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8To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 9not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

10For,

“THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS,

MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT.

*11“HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD;
HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.*

*12“FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS,
AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER,
BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL.”*

We've been talking about husbands and wives, policemen, bosses, Presidents and Kings, masters and slaves.

All of those have in common that they are elemental relationships in human society. Those categories pretty much sum things up. What else is there, on this plane, in this world, that we could list as societal interactions.

We live in a land that has laws and authority to punish law breakers. We are largely free men and women in this land, but that freedom still has boundaries. Laws for the common good. We live under wide ranging authority and submission. We answer to Federal, State, and County authorities.

We work to live. Most of us have that relationship. Again, we're free, slavery is gone, we have choices, but the bottom line is we're still slaves to our stomachs and some basic hygiene and comfort, so we go to work and we live in some kind of authority and submission in the workplace.

And finally, at the lowest common denominator, most of us live within family groups. Pretty basic stuff. You're either a mom, or a dad, or a kid, and there are all kinds of authority / submission relationships in that final unit.

Peter has addressed all of those. Every possibility of human interaction on this plane. On earth. We've yet to talk to husbands, but we will, shortly.

All of these interactions are horizontal. Stop and put your thinking cap on for a moment. We could break down every interaction of the will and mind and decision making machine up in your head into two categories. Horizontal, men to men, and vertical, men to God, the Almighty Creator Lord.

Peter has addressed every possibility in the horizontal categories, but underlying it all is a vertical relationship that drives everything. The underlying motive for every horizontal possibility is vertical.

We do what we do because we are His. We belong to God. He has chosen us out of this world. We have thus become strangers and aliens in this world, and the citizens of this place are watching how we live. Are we really any different?

Ultimately, that's what is driving Peter to encourage us to live in a circumspect manner in all of these relationships. We are ambassador's of our Father in heaven, and how we live here, reflects back on Him. The citizens of this place are judging our God based on the fact that we belong to Him. He is Lord of us.

They cannot see Him. They see His creation, but they are disconnected from Him by sin. But we claim that He has called us out of this world,

forgiven our sin, and restored a vertical connection. So the world is watching to see if those claims are valid. Are we really any different? Or are we just the same.

Because if there's no difference, if the world cannot get some understanding of the God who we claim owns us by how we live, if it's no better than how they live, why would they investigate any further.

And that is a summary of everything Peter has said so far. You are christians. You are called out ones. You are an ethnos, a race, set apart from all of the races of this world. You are elect. Separated from this world.

But you live IN this world, and you interact with the citizens of this horizontal plane, this fallen world as strangers and aliens here. Foreigners here for an extended stay, who have a home in another world.

And Peter says, that's who you are, therefore, for the sake of the world looking on, live circumspectly in every relationship that God has seen fit to leave you in.

And we've covered all of those possibilities except we didn't finish the verse about husbands.

7You 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.

It's a simple verse, but oh so complex. Easy to understand, but impossible in it's depth. Let's look at it and try not to make more of it than what is really there.

7You husbands in the same way,

Again we see that phrase, *in the same way*. And that is what I covered in my introduction. Husbands, your motivation is the same as all the

other relational possibilities. We do this because the world is looking on.

And *in the same way* also has bound up within it, authority and submission. Husbands are to live with their wives, in the same way. There is a sense in which we submit to our wives. Now this is tricky.

God has designed that the man, the husband is the head of the household. But that just means he has an ultimate presidential veto. It doesn't mean he's smart if he overuses it.

In the same way has at its roots, the idea of mutual respect. Mutual respect. Every relationship that falls under the words, *in the same way*, is based on mutual respect.

So Peter says *live with your wives in an understanding way*

The word there for understanding is *gnosis*. Knowledge. Intelligent choices based in knowledge, or understanding. So Peter says you need to be smart about the woman. Some knowledge. Some intelligence. There's so many possibilities in that word.

Women are different than men. The key to understanding women is to be smart enough to realize, you'll never understand the woman because, she is a woman. It pleased God to do that.

Don't tell me God doesn't have a sense of humor. I know He does, because I am created in His image, and I definitely have one. I love to laugh, and I understand how important it is to laugh. That just means God's sense of humor, and laughter is infinitely more than what mine is. He created me in His image.

So, it pleased God to make women different. And I'd lay you really good odds that He enjoys watching us try to figure them out. I think He's having a good laugh even as I try to make any sense out of Peter's verse.

I need to digress for a minute here. This seems like as good a place as

any.

God made 2 sexes. Humans are binary. Male and female. It pleased God to do that and we look at what He has done with awe. What a boring world if God had only made men. The more you think about that, the scarier it is. Hideous world. Colorless, horrible thought.

Or if He only made women. Better, perhaps, but still empty. One dimensional and boring.

God made men and women because we are incomplete without the other. Men compliment women and make them complete. Women compliment men and make them complete. Sort of. Ultimately we discover we're only really complete as a threesome. Man, woman, God. Therein is real completeness.

But even on the horizontal plane of fallen humans, the complimentary roles of men and women are what make the world what it is. That idea of men and women and how we compliment each other, points to a loving creator.

But all of what I just said is under attack. Satan in his ongoing battle with God seeks to undermine that very core relationship that gives evidence of the Creator.

Our culture has rejected God, and in doing that, it's a quick jump, a short leap to saying that gender relationship doesn't matter. Everything God designed in His creation of male and female doesn't matter. In fact, you get to decide what you are, not God. Your birth gender assignment doesn't matter. It's just an unfortunate accident. God didn't do that. You decide.

This week, you may have heard it in the national media, the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood issued a Statement called the Nashville Statement.

I urge every single one of you to go to cbmw.org and read the preamble and the 14 short articles of that definitive statement. If you can't

remember cbmw.org, I have already put a page up that is prominent at our website with a link to it. It's an important line in the sand that the church of God has drawn.

Every important evangelical leader that is sound biblically, including yours truly, has signed that statement. The battle lines are forming around this issue and this Statement is definitive for us.

Transgenderism and homosexuality are Satanic lies. They are in direct defiance of the order of design of **complimentary** relationships between male and female that God created. OK, I now return you to Peter and his direction for husbands. It all revolves around God's complimentary design.

And Peter is pretty much doing the same thing I'm doing. The verse says, husbands, use your head. Be smart about your wife. She's a woman. Think. God made her different.

Just knowing that much is helpful. Use your head. She is different than you. God didn't tell her to use her head. He designed her to think with her heart. Peter says, all I've got is; live with her in an understanding way. Everything about her is different than you. Go with it. Be smart about it.

live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman;

A quick note. Wives are women. Female. This is the word of God, hear it. For 20 centuries this sidebar would be unnecessary. In fact it would have been downright weird 50 years ago to point this out. Not so today. The Bible offers a single choice of the two sexes for wife. Female by birth.

So, Peter doesn't have much to really help us out. Other than, engage your brain. You're living with a woman and she is totally not like you. And then he throws in the part about her being weaker. You're weak. She's weaker.

So, in order to get out of this deal alive, I have to go and study the greek word. What exactly are you saying Peter. And it's safe. We're OK. You can lower the "danger" flags.

What the greek word means is, she isn't as big as you. She has a percentage less horsepower than you.

I'm such a gear head. Sorry ladies. So I have two late 1930's Fords. A 1938 coupe and a 1939 Truck. And it turns out that Ford had 2 motors available. A 60 horsepower, and an 85 horsepower.

The '38 coupe has 60HP. The '39 truck has 85HP. This greek word is perfect in describing the coupe. It simply isn't as strong. It'll get you to the top of the hill, but a little slower than the truck. It's weaker.

Just to be safe, I looked it up on Google. Women have about 25% less muscle mass than men. They aren't as big. Physically.

Still, Peter says, you need to engage you brain, men. She may be smaller, but she can still turn you inside out, in most cases.

Historically, if you study, it's common for men to outlive their wives. Perhaps if they had understood this verse. She's smaller than you. Don't wear her out making her do as much physical labor as you. You pulled the plow for 10 rows. Maybe 8 is enough for her. That's all the word means.

It doesn't mean she's weaker mentally. In fact you're going to have to engage your brain to keep up with her. But she may not be quite as sturdy. You outweigh her, in most cases, talking law of averages, by a percentage.

And finally, Peter says; *and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.*

She is your equal in God's eyes. She is a fellow heir. She is in line to inherit the exact same thing as you. Therefore, you respect her as an equal. We're back to mutual respect. God didn't make you better than

her, smarter than her, He only made you different.

And He assigned you the role of head of household. Everything He did with both of you in that relationship compliments the other. Our hearts go out to single moms. God didn't plan it that way.

This one thing, this mutual respect and equal honor before God, separates the citizens of heaven from every other ranking down here on the vertical plane. Honoring God's word and His design elevates women. Take this book away from man - woman relationships, dismiss God's word, and what is left?

Women have been brutalized, mistreated, bullied, preyed on and every other evil thing known to man because they aren't as big.

After the fall, in the garden of eden, when sin begins to reign, men controlled by sin lost the dignity of their creator. Left to themselves, they rule over women like horses out on the range where I work.

The biggest meanest horse, drives away all the other horses, and herds the women into doing what they want. That's a brutal description, but without the dignity that this book brings to women, that's where fallen man ends up. We're well on the way back to that, since our culture has set this book aside.

What a difference between what I just described, and Peter's simple words. *and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life*

We honor and respect women, because they have the dignity of being equal's in God's blessings and benefits. Created in His image, they have equal value and dignity.

They are fellow heirs of grace, unmerited favor, and life, abundant life in conjunction with the Holy Spirit who quickens them the same as us.

But Peter combines those words to form an idea about living, even in this world, as christians. It isn't all just pie in the sky, by and by. God is gracious to us here. Amidst all the trials and toil and tears of this life,

there is joy. God extends the grace of life to us here and now, as well as our inheritance when we see Him.

And much of that grace found in daily living is in the joy of a marriage and a partner in grace. Hours after initial creation, God in His goodness said, it isn't good for the man to be alone. I'll make him a partner. A companion. A compliment.

Women are God's gift to us. And in most cases, not all, but most, the grace of living is in the companionship of a complimentary person. Husbands and wives form unique teams. They are a family, the basic unit of civilization. Then children come and stay for a time, and then go off to form that unique unit all over again.

Within that God given gift to us, is the grace of living. We are fellow heirs of the grace of living. As I look back over 65 years, all of the joys, all of the grace of life hasn't come from careers or hobbies or accomplishments or whatever else is held in highest regard these days. The grace of life, the joy of living is based in our home, our family, our travel through life, together.

And finally, Peter encourages the men. Treat your wife with dignity, as an equal, or pay the price. If you mistreat your wife, God will mistreat . . . you.

so that your prayers will not be hindered. If you mistreat your wife. If you don't honor her as equal in value in God's eternal plan, and equal in creation to you, your prayers will go unheard. OK, not unheard, but perhaps unanswered. Hindered. Stalled . . . for a time. Until He gets your attention.

In the sermon on the mount Jesus says; Mt. 5:23 - 24 *Therefore if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.*

If unreconciled trouble with a brother can be a hindrance, perhaps

unreconciled trouble with your wife may be double hindrance. This unit of family trumps the other relationships.

Treat your wife well, hold her in high esteem, honor her as a fellow heir of God's grace, and your prayers will not be hindered.

Vss. 8 and 9 summarize all that has been said about all the horizontal relationships with our vertical relationship to God and Him to us, being our example.

Treat others in the same way that He has treated you.

8 To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

These verses are a summary of all that has preceded them about interpersonal relationships. This is how we treat each other, and for the sake of the witness we are to our heavenly King, this is how we treat the world.

Saved and unsaved alike are recipients of honor and grace and mutual respect from the church of God. The words are interesting, and worthwhile to take a minute or two to define.

8 To sum up, all of you . . . Peter is speaking to us; the church of God, the called out ones, the elect, separated from this world. We have no basis to expect or exhort the unsaved world around us to behave this way. This is for us.

These are the attributes that separate us from the world. And they are likewise, attributes of our Master and King. This is how He treated us when we were His enemies, and this is how we treat the world that hates our God, and sometimes slanders and is hateful to us.

be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;

Harmonious is from the greek word homophrones. Two greek words combined. Homo means the same as. Two things that are the same. And Phrones is the word we ended up with *frontal* lobe. But to the greeks it was the word for thinking. So the word means be of the same mind.

Amos 3:3 says simply; *Can two walk together, except they be agreed??*

Paul says to the Philippians in 2:2 *make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.*

This is Satan's first line of offense. Get christians to fight and squabble over things they disagree about. Far too common. And by the way, there is a sweetness here. This church has been wonderful to be a part of. We are largely free of this problem. Thank you.

Next is Sympathetic. *sympatheis* Our word is just the anglicized version of the greek word. Also a compound word from 2 root words. Pathos we know well. Pathos in the greek was to suffer. And Sum is the other word and it means together with. To suffer with.

If you're a politician you say; "I feel your pain" and it means exactly nothing. But for christians, we do share each others joys and pains. We are in sympathy with our brothers and sisters. When they hurt, we hurt. When they rejoice, we rejoice with them.

Remember these aren't just inter church relational. We need also to be sympathetic to those who are duped by Satan and are on damaging dead end streets. We don't sit in judgement. There but for the grace of God go I. We are sympathetic to their blindness and misfortune and we love them in the hopes that perhaps God will rescue them even as he rescued us.

brotherly, philadelphoi. One of the three words often translated love. This is brotherly love. Family love. Unconditional love we have for our brothers and sisters, moms and dads. We treat each other as family, and

this is the strongest evangel to the onlooking world.

Our message is confusing. Our music is awful. Our prayers are empty. It's like we dropped in from outer space. But our love for each other is the universal draw.

I stand before you today the result of a bunch of ordinary high school kids, off at a retreat. I couldn't get over the way they loved each other. Brotherly love. So very different from anything the world had to offer. Whatever it was that was making that happen, I wanted it at any price. Here I am, 47 years later.

kindhearted, splagchnons. It means tender hearted. The word is derived from a medical term that is associated with the gut. The bowels. And in this case it means the very seat of your emotions.

It's the same word Paul used speaking to the Ephesians. Ephesians 4:32, "*Be ye kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another.*" Our love is from our depths. It isn't shallow surface love. It's deep seated in the bowels of who we are. Again, this is something that stymies the world. When they see this kind of love, it draws them in. It's something we have that the world is bereft of.

And lastly, Peter says we are to be *humble in spirit*

Paul gives the sense of this word perfectly to the Philippians 2:3: "*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself.*"

Again, the distinction of christians from the world if we do this. This is exactly opposite of how the world around us works. The world is dog eat dog. Claw your way to the top. Crush anyone in your way. You are the center of the universe, and anyone in the way is nothing more than collateral damage.

Our witness to the world is that everyone else is more important than us. Our example is Jesus. Ppn. 2:5-8 *5Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6who, although He existed in the form of*

God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

And finally, one last verse, and we won't do it justice this morning. So much more could be said.

9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

We've talked over and over about how heavenly people who are called out of this world and into the Kingdom of God live as opposed to how Adam's race lives.

Adams race is tribal. Left without restraints we degenerate into gang warfare very quickly.

We're seeing it on a huge scale in the world on the evening news. It's one thing when gang members go and murder some offending gangs members in so-called retaliation, and then that gang has to come and do likewise.

We're watching two bullies doing the same thing but on a nation scale instead of a gangland scale. And that's how Adam's race rolls. Since the fall in the garden, the first human born murdered the second, and on and on it goes . . . to this day.

How different it is for the elect. The called out ones who belong to the Lord Jesus. Peter says, we don't roll like the world rolls. We don't pay back. We don't return an evil when we're dealt an evil. We don't return an insult when we receive an insult.

Why? That's radically different than what is normal. Islam is a so-called honor religion. So if you dis-honor it's prophet, a horde of men with black beards will hunt you down and kill you. It isn't insult for

insult, it's death for insult.

But our God says, vengeance is mine. I will repay. And a day is coming when He will repay. Frightening thought, because the insults have been piling up unrevenged for centuries. Millennia.

Peter tells us, we don't return insults for insults. That's the Almighty's job, and we wait for Him to come and recompense. But until then, in completely radical to this world fashion, we return a blessing for an insult.

If someone does evil to us, we don't return evil. We return a blessing. That is radicalism. And it's unique to christianity. It's otherworldly.

I love the story of the guy whose car breaks down in the inner city and it's an extra mile and a half to get to help unless he takes a shortcut up a dark alleyway. Suddenly he looks up and there's four men coming toward him with black bushy long hair and black beards. Big guys. Scary.

And he thinks to himself this may be it. I may have bought the farm here. There's no place to go, no place to hide. And when they get closer to him, he notices, all four of them are carrying big black . . Bibles.

What is it about that book that turns a scary situation into a sigh of relief. In fact, the world knows you could insult all 4 of them, and they'd probably go home and get a can of gas and some jumper cables and not leave your side until you're safely on your way.

Something about that black book does that. It changes us. It turns us from tribal warriors into sweetness that's not of this world.

for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

Our model is us. We were hurling insults at God. Evil upon evil, insult upon insult, and He did not return evil for evil. He called us out of this world of insults and evil, and made us His own. He returned blessing on

us for all of the evil and insults we hurled at Him.

We were called for the very purpose that He might give us blessings and riches beyond our wildest dreams. What a small thing for us to treat others, still in this world, in the manner that the Saviour treated us.

Paul says the identical thing in Romans 12:19 - 21 *Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but leave room for God's wrath. For it is written: "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord." 20 On the contrary, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink. For in so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good....*

This is our manifesto. This is how we roll. And compared to how the world rolls, it is nothing short of radical living. If the church would obey these simple truths, we would be radically distinct from the world around us.