



“A Wordless Witness” (I Peter 3:1-7)

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Intro:

A woman named Barbara was driving home from a teaching assignment in Northern Arizona when she saw an elderly Navajo woman walking on the side of the road. She stopped and offered the woman a lift, and after some small talk, the Indian woman noticed a bag on the seat next to Barbara. “What in bag?” asked the woman. Barbara glanced at the bag and said, “It’s a bottle of wine, I got it for my husband.” The Navajo woman was silent for a moment and then, with the quiet wisdom of an elder said, “Good trade.”

Stumpy and his wife Martha went to the State Fair every year, and every year Stumpy would say, “Martha, I’d like to ride in that airplane.” And every year Martha would say, “Stumpy, that airplane ride costs ten dollars, and ten dollars is ten dollars.” This one year Stumpy and Martha went to the fair and Stumpy said, “Martha, I’m 71 years old. If I don’t ride that airplane this year I may never get another chance.” Martha, replied, “Stumpy, that airplane ride costs ten dollars, and ten dollars is ten dollars.” The pilot overheard them and said, “Folks, I’ll make you a deal. I’ll take both of you up for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and not say one word, I won’t charge you. But if you say one word it’ll be ten dollars.” Stumpy and Martha agreed, and up they go. The pilot did all kinds of twists, turns, and dives, but not a word from either Stumpy or Martha. He does the same tricks all over again, but silence. They land and the pilot turns to Stumpy. “By golly, I did everything I could think of to get one of you to talk, but you didn’t. That’s amazing! Stumpy then said, “Well, I was gonna say something when Martha fell out, but ten dollars is ten dollars.”

Peter began this section with the believer’s purpose in the world in view (refer back to 2:12). So these are instructions on how to let “the world” see our good deeds and be drawn to Jesus Christ. Chapter three takes us right into the home, and shows how a wife may be a powerful witness to her husband, and how a husband may be a powerful witness to his wife.

Why is it that in our day, when there are countless seminars, tapes, videos and books available on marriage, that we see even Christian marriages unraveling to an unparalleled degree? Part of the answer may lie in all the information we have on the subject. You see, what God says is simple and straightforward. The real issue is not knowing what to do, but rather doing what we know.

I. WIVES AS POWERFUL WITNESSES (vv.1-6).

A. Some Things To Note

1. God's design for every marriage

- Eph.5:22-24

- This is usually the point that women tune out, and men tune in. But ladies, please listen to what God has to say here. We will deal with the men in a moment.

2. The context of the passage (refer back to chapter 2)

- The purpose behind the wife's submission here goes beyond that of God's design for marriage. Here the purpose is to be a witness to an "unbelieving" husband (either not saved, or backslidden).

3. This is not a guarantee that the husband will be changed/saved. But it is a guarantee that the wife will be used as a witness toward that end.

4. This is a witness "without words."

- Wendy's Wordless Witness In My Life

- Women already have a natural gift for talking, so this makes God's instruction here even more challenging.

B. Characteristics Of A Wife That Is A Powerful Witness

1. Submissive

- Sarah obeyed and called Abraham "master"

- Even my own marriage is not to this point yet (but I'm hopeful).

2. A life marked by purity and reverence

- KJV = chaste conversation coupled with fear; the fear has reference to the honor shown to the man, the same as one "fearing" the Lord.

- Eph.5: 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must *respect* her husband.

- KJV = "reverence"; 5399. phobeo, fob-eh'-o; from G5401; to frighten, i.e. (pass.) to be alarmed; by anal. to be in awe of, i.e. reverere:--be (+ sore) afraid, fear (exceedingly), reverence.

3. Beauty that is beyond skin deep

- Roman women were captivated by the latest fashions of the day, and competed with one another in dress and hairdos.

- See Prov.31

- Leah's faithfulness to Jacob, then at the end of his life desiring to be buried beside her and not Rachael. Jacob was more physically attracted to Rachael, but over time Leah's beauty in character meant more than the physical attractiveness of Rachael.

4. A gentle and quiet spirit

- Prov.19: 13 A foolish son is his father's ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping.

- Prov.21: 9 Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

- Prov.25: 24 Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

- Prov.27: 15 A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day; 16 restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.

- Note: Solomon had 300 wives!

- I Thess.4: 11 Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you,

- You will never preach him into being a godly husband ("Why can't you just be like _____").

5. Does not give in to fear

- What is the fear a wife might give in to here?

- The fear of submission

- Rare for women in our culture; what will other women say about you?

- The fear of losing my identity/independence

- The fear of being unfulfilled

- The fear of him never hearing the truth

- The fear of losing my dominant position/rights. (Perhaps you once wore the pants in the family, or are right now.)
- The fear of where will my “clueless” husband will lead me and the family? (Abraham going to Egypt...twice; Gen.12:10-20; 20:1-18)
- *Note:* Submission for a wife does not mean that you submit to sin. (Don't lie for him, etc.).

II. HUSBANDS AS A POWERFUL WITNESSES (v.7)

* Note: Only one verse for the men here, because they can't handle too much information!

A. Some Things to Note

1. The context (refer back to chapter two; note Eph.5:21)
2. This does not mean that you are a pushover (a pansy). A man must lead his wife and family in truth. Sarah failed when she lied for her husband in Egypt, but Abraham failed here when he listened to his wife in regard to Hagar (Gen.16:1-4ff).

B. Instructions For The Husband

1. Treat your wife with respect.

* KJV = give “honour” to the wife

* Honour = 5092. time, tee-may'; from G5099; a value, i.e. money paid, or (concr. and collect.) valuables; by anal. esteem (espec. of the highest degree), or the dignity itself:-honour, precious, price, some.

* Time, money, dignity...The husband should treat his wife as an expensive, beautiful, fragile vase, filled with expensive treasure.

* Most wives feel as though so many other things/people are more important than her (Wendy telling me that I reacted to the kids more quickly than to her). But guys do not realize they are communicating this to their wives!

* Would your wife say you make her feel valuable?

* I am letting my wife go to England this summer (Contrast the way I was with Terri, etc.)

2. Recognize that she is the weaker partner.

* The idea is to respect her as the weaker partner. She is feminine, and she could be disrespected and taken advantage of as a result.

* Gen.3: 16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, *and he will rule over you.*"

* Domestic violence today; Comments and letters from Sheryl Shay, Kelly Miller, etc.

3. Don't forget that she is an heir of salvation just like you.

4. Be considerate.

* KJV has it a little better here. It says to dwell with your lives "according to knowledge." And that's where the problem begins for men. You see, we don't understand women. But at the same time, most women don't understand men.

* Illus: A fellow was once thinking of how sailors referred to ships as "she" and "her." He then wondered by what gender computers might be addressed. So he set up two groups of computer experts, the first comprised of women, and the second of men. Each group was asked to recommend whether computers should be referred to in the feminine gender, or the masculine gender. They were asked to give four reasons for their recommendation.

The group of women reported that computers should be referred to in the masculine gender because:

1. In order to get their attention, you have to turn them on.
2. They have a lot of data, but are still clueless.
3. They are supposed to help solve problems, but half the time they are the problem.
4. As soon as you commit to one, you realize that, if you had waited a little longer, you could have had a better model.

The men concluded that computers should be referred to in the feminine gender because:

1. No one but the Creator understands their internal logic.
2. The native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else.
3. Even your smallest mistakes are stored in long-term memory for later retrieval.
4. As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending half your paycheck on accessories for it.

* Men do not understand the needs of women, and even when they do, they can't relate to them, so they tend to ignore them...a man may go on for years, always doing what he wants to do, and thinking that his wife is enjoying the journey as much as he is...

* Things I've learned about my wife:

- My wife just does not get excited about fishing...or boating...she could care less if I sold the boat tomorrow (Try and relate to that kind of thinking!).
- She loves pillows. The only pillow I owned before I was married was the one I slept with. We now have pillows that serve no practical purpose (in my mind). They are just there for looks!
- She does not like “conquering the road” when we take long trips in the car.
- She takes no pride in not asking for directions when we’re lost.
- She has a “need” to talk; I know what you’re thinking, that any man should know this long before he’s married. But here’s the truth. Men know women love to talk, but many have never learned that they NEED to talk.
- My wife does not enjoy burping contests (especially at the dinner table); nor does she appreciate flatulation!
- She does not enjoy COPS, football, etc.
- She does not have the same sexual drive as I do, and I truly cannot relate to that. And she seems to desire conversation before intimacy (????).

C. Effects Failure Has On A Husband’s Prayer Life

- * God says he will not listen to you until you learn to love your wife.

III. ADDENDUM: HELPING MEN AND WOMEN UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER.

A. The Physiological Differences In Men And Women

- * Women have 2x chromosomes, men have an x and y chromosome.
- * Women have 4/5 of a gallon of blood in their body, while men have 1.5 gallons (generally can work longer, harder than a woman).
- * Women deteriorate 2% every ten years, men 10% (and increases significantly for men after age 40).
- * For women, 20% body weight is muscle, while for men, 40% is muscle.
- * Men’s bones are heavier, skulls thicker.
- * As a result of testosterone, men are more lateral brained, using only one side of the brain at a time (predominantly the left side). Women are more bilateral (but predominantly right brained), which makes them more sensitive to sound and sight, etc. Men basically live in one room at a time, while women can be in several rooms at once...

* Illus: Subliminal messages on a screen and ask men and women to write down what they see, women would be writing and men would be going, "Did you see that? What was that?"

* Illus: They wired microphones to girls and boys ages 2-4 yrs. old and recorded sounds they made. 100% of the girls sounds had something to do with conversation, while only 60% with the boys. 40% of the noises boys made were non-language sounds (car sounds, etc.).

* Give a boy a stick and what does he do with it? Makes it into a weapon. And a girl, she puts the mop head on top of it and begins talking to it!

* Men are made to be warriors. They are out to conquer. They love competition, challenges, they are generally very objective in their thinking. (That's left brain kind of stuff.)

* Women are more feeling oriented, nurturing, relational. (That's right brain kind of stuff.)

B. Examples From Life

1. Going on a long trip with the family

- The guy is out to conquer! That's why he doesn't want to stop and potty, and why he hurries you through the meal (or suggests we eat in the car)...

2. Soon after marriage, men sometimes seem as if they had brain surgery, and the wife wonders what happened to the man she married. But at that altar, he has conquered, and now he's moving ahead full bore with life (fishing, golfing, sports, etc.).

3. Watching a football game

- There's not a whole lot of nurturing going on down on the field, and even more so, she doesn't know any of the players (My wife saying she'd go see out neighbor Andre play football).

4. TV programs

- COPS, cowboy movies, war movies, etc. (Warrior kinda stuff)

- Ann of Green Gables

5. Hunting

- Guy can shoot just about anything

6. Shopping

- Men cannot understand going from store to store and just looking. They are out to conquer! Gary Smalley's shopping story.

CONCLUSION

* A man and his wife were having some problems in their relationship and were giving each other the silent treatment. The man realized that he had to be up early the next morning for a business flight to Chicago. Not wanting to be the first to break the silence (and lose), he wrote a note on a piece of paper and left it for his wife. The note read, "Please wake me up at 5:00 a.m." The next morning the man woke up, only to discover that his wife had not awakened him, and he missed his flight. Furious, he goes to get out of bed to let his wife have it when he noticed on piece of paper on the nightstand. It was a note from his wife. It read, "It's 5:00 a.m. WAKE UP!"

* Isn't it time to stop retaliating, and start submitting?

- Eph.5:21

- It is our submission to Christ that determines our obedience to these commands. Would you submit to Christ, and by so doing begin to live differently toward your husband/wife?

* For some wives, it means getting your life right with God, not giving in to the fear of what will happen if you follow his lead...for husbands, it means considering your wife's needs, desires, treating her with respect, etc. None of these changes should come as a result of feeling, but rather by faith. And wives should not be waiting for their husbands to change before they change...stalemate unless someone is willing to change.

* Marriage on a scale of 1-10...men usually rate higher than women (Have a couple stand and ask them?). Now, when she says it's a four, you can't then begin to argue about whether it's a 4 or not...