small portion of it.

I feel like the topic of marriage and relationships is somewhat like the Pacific; there is so much to cover that it could go on and on. It is not my intent to fully expound on everything God has to say concerning marriage and relationships during this series. The Holy Spirit led me to define God's standard for the roles and responsibilities of husband and wife, and hopefully I have at least scratched the surface on these topics. I doubt any of the material presented has been easy to swallow; some of it has been quite painful because of the fallen world we live in and the extent to which we have adopted the world's views on marriage. I trust at least some of the material I have covered has given you pause to think and evaluate how closely you are following God's design as opposed to Satan's design.

Unless the Holy Spirit changes my course, which He has every right to do of course, I will be preaching two or three more sermons from various passages of Scripture concerning marriage. I will probably be bouncing around; meaning I may spend part of the sermon preaching to the wives and part to the husbands. After this series we will then move on to a few other topics God has placed on my heart and eventually get back to learning more about Jesus in Matthew's gospel.

Let's pray.

A young army recruit was in charge of the base armory one day when the phone rang. A gruff and authoritative voice on the other end barked, "What kind of stock do we have, private?" The private replied, "Sir, we have six tanks, six trucks, twelve jeeps, and a whole mess of guns and ammunition. Oh, and we also have a Cadillac for our big fat general to cruise around in."

The caller paused before yelling out, "Private, do you know who you are talking to?" "No sir", the private answered. "This is General Weston!"

Again, there was another pause until the private asked, "General Weston, do you know who you are talking to?" Surprised, the general answered, "Well, no." The private chuckled and said, "See you around fatso!" and hung up the phone.

Now, a private in the army would not get away with such behavior as it would be easy to know who was working in the armory at any given time, but the point of this story is it's important to know who you are dealing with. This is especially true when it comes to

marriage, but women in general totally baffle men. We are at times like the little boy who got a screw driver and disassembled his walkie-talkie to learn how it works, and now doesn't have the foggiest notion of how to put it back together, let alone how it works (and yes, I was that little boy).

Can we all admit it here tonight – for the most part, we men do not know how you women work. And while you women may have a little more insight into how men work, you probably have very little insight into why we do the things we do.

Turn with me in your Bibles to **1 Peter 3**. I want to read the first nine verses but I want to focus our time on just a few. I am also going to skip any review of the first four sermons in this series and just direct you to pick up the tapes or go to our website for the transcripts if you missed any of them or would like to refresh your memory.

### **1 Peter 3:1-9**

Like Paul in Ephesians, Peter speaks to the wives before he speaks to the husbands. Unlike Paul, Peter started this discussion in chapter 2 by telling all of us to submit ourselves to all human authority. He then speaks to servants and slaves being submissive to their masters and uses the example of Jesus as our motivation to be obedient to this calling.

So when Peter uses the language, "**in the same way**" in verse 1 and verse 7, he is telling us to willingly be obedient just as Jesus Christ was.

I am not going to spend much time in verses 1-6 because I have another passage of Scripture we will eventually get to for the ladies, and also because much of this material is basically the same principle Paul taught in Ephesians and God taught in Genesis; which we have already covered in detail.

### **v. 1-2**

That being said, notice ladies that your obedience to God's design will have a godly effect on your husbands. Many commentators and preachers consider this influence to be on an unbelieving husband but Peter doesn't really differentiate between a believer and an unbeliever here. Instead he simply calls him one who is "**disobedient to the word.**" Christian men can at times be disobedient to the word just like those who are not Christians.

The point is, wives need to handle their disobedient husbands in the proper manner; and the proper manner is not criticism and rebuke and nagging and cold shoulders, etc. The proper manner is submission, and chaste and respectful behavior. God says you will win them without a word when your actions are right; when you are being obedient to God's Word even if your husband isn't.

Now for some ladies it may be very hard to believe, but actions do indeed speak louder than words, at least in this case.

### **v. 3-4**

Refine your focus. God is not telling you to let yourself go and not wear makeup or jewelry, as some denominations interpret this; instead He is simply wanting you to take

a step back and evaluate what is more important. Do you spend more time adorning yourself externally or do you spend more time adorning yourself internally; in your character and spirit?

Here's a test: How much time do you spend on your makeup, your hair, choosing what to wear, etc. in comparison to how much time you spend feeding your soul with God's Word and working on your holiness and righteousness? That's the point Peter is making. Go ahead and spend time on your outer beauty but make sure you spend more time on your inner beauty.

### **v. 5-6**

Let's just look at the last phrase ladies: "**without being frightened with any fear.**" It can be a frightful thing to be submissive to your husbands. Your husband could be living un-righteously and out of God's will at times. Your husband may not even be a Christian. But here is your guarantee; God will protect you and God will take care of things if you will simply be obedient to what He has called you to.

There is no reason to fear being submissive to your husband. I know it is difficult to give up control of the situation and I know you may at times have serious doubts about your husband's choices and decision-making ability, but you do not have to fear. Leave God's responsibility in God's hands. He will take care of His end of the bargain; and you can bank on that! You just do what He has called you to do and stay out of His business.

### **v. 7a**

So let me ask a question: how do you live with a wife in an understanding way if you don't understand her? The answer is that you can't. But here's the catch: The literal meaning of the phrase, "**in an understanding way**" is, "according to knowledge." Husbands, it is our responsibility to know our wives. Now praise the Lord, God did not put a timetable on this. I think one of the reasons God's design is for one man with one woman for life is it will take that long to truly know her. This is a lifelong process but it is a process that requires your attention and your diligence.

Husbands must take the time to know and understand their wives. We cannot operate on hearsay, stereotypes, and guesswork. We can't lump our wives into one big conglomeration of womanhood and assume we now know and understand her. We can't assume that because we like things a certain way that she will too. Each of our wives is unique; tremendously unique; fascinatingly unique. And we must purposefully learn everything we can about them with each passing day.

If it helps, consider your role as a husband is to at times be Sherlock Holmes. You need to find the clues and put all the pieces together in discovering all the uniqueness that is your wife.

### **v. 7b**

The old King James renders the wife as "**the weaker vessel.**" This rendering has led some to believe that we must walk around as if on eggshells because our wives can't take much. She is just a fragile little thing after all. Boloney! Women are stronger than men in a lot of ways. That's not the point Peter is making at all.

A good illustration to help us understand how Peter is telling the husbands to treat and care for their wives is the difference between how you treat a paper plate as opposed to treating a plate made from the finest china. You throw paper plates onto the wood picnic table and you carefully place the fine china on a nice dining table cushioned by a tablecloth. Paper plates get thrown in the trash when the meal is over, fine china is gently hand washed one at a time and carefully placed back in the display cabinet.

That's the point. Our wives are to be treated with gentleness and care as someone of extreme value and worth. She is to be a delicate Ming Vase in a world of clay pots through your eyes. Treat her accordingly.

### **v. 7c**

Let me expand on my profound statement from week one in this series; and I trust you all remember my profound statement from week one (men and women are different). When Peter says, "**since she is a woman**" he is also saying she is not a man! This is pretty basic stuff but let me know if I need to slow down guys.

She's a woman. She's different than you in just about every way you can be different. Don't treat her like a man! Don't expect her to act like a man. Don't expect her to be okay with everything you are okay with. Don't scratch your head in amazement when she doesn't think like you think. Don't bury your head in your pillow when she changes her mind five times in the course of a brief conversation. She's a woman and that means she is created by God to be quite different than a man – and praise God for that!

She has different needs, different perspectives, a different way of dealing with the world, a different way of dealing with pressure, and different interests. When you ignore these differences or refuse to accept them, you are asking for trouble and a marriage that will never become what God designed.

### **v. 7d**

Our wives are to be honored by us. They have inherited God's riches just as much as we have. They are children of the King just like we are. If we lived in a kingdom as opposed to a democracy, and you were in the presence of the king's daughter, you would treat her with honor, dignity, and respect. Your wife is a daughter of the King of kings and Lord of lords, remember that and treat her accordingly.

And guys, if we do not get to know our wives, if we do not learn to understand her, if we do not treat her as the valuable and delicate creation she is, if we do not treat her as a woman and not a man, and if we do not honor her a daughter of the King, God says our prayers will be hindered. In other words, If we are not being obedient in how we are to be godly husbands then our spiritual lives will be in the tank. We cannot have a proper relationship with our heavenly Father if we do not have a proper relationship with our wives – plain and simple.

### **v. 8-9**

Peter sums it all up by teaching both husbands and wives to treat each other properly. We must pursue harmony in our relationship, we must be sympathetic toward one another, we must exhibit brotherly love toward each other, we must be kind and tender-hearted, and we must display humility in all things. When disagreements arise we

cannot return evil for evil or trade insults with each other, but instead we are to bless the other person just as we have inherited an undeserved blessing from the Lord.

With the time we have left this evening, let me briefly give the husbands a few core needs every wife has, and then we will turn the tables next week.

Companionship – God created women out of high-intensity relational material. With most wives, much of her identity and sense of worth come from how well she relates to her husband. Women long to deeply experience one another's lives. Surface relationships do not cut it with women, especially when it comes to her husband.

One of the reasons women are attracted to soap operas more so than men is because the main characters are exposed in deeper and more vulnerable ways than you typically see in real life. The story lines go on and on and on until you know everything you can about a particular character. All of the feelings and emotions and thoughts and motives of the heart and ambitions and failures are all exposed in a man on a soap opera. Women eat that up.

The lesson we need to learn from this is our wives long to know every detail about us. Whereas God has to command the husbands to get to know their wives, a command isn't needed on the flip side; there is an intense desire there.

Most relationships begin this way. During courtship the man is very open and has a tendency to share his feelings quite easily. You relished every opportunity to spend time together and you were very creative in courting your future wife. The deep companionship your wife has always desired is a reality – until the honeymoon is over.

A Valentine card expresses this transformation very well. On the outside it says, "If you love something, set it free. If it returns, you haven't lost anything. If it doesn't return, it wasn't truly yours to begin with." On the inside the message continues, "And if it just sits there watching TV, unaware that it's been set free, you probably married it."

A woman views the marriage ceremony as the beginning of a never-ending relationship with lots of deep sharing. A man looks at the ceremony as the completion of a goal. After the honeymoon he's ready to move on to other mountains to climb, especially his career.

Guys, when you take time to "be" with your wife, you are paying her the supreme compliment. You're communicating how important she is to you. You are expressing your commitment to her. You are telling her that you enjoy her and enjoy being with her.

Security – Much more so than men, women need security. Men can live their whole lives flying by the seat of their pants, barely squeaking by and be fine with their life. Most women need more than that. When the husband is not doing his level best to provide security, including financial security, the wife will be compelled to try and find that security in a job, but it is not the same. She will never find the security she desires outside of her marriage. This is our responsibility as husbands to provide a secure home and relationship.

This does not simply mean you earn a healthy income and leave it at that. Security comes from her knowing that you will always take care of her even if your finances are always tight. **1 Timothy 5:8** expresses this responsibility we have in providing for our wives and households: **"But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."**

Significance – In general, much of what wives do is hidden from view. Appreciation is lacking in most marriages. The way a wife nurtures and develops relationships cannot be quantified or measured. The only one who can really appreciate her unique contributions and the only one who can honor her accordingly is you, her husband; which goes back to **1 Peter 3:7** where we are exhorted to honor our wives. No one else is in the position to truly exalt and praise her value and importance as your wife.

In great measure, we are dropping the ball in this regard. In 1970, a poll showed that 70% of women regarded men as basically kind, gentle, and thoughtful. The same poll run in 1990 showed that percentage below 50%, and 42% described men as basically selfish and self-centered.

Truth be told, the primary reason so many women began entering the work force back in the late 60's and early 70's was more about finding some significance than it was about the money. That trend may have changed in today's economy, but women still value praise and recognition in the workplace at a much higher rate than do men – money is still king for most men.

Emotional Responsiveness – The last core need most wives have is their husbands to be emotionally responsive. Her world is one of deeper feelings than we can understand. When our wives are feeling down or depressed our natural response is to fix whatever is wrong. Unfortunately, all too often our wives don't necessarily want it fixed! Often our wives don't want broken things fixed or problems solved - they just want a listening ear and a compassionate shoulder. She needs acceptance and validation that her feelings are warranted. During these times of deep emotions a woman needs time to explore these feelings, you trying to fix things or give her a quick and sanitized solution, short circuits this important time in her life.

When you just give her the emotional support she needs you aren't in essence solving the problem, but you are taking the time to experience her world and that is what she truly needs from you. It is a truly unusual and revolutionary husband who will say, "Tell me about it honey" instead of "get over it!"

**"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23)**. Husband's, if we truly exhibited these qualities in our marriages, we will have no problems being everything our wives need.

Let's pray.