

DEAR LIFE GROUP LEADERS, Last week, Peter's main focus was on the role and responsibilities of a Christian wife in a marriage - this week it will be the husband's turn.

Similar to last week, you may want to start with a few funny quotes about marriage. I am including a few for you here but again you may come up with your own.

- A good marriage would be between a blind wife and a deaf husband.
- Marriage is really tough because you have to deal with feelings...and lawyers.
- Before marriage, a man declares that he would lay down his life to serve you; after marriage, he won't even lay down the TV remote to talk to you.
- Marriage is a relationship in which one person is always right and the other is the husband!
- In my house I'm the boss, my wife is just the decision maker.
- When a man opens a car door for his wife, it's either a new car or a new wife.
- My wife and I always hold hands. If I let go, she shops.
- Marry a man your own age; As your beauty fades, so will his eyesight.
- Before you marry a person you should first make them use a computer with slow Internet to see who they really are.
- Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterwards.
- A good marriage is one where each partner secretly suspects they got the better deal.

START YOUR TIME TOGETHER

- **READ 1 PETER 3:7**
- What is the first thing that strikes you in how Peter instructs wives and husbands differently in verses 1 to 7 of chapter 3? Why did he do it in this way?

HINT: six verses to wives, one verse to husbands

DIGGING DEEPER

1. **Before we start with the husbands,** lets' get another controversial issue out on the table. I am referring to the phrase "weaker partner" or "weaker vessel" in verse 7.

- How does it make you feel as a wife to be described as "weaker"?
 - In what ways do you think a woman to be weaker than a man?
 - In what ways do you see a woman to be stronger than a man?
 - Does this "weaker partner" identification seem to add further support to the argument that a woman's call to submit to her husband means that she is less important or less valuable (cf. 1 Peter 3:8; Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-20; 1 Corinthians 7:4; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 5:21)? Why or why not?
2. **This is the time** all the wives were waiting for. The time to focus on a Christian husband's role and responsibilities in marriage.
- Peter starts his instructions by the phrase "in the same way". What is he referring to?

There are 3 exhortations in this one verse to husbands who want to glorify God in their marriages. For an easier way to remember, let's start all with the letter "C": "Companion", "Considerate" and "Courteous".

3. **Companion:** Peter says to husbands, live with your wives. The word "live" in its' origin means: "to dwell together", "to be at home with", "a close and intimate togetherness", "to keep them company". According to Peter, it is the role and responsibility of a husbands to create a close relationship of harmony in your home. Don't put that on your wife.
- Husbands have you seen this as one of your roles? Or is this a new concept to you?
 - Are you really living with your wife? Are we really keeping them company? When we are home, are we really home? And when we are home, is our family really glad we are or are they counting the minutes when we go back to work?
 - Last Sunday husbands were given the analogy of thermometer verses thermostat. Which one do you think you are? Which one do you think your wife or kids think you are? Which one do you really want to be?

4. Last week, wives were challenged to take an inventory of how much time they spend on the outer beauty verses inner beauty. This week we are asking the husbands to take an inventory of their lives.
- How much time do you spend outside home verses at home?
 - How many of those hours spent outside are by force (like working hours, car maintenance, mowing lawn and etc.)
 - How many of those hours spent outside are by choice (like unneeded overtime, hobbies, friends and etc.)
5. **Considerate:** Peter instructs the husbands to “be Considerate”. Other translations: “according to knowledge” (ASV); “with understanding” (NKJV);
- Google defines the word considerate as: “careful not to cause inconvenience or hurt to others”
 - What does the word mean to you as a husband? How do you show consideration to your wife?
 - The original meaning of the word has to do with knowledge and understanding.

GROUP LEADERS: You can use this humorous story to lighten the mood:

A young man was walking along one of Southern California's sandy beaches with his surf board. He suddenly spots this bottle which has recently washed up on the beach. It's obvious it's been tossed around for a long time. He picks up the bottle and notices that it still has the cork intact. So, being curious as to what may be inside, he manages to get the cork out and out pops a Genie.

After expressing profound appreciation for having been let out of the bottle, the Genie grants his benefactor the classic, "one wish" and it will be yours. Being an avid surfer, it doesn't take him long to say, "I've always wanted to surf Hawaii, but I get seasick on ships and I'm afraid to fly. Would you build me a bridge to Hawaii?"

The Genie replies: "Do you know what you are asking for? Do you know how long the bridge would have to be? Think of the enormous challenges for that kind of undertaking. The supports required to reach the bottom of the Pacific! The concrete and steel it would take! It will nearly exhaust several natural resources. And the maintenance of that bridge! No, think of another wish."

The man said OK and tried to think of a really good wish. Finally, he said, "I've been married and divorced four times. My wives always said that I don't care and that I'm insensitive. So, I wish that I could understand women ... know how they feel inside and what they're thinking when they give me the silent treatment ... know why they're crying, know what they really want when they say nothing ... know how to make them truly happy ... I really want to understand women and how they think!"

After a long sigh, the Genie responds: "Would you like that bridge with two lanes or four?"

- Now this is funny and to some extent true but all joking aside, Husbands do you really know your wife?

6. **Companion:** Last Sunday we were told that a survey revealed that the average husband and wife had thirty-seven minutes a week together in actual direct and meaningful communication.

- What was your response to that information? Did you say - WOW, what do they talk about for all that time? Or did you say, well, we talk more than that so that means we are above average.
- Recall the time you first met your wife. (Maybe a few can even share some experiences).
 - What was your courting experience like? Did you try to get to know her and learn about her, her family, her past, her likes and dislikes and so on? Did you go through a pre-marital counselling course with her?
 - How about now? Has your sense of wonder come to an end? Have you stopped your learning experience? Do you know what makes them happy, sad, angry, anxious, afraid?
 - Have you taken a refresher course? In our jobs, we are often required to take refresher course to do our jobs better. How come we don't take refresher courses for the 2nd most important relationship of our lives?

- A question for wives: How can you make it easier and delightful for your husband to want to spend time with you and get to know you on a deeper level?

7. **“Courteous”**. So husbands we need to “be a companion”, “be considerate” and lastly “be courteous”. Peter says “treat them with respect” (NIV). Other translations: “giving honour unto the woman” (ASV);

- What two reasons does Peter give for husbands to treat their wives honourably and respectfully?
- Wives, when do you feel most honoured in your marriage? Give practical and clear examples.
- Husbands how do you show honour to your wives? Do you show your appreciation to your wife regularly (not just on Mother's Day or her birthday) both in private and in front of children and acknowledge the things she did for you, children and the family?

- Husbands, do you have any unanswered prayers? How about giving these wise exhortations a try and see if your prayers are answered?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT FOR THE HUSBANDS

1. Is there anything God has revealed to you that you need to repent to your wife for any hurtful spoken words or actions?
2. What area of your life God is asking you to make some sacrifices or compromises so it can lighten up the load from your wife?
3. Is there any area of your marriage, you can show grace to your wife where it's seemingly feeling undeserved?
4. What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.
5. Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT FOR BOTH HUSBANDS AND WIVES

1. In the next week, write 4 qualities that you appreciate most about your spouse and tell them? Tell them why you appreciate that about them.
2. Using 1 Peter 3: 1-7 as a guide, admit the one thing you would most like to change about yourself.

GROUP LEADERS: If it is possible, before you go to a time of prayer, have husbands and wives spend a few minutes together. Let them think about what they have heard in the last two weeks. Encourage them to spend a few minutes talking with each other. For some this might be the first time in a long time to do this. Maybe put some quiet background music. Ask them to each think about their own shortcomings and not the other spouse.

LET'S SPEND SOME TIME IN PRAYER