

Are you an Uxorologist?



1 Peter 3:7

Bro. Ricky Cunningham

I did something Friday afternoon I hadn't done in a long time—played nine holes of golf. Now, one of the things that I love about playing golf (if you don't play very often) is that from time to time you get to claim a mulligan. If you hadn't played in a while, you never know when you're going to need your mulligan. So when you hitting one of those really bad shots because you hadn't played in a while, you just say, "Hey, I'm going to use my mulligan." You get a do over. Well, I want to say this is the first day of a brand new week but it's the middle of Memorial Day weekend so it's been a busy, busy week for me. So I'm just letting you know I may claim a do-over after today's sermon is over. The more I studied, the more I realized I needed to study more so we may claim a mulligan and preach this sermon again in the next few weeks or the next month.

Scripture

"Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."

I've told you this before, but I just want to remind you how I work—I try to study as long as I can and then at the last hours of Saturday night and early Sunday morning, I actually arrange the sermon. It's not until I get the sermon the way I want it to be that I put a title on the sermon. I always want the title to be the main point of the message so that if you don't remember the three or four points in the message, if you remember the title then hopefully you've got the gist of what we were talking about. I say all that to say this—I didn't get the title this morning until about seven-thirty, and I want you to be ready for this because this is going to be the gist of the message to every husband here this morning, "Are You an Uxorologist?" Husbands, how many can raise your hand and say yes? How many of you don't have a clue? Well, you're not alone.

Now just so you don't feel bad, after I got my title I had just a few minutes before I had to leave to come to church, so I Googled the definition of an uxorologist, and here is what it said, "A medical doctor who specializes in urinary tract infections." I thought I must have typed this in wrong and I checked, but I hadn't. But you know how Google works—you type in what you are looking for and it says, "Showing results for..." and then it shows the most common thing closest to what you typed in. So it showed a search for *urologist* (which brought up twenty something thousand sites). But if you look underneath "Results for..." you see, "Search instead for..." and there it had my word, uxorologist. I clicked on that and when I did (this had never happened to me before), in big, bold letters it said, "There are not many great matches for this search." That surprised me. Every occurrence of this word on the internet could be put on one page, and there are only four searches! Wow, that blew me out of the water. Now, I want you to know the reason I was searching for this word was because I knew that in my little home off of Redbud Road I had created a brand new word. I knew I was going to be preaching to husbands about wives, so I just took the Latin word for wife, *uxor*, if you transliterate it with English letters, and then I put *ologist* on the end of it. I just wanted to see what the internet said about someone who specializes in the study of their wife, and there are only four occurrences to this word. Now, hopefully today after this sermon is complete and we download this sermon on the internet, wow, there'll be five and one of them will be from Hardin,

Kentucky! But if you search this word on the internet before this sermon is downloaded, here's what it's going to say, "The science of marriage for African women." So there are four other occurrences of this word on the internet, but that's not how I'm using this word. I'm asking you as a husband, are you a specialist in the study and knowing of your wife?

Now, if you just have been married a few months, a few years, you're not there yet. You are still in school, so to speak. But I pray if you're like me and you've been married for almost forty-three years, you ought to be an uxorologist. I pray after this message over, if you've just been married two, three, five, ten years, you have a desire to stay in school and not quit until you become a specialist in the knowledge of your wife. I just want to say without bragging this morning that I am a Celisa-ologist. Not to brag at all, but she's not going to be here this morning because it's Memorial Day weekend and we're camping so she stayed at the camper with some of the grandkids. At 5:30 this morning, I got a text that just said, "I'm praying for you." And then, I shouldn't say this because it's going to sound like bragging, but here's what she said, "There is no one with more authority to preach on this subject than you. You are the best husband and have been for a long, long, long time." Wow! Guys, I may need a do over, this may flop, but when this message over I want you to desire to be an uxorologist.

Can we look at the text again in its entirety? "Likewise, husbands live with your wives" — Now, this isn't saying we have multiple wives. It's addressing us collectively as a group of men, saying to each one of us men who has a wife that as an individual husband we are to live with our own wife, just one wife — "in an understanding way, showing honor [not to our wife] to the woman [Peter doesn't use the same word there but we'll talk about that in just a moment] as to the weaker vessel. [Ladies, I didn't say that; Peter said that under inspiration of God's Holy Spirit] since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." Mm...didn't expect this to end this way. Peter didn't say he wants us to do this so that we'll be great husbands, or so that we'll have great wives, or we'll have great marriages, but here's what he's saying to us men—when it's not right with her it's not right with Him. When you aren't talking to her, don't even think about talking to Him. Wow! Men,

when we got married, the whole dynamic changed. Our relationship with her reveals how our relationship with Him is, according to Peter.

“Likewise.” We saw this word last week in verse 1 before Peter tells the wife to be submissive to the husband who doesn't even obey the Word. He commands her to be submissive so that without a word, he might be one by her conduct, not outward beauty, but inner beauty. “Likewise” is reminding the wife of her motivation for doing what she does. Now, here is the context. Peter told us in verses 9 and 10 of chapter 2 who we are—as a church we're a chosen race, we're a royal priesthood, we're a holy nation, we are a people for His possession. Then, he tells us in verses 11 and 12 that we are sojourners; in other words, this world is not our home. We're sojourners, we're exiles, and we've got some folks that we're living amongst who are not Christians. Peter wants our behavior among Christians to let them see our life and then our life ultimately bring glory to God. Then to start showing us how we live our life in front of Gentiles, he does something that, if I'm being honest, we as Americans don't like. The first thing he told us was as a Christian we are to submit to the government. We don't like that. Then he tells servants to submit to their masters. Even if the master is cruel and unjust, they're still to respect their master. In verses 19 through 25, he gives those servants an example, and the example is Christ. Immediately after giving the example of Christ, he says, “Likewise, wives...” So, what's the motivation for a wife who's living with a husband who's not under the Word? Her motivation is she lives like Christ in the marriage. See, living like Christ reveals your identity as a wife to your husband.

Now, when Peter gets ready to start talking about us husbands, he also says “likewise,” which means we have the same responsibility. What's our responsibility? What's our motivation? It's the life of Christ, because when we live like Christ we reveal our identity. Identity influences behavior...likewise. Can I remind us what Peter said about Christ? He suffered. One of the reasons He suffered was to set an example for us who are going to follow Him. And when He suffered, Peter says, He did not commit sin...wow. Husbands, you should strive to be sinless. Got it? No deceit was found in His mouth. Now since this is talking about our

relationship with our wife, there should not be a time when we sin against her, and when we open our mouth there is no fraud, there is no deceit, and there is no deceiving her. When she reviles us, we don't revile back. Being from Dexter, we don't use that word, revile, a lot so I had to look it up. It means to criticize angrily or unjustly. Now can I just say something to you men? From time to time, your wife is going to revile you, she is going to critique you, and it's not a good critique. She's mad at you, she's angry, and WOO—she is going to let you have it! Maybe you've just been married a couple of days and that hadn't happened yet. It's going to happen. Just get ready for it...and when she does, you do not do that back. Got it? When Jesus suffered, He didn't threaten, but she's going to threaten you from time to time. She's going to tell you what she's going to do if you do *that* again, and when she does, don't you ever do it back. Why? Because you're a chosen race, you're a royal priest, you are a holy nation, you are a people possessed by God, you're a soldier, you're an exile, and you're following Christ so your response to her is not a response to her, it's a response to Him. You don't respond to her the way she responds, do you? You respond to her the way He responded to you.

Why did Jesus do this? So that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. Why did He bear our sins? So that it would change our life. Why do you bear your wife's sin? So that she can die to that sin and live to righteousness. Now listen to me; I'm going to say something really important here. Don't you ever try to change her by using God; you let God change her by using you. It's not going to happen when you come to church, it isn't going to happen when you're reading your Bible, it's not going to happen when you're doing family devotion; it's going to happen when you're bearing her sins! There is no wife in here who is perfect. Don't give me this, "She's killing me!" You killed Jesus, and He didn't complain about it, He didn't bellyache about it, and He didn't think He deserved a better wife—He bore it! And by His wounds, my life's been changed. I am who I am because He bore my sin. Are you listening to me? That's what your love does for her, it redeems her, but it's by the wounds! You can't shield yourself, you can't run away, you can't hide; you bear it. And then, it takes a while, but trust me...what's going to happen is eventually they see (if they are godly) what their sin is doing to you and then they'll be open to

God to deal with it. What did we do? We strayed like sheep, but we returned home to the Shepherd. She will stray from your leadership, but she'll return if you'll mirror Christ. So guys, I need you to be spiritual, and I just want you to get this picture—the next time it's going horrible with her, just know it's going horrible with Him, according to Peter. So, when you quit talking to her, don't even say a word to God because He's not going to listen.

Husbands. The word, husband, literally means house-band. You're the band that holds the house together. That's not on her, that's on you. That's why Satan's after men, because when he puts the ax to you, when he takes you down and you break, life goes this way, kids go that way, and the whole thing falls apart. Do you feel the weight of this? I hope you do. I need you guys to be strong. At our house, we've got several things that we use to hold things together. Sometimes we reach for plastic; we get a zip tie. Is there a man here who doesn't have duct tape? Duct tape, wow! How many things do you have at your home or your farm held together by duct tape? Yes it works. But we don't use zip ties and duct tape on everything. There are some other things we want to hold together that we use ratchet straps. Do any of you have to use steel? Yeah. I remember when my dad was fencing our farm, he bought a load of railroad ties and they were bundled together with steel straps. I took our hundred horsepower tractor, I put the loader under to pick them up, and I couldn't pick them all up. I literally couldn't pick them all up. So do you know what I did? I ran down to the shop, I grabbed an axe, I jumped up on top of the railroad ties, and I broke three straps and the bundle of ties broke apart. Now I could take my loader and pick up as many as I wanted to because I wasn't trying to take on the whole unit.

That's what Satan wants to do to you. He can't get your whole family so he's going to try to get you. When he breaks you, there'll be a separation—wife, kids, family. So guys, I need you not to be men of plastic, I don't need you to be men of tape, I don't need you to be men of cloth; I need you to be men of steel. If you're like me and you have an agricultural background, you know that there are times when we just need steel. Have you ever seen that steel that will not bend but it will break? It just snaps.

It's brittle. But there's another kind of steel we have on the farm and it's called tempered steel. It's strong and it bends but it doesn't break, hardly. Some things are made out of tempered steel. To get tempered steel, you heat it up to its critical point, and right below it's critical point, you then stop the heat, let it cool down, heat it up again, and you raise its critical temperature to the point that that steel will be strong but not hard. It'll be bendable. Guys, God wants you to be strong but not hard. So do you know what He's going to do? He's going to heat you up. He's going to heat you up at work, He's going to heat you up at recreational activity, and from time to time, He's going to use her to heat you up. Now listen to me. This is not about her; this is about you. You have got it all wrong when you focus on you thinking God is wanting to change her. Your circumstances may not change until God changes you. He knows what's coming down the road in your life, in your family's life. He wants you to be a man of steel, a man of tempered steel. So I need you guys not only to be spiritual, I need you to be strong. You're the strong one in the family.

Now, here's what Peter says to us husbands. Live with the woman in an understanding way. Whoa! Remember, husband means house-band. Now, Peter does something really neat here if we were Greek students (we're not). When he talks about the house-band, the verb that he uses to tell us to live with our wives is a derivative of the word husband, so in the English we would translate it this way: Husbands house with the woman in an understanding way. This word means to live, it means to dwell, but it's the picture of your house. Now I know we live in a society in which it's no longer politically correct to talk about a lady being a housewife, because a lady would tell you real quick that she's not married to the house. But this is what Peter's reminding us men of—every one of us should be a househusband. Whoa...a househusband. See, he switches from the word wife to the word woman, meaning your woman, my woman, Celisa. This word, woman is speaking of her being different from you; you're masculine, she's feminine. So what it's saying here is live intelligently with the feminine one—the one who's not like you, the one who's different from you—in an understanding way. Whoa Guys, there's a stereotype that the house is hers and everything outside is ours. We go outside the house to

bring home the bacon. Yes...but when we come home, we're to be domestic. We're to dwell with, house with, her intelligently.

Now, I'm just going to say this, when you come home, you probably don't need to turn on ESPN. Many of you do not need to turn on Fox News. And for the very few of you who watch CNN, you probably don't need to watch that either. Here's what you need to remember; I'm still in school. I am a specialist, I'm an uxorologist, and my specialty is my wife. I know some of you haven't got your degree yet...and you're never going to get it if you keep doing what you're doing. I don't understand this, because as a guy every one of us admires someone that we call a student of the game. If we need a sports score, if we need information about somebody, if we need to know how to improve our handicap, if we need to know how to do tech, we have somebody we call and we admire them cause they're a specialist in their area. I not only want you to be spiritual, I not only want you to be strong; I want you to be studious, I want you to study your wife. I want you to become a doctor, not of general family practice, but to specialize in uxorology.

So, how do we do this practically? We have to spend time with her. Now, Peter says, dwell with her, live with her, house with her. Let me tell you what this means—you aren't going to like this, I'm sorry take it up with Peter—you don't spend time with her doing what you want to do outside the home, you spend time with her inside the home. Get an idea of what it feels like to work all day inside the home, have responsibility for all those kids you blessed her with, and see what she does. Spend time with her. You do what she wants to do. Now yes, you're going to take her to do some things you want to do, and when you do that, you're going to learn what she doesn't like. But when you spend time with her, you're going to discover what she likes. This isn't about you; it's about her because it's about Him, so you have to spend time. While you're spending time, you have to observe her. You have to see what makes her tick, and you have to see what ticks her off. You have to watch and learn and become an expert. I would just suggest that while you're observing, listen. You know the average wife speaks 25,000 words a day, right? The average man speaks 12,500. Ladies, can I just say when he comes home it's not that he

doesn't love you—he's just used all of his words. ☺ If I can be honest with you, that's why he likes to watch ESPN and Fox News and CNN, and he likes to sit on the couch and do nothing. You guys have to quit doing that when you come home you have to live. You can't give your best to work, and you can't give your best to your buddies. She needs you to listen and save some words, not to critique, not to change her, but to hear her, get to know her, and understand how she feels because of what has happened in her day.

Now, if you have just been married a year or two, or five, ten years, you're not going to arrive at this. But if you are like me—I'm going to celebrate forty-three years on July 18th—you should be an uxorologist. And then, as you begin to discover things about your wife, you take her to the lab and you run experiments. Do any of you remember Mr. Tucker in freshman science class at Calloway County? Wow, we were blowing things up all the time. There's going to be some blowups in the home! You're going to run an experiment and it's not going to go good because you put the wrong amount of this or you didn't put it in the right order. You thought you knew how to do it, didn't work. You don't quit! You don't blame her! You evaluate. Let me tell you guys what you do. You ask yourself, what did I do wrong? Quit focusing on what she's doing wrong, and then rerun the experiment. But please don't keep doing the same thing! It didn't take me but one time to understand on Valentine's Day and I brought Celisa flowers. I don't buy red ones anymore because she doesn't like red roses she likes yellow. Yellow roses are more expensive than red ones. You ought to see the look on my wife's face when I bring home a yellow rose. I had a one of her students call me a little while ago who wanted do something nice for her as her Ag teacher. And she said, "Bro. Ricky, do you know what Memish's favorite flower is now?" I said, "I sure do!" It's because I'm an uxorologist. You should have seen the look on her face when she got the yellow flowers. You should have seen the look on my face! Now, it took me a while to learn this...we lost a lot of money learning this. Bought motorcycles and that didn't work. So we got into horses for her, didn't work. Went back into three wheelers, didn't work. Went back into horses, didn't work. Got four wheelers, didn't work. Got back into horses, didn't work. Eventually, we found cows...woo, praise the Lord for

cows! Now, I bought every motorcycle high and sold it low. I bought every horse high, sold it low. We spent a lot of money. Do I ever bring that up? No, I'm a slow learner! But I understand my wife, and you understand your wife too. But somehow, you want this to be about you, and I want this to be about me...and it's not about us, it's about Him, and it's about her because it's about them (unbelievers). Do you guys feel the weight of this? As husbands, God wants to use our marriage with our wife to bring honor and glory to Him, by Him revealing to an unbeliever who He is.

The reason I need a do over for this sermon this morning is because I had a bad week. This is my favorite time of the year because I love hay on the farm. Now, I don't want this to sound like I'm bragging but I want to tell this just as an illustration. I've got a deal with a guy in our church, Joseph Kelly. Joseph is a great hay master, and he has all this equipment to cut hay, so he cuts my hay because I'm a pastor. All I have to do is rake and bale it, and I love that. We had it all arranged for Joseph to come Monday to cut my hay...but his cutter caught on fire and burned up, and I was next on the list. When Joseph called me to tell me, I said, "Joseph, I hate this for you (but I was honest and then said) and I hate this for me too." So you know what I had to do. I had to go get my cutter ready, lost all day Monday, had to cut Tuesday, and had to cut Wednesday because I had to be done by Friday because it's Memorial Day weekend.

See, my wife's love language is quality time. Now, I know y'all don't know this about me at all, but I like to work. ☺ I just love to finish being a pastor and then go be a farmer, then to stop being a farmer and going being a pastor. I just love work! Now I don't work because I get anything from work like security, or self-esteem; I just love to work.

But this last week I was in a bind. It's was going to be pretty all week long and I couldn't work the weekend. So I cut all day Tuesday, start cutting all day Wednesday, and I have this thought...*Man, if I cut all day Wednesday, it's going to take me to Friday night, possibly into Saturday to get all that hay up.* Now, Celisa loves the cows so I called her and said, "Sweetie, if I cut all day Tuesday and cut all day Wednesday, and I haven't even got the baler checked out yet it, could..." She said, "Just be done Friday night." So I decided I wasn't going to cut all day Wednesday, I was going to cut just

long enough to be sure to be done about mid-afternoon Friday, because Celisa also told me that my daughter was going to be off on Friday and she would love for us to go play golf with her and her husband. So I had this thought...*Hmm, cows?...wife?* I chose my wife. I quit cutting hay in time to be done by around one o'clock. Now, I say that to say this—you should have seen the look on Celisa's face when I told her I wasn't going to cut hay all day on Wednesday because I wanted to take off early so I could be with her this weekend. Ahhh! Do you know what I did Friday? I played golf. Do you know what I did yesterday? I boated. That wasn't for me! Do you know who that was for? That's for her, because that's her love language! I understand her love language. You should understand your wife's love language!

Because I want to be right with Him, I'm going to be right with her. I can't go back and tell you how many times in those first two years, in those first five years, in those first ten years when I blew it time, after time, after time. But I'm not dumb...so I quit doing those silly things! Why? Because I'm a Celisa-ologist. I want to live with her in an understanding way, and you must desire this of your wife, showing honor to her. See, when you dwell with her, when you become domestic, when you get in touch with her who is your feminine side, you are not feminine as a man, you show honor to her, you place value on her by how you live with her—not your words, your actions. How does your wife feel about how you value her?

See, we show honor to her as the weaker vessel. I know you ladies don't like this...I didn't say it, Peter did. I can't change it; it's the Word of God. But when I read my commentaries and my scholars, I don't think this is talking about intellectually a woman is weaker. I don't think this is talking about emotionally a woman is weaker. I don't think this means spiritually the woman is weaker. Now, I know most of us men married a woman that we would win against in a wrestling match, therefore we might say this is talking about the wife being physically weaker. And in that culture, it was hard for a lady to do certain things without a man, but I don't think that's what Peter is referring to either, possibly. Now I may change my mind on this, but here's what I'm thinking...why does Peter call the woman the weaker vessel? Because Peter knew what Paul knew, and that is the

husband is the head, the wife is the body. He is the ultimate authority in the home, not her. And what that means is, you should want the input from your wife and know her side of things, but when it comes down to it, if you can't agree, the husband breaks the tie, every time. That puts her in a position of weakness; it puts him in a position of strength. Peter is acknowledging that. So what am I supposed to do? I'm supposed to live with Celisa in an understanding way where I show her value to me by showing her how valuable she is in my life, because she's my helper and without her I can't do what I'm doing. Does that make sense? I've said before that there will never be a Bro. Ricky translation of the Bible, but if there ever were, this verse would say this: showing honor to the woman, the feminine one, as the weaker but more valuable vessel. I think Celisa is more value than me for this reason—without her I can't be who I'm supposed to be. She's more valuable. She's the difference maker in my life. Your wife will be the difference maker in your life if you'll live with her in an understanding way and show honor to her, show her how valuable she is to you!

I read an article on the internet that said pastors shouldn't ever say what I'm about to say again because ladies don't like it, but I'm going to say it anyway. If we husbands are a man of steel, when we think about our wives, she's the china, she's the fine china. Now, that doesn't mean she's not usable. It doesn't mean we put her behind glass because she's breakable. It just means in our home we don't put the china where we put the plastic plates and the common plates; it's behind a glass in a cabinet with a solid door. My life as a husband should put my wife in a place to be seen because of how valuable she is in my life! She's china, not chinet, amen! But many wives feel like they're disposable, many wives feel like they're replaceable. To be totally honest with you, there are many wives in here who believe his mother...No, it has to be your wife who is valued, and our responsibility as men is to make them sense this.

Why are we doing this? It's because we are heirs of the grace of life together. In that culture, I'm told that ladies didn't get inheritance like men did in all situations, so it was not uncommon for a lady to be left out of a will and not receive an inheritance. So Peter is writing to this Roman

culture and saying hey men...she's an heir with you of the grace of life. Now, I don't believe grace of life here is referring to life everlasting. I think it's referring to marriage, and she's an heir; she's equal with you. Without her, your marriage isn't what it's supposed to be. You need her to be who God wants you to be; she's valuable to you. But the ultimate reason is when I recognize she's an heir, and I'm the house-band following the example of Christ and I know her needs, my prayers get answered. Peter says, "...so that your prayers will not be hindered." When it's going right with her, it's going right with Him.

This word, hindered, literally means to cut down. It was the picture of the military of Rome going into the woods, cutting down trees, and dragging them into the passageway of where they thought the enemy was going to come so that the enemy could not get to them *unhindered*. Guys, when it's not right with her don't even think about praying because it gets cut down. Has it been a while since you've had a prayer answered? Has it been a while since you really wanted to talk to God? There may be a reason. According to Peter, it's because they're not going right with her. No apologies guys, it's the words of Peter.