

Doctrinal Summary of
Prayer: Common Reasons for Rejection-Disharmonious Cohabitation

In 1 Peter 3:7 Peter identifies one of the common reasons God rejects prayer is disharmonious cohabitation.

“You 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.”

The word “live” is translated from the Koine Greek word συνουκοῦντες (“sun-oi-koun-tes”) which more literally means, “performing the continuous type of action as a matter of principle to dwell together with another based on one’s own initiation.” It describes a man as having initiated the action to dwell together with a woman in a marital relationship. This cohabitation has occurred and continues to occur as a result of the man and woman being joined together in marriage. Peter’s instruction is that the man is to dwell together with his wife in an understanding way.

The phrase “in an understanding way” is translated from the Koine Greek words κατὰ γνῶσιν (kah-tah g’noh-sin”) which more literally means, “according to the norms and standards of knowledge sought through instruction and investigation, based on response.” It identifies the means by which the husband is to be dwelling with his wife as being based on a set of norms and standards that he learns through instruction and investigation. Those norms and standards are learned by instruction in and study of God’s Word. The husband dwells with his wife according to those norms and standards through applying what he learned. While living with his wife according to knowledge, he is also to show her honor.

The words “show her honor” are translated from the Koine Greek words ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν (“ah-po-ne-mon-tes ti-maen”) which more literally means, “performing the continuous type of action as a matter of principle to give the honor and value which is appropriately due to another based on his own initiation.” It describes the husband as performing the action to render to his wife something that is rightfully hers to have. That something is her rightful honor and value as a fellow heir of the grace of spiritual life. The honor which the husband is to keep on rendering to his wife is not tied to her role as his wife or her faithfulness to fulfill it but is instead tied to her status as a member of God’s family through faith in Christ. He is to do this based on his own initiation, with the result that his prayers will not be hindered.

The word “hindered” is translated from the Koine Greek words ἐγκόπτεσθαι (“en-kop-tes-thai”) which more literally means, “to continuously be acted upon to be impeded as a result of something cutting into its path as a matter of purpose.” It identifies a repetitious impediment that keeps on popping up in front of a person’s or object’s path as it progresses toward its intended location or goal. The objects in view are the husband’s general prayers to God which will not be impeded in their journey to the throne room of God if the husband is dwelling properly with his wife and honoring her as a joint heir of grace.

The result of a husband dwelling with his wife according to the norms and standards of God’s Word and rendering his wife the appropriate honor she is to have is harmony in the home. By means of utilizing God’s Word in how he interacts with and responds to his wife he is able to rightly manage the home and properly relate to God. Failure to dwell with his wife according to God’s instruction while rendering appropriate honor to his wife will produce disharmony in their dwelling together. This disharmonious cohabitation may result in the husband’s prayers being impeded in their progress to the throne of God.