

**Alpha and Omega**

Revelation 1:8

**Honoring the Wife**

I Peter 3:7

**The Marital Bond**

Song of Solomon 1:16, 17a

**Give Me Your Heart**

Proverbs 23:24-26

**Honoring the Hoary Head**

Leviticus 19:32

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January 1, 2017 — No. 3861

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## Reformed Witness Hour

([www.reformedwitnesshour.org](http://www.reformedwitnesshour.org))

### Station Listings

Station	Location	Frequency	Time/day
KARI	Blaine, WA.....	550AM.....	8:00 P.M./Sunday
KCWN	Pella, IA.....	99.9FM.....	3:30 P.M./Sunday
KDCR	Sioux Center, IA.....	88.5FM.....	5:00 P.M./Sunday
KGDN	Tri-Cities Walla Walla, OR.....	101.3FM.....	5:00 P.M./Sunday
KLOH	Pipestone, MN.....	1050AM.....	8:00 A.M./Sunday
KLTT	Denver, CO.....	670AM.....	1:30 P.M./Sunday
KPRO	Riverside, CA.....	1570AM.....	11:30 A.M./Sunday
KSPO	Spokane, WA.....	106.5FM.....	5:00 P.M./Sunday
KTAC	Moses Lake, WA.....	93.9FM.....	5:00 P.M./Sunday
KTBI	Wenatchee/Moses Lake, WA.....	810AM.....	5:00 P.M./Sunday
KTRW	Spokane, WA.....	630AM.....	9:30 A.M./Sunday
KYAK	Yakima, WA.....	930AM.....	5:00 P.M./Sunday
WFDL	Fond Du Lac, WI.....	1170AM.....	8:00 A.M./Sunday
WFUR	Grand Rapids, MI.....	102.9FM.....	8:00 A.M./Sunday
WFUR	Grand Rapids, MI.....	1570AM, 92.9FM ...	4:00 P.M./Sunday
	NYC-Long Island, NY.....	101.5FM, 94.9FM, 104.5FM, 96.5FM ...	8:30 A.M./Sunday
WORD	Pittsburgh, PA.....	101.5FM.....	10:00 A.M./Sunday
WPGF	Carlisle, PA.....	91.3FM.....	8:00 A.M./Sunday
<b>UK</b>			
GOSPEL	Northern Ireland.....	846AM.....	8:30 A.M./Sunday
<b>Canada</b>			
CKNX	Wingham, ON.....	920 AM.....	7:00 A.M./Sunday

### THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

January 1, 2017  
No. 3861

Alpha and Omega  
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Dear radio friends,

### Introduction

The verse of Scripture we consider in our broadcast today does not seem to say much. It is Revelation 1:8, which reads, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." All it really does is give us a name of Christ. He is Alpha and Omega. But as we stand on the first day of the year 2017 we need something to guide us through this year to come. We need a Word of God that will give us good sound instruction as we walk through another year. This verse does not seem to do that. We are told a name.

What practical good will just a name give us? This: it will serve to give you and me hope in this year to come. That is really what we need. Oh, we will receive the Word of God all year long. That Word will certainly instruct us in the way we should walk. That Word will admonish and encourage us. But the Word that we need to hear as the new year dawns, must be a Word of hope. We need bright hope for today and tomorrow. That hope is given us

in the name of Christ we read here in Revelation 1.

You see, life in this world is always changing. Time is like an ever rolling stream. In the year to come all of us will become another year older. In this year to come Christ's coming will be another year closer. In the year to come there will be new events that take place in our lives. In this year to come God will take some of His people home to be with Him. Others will be given affliction and sorrow. Some will be given new joy, a reason to laugh and to rejoice. Time always changes things. But there is one thing in our lives that will never change. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is the one who is and was and is to come. And for that reason our Lord and Savior is the rock to which we will cling again in this year to come for comfort and strength.

All of that is found in a name. What name? Alpha and Omega. This is a name that is unique to the book of Revelation. It is mentioned four times. In all four of these occurrences *Christ* calls Himself by this name. No one addresses Him

and calls Him by this name. It is a name Christ uses to speak of Himself. For that reason, it is a special name—a name set aside by Christ to encourage us. It is this name of Christ we wish to have on our lips throughout the new year to come—a name we can call upon for our hope and strength.

## ALPHA AND OMEGA

### I. *The Identity*

In this verse we read that it is the Lord who calls Himself the Alpha and Omega. In other words, Jesus Christ as the Lord calls Himself by this name. As the risen and ascended Lord who sits at the right hand of God and rules in the heavens, He says, “I am Alpha and Omega.” That is the truth that stands out in this verse. Christ is Lord! He rules in heaven over all things. Christ was ordained of God from eternity and anointed by the Holy Spirit at the time of His baptism to function as prophet, priest, and king. In the verse before us, Christ speaks to us in particular as King. That is why the name Lord is used. You see, a lord is a man having power and authority over others. He is a man of rank and high position. That position of authority over others belongs to a lord by virtue of hereditary right and/or because he has earned that position of honor and power. For that reason, one who is a lord

exercises leadership and great power. Those under him must render him honor, service, and obedience.

As we enter into the year 2017, it is encouraging to know that Christ is such a Lord. In fact, He is *the* Lord. There is no one of higher power and rank, no one of higher authority and honor than Christ. He is the sovereign Lord who rules over all. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords! There is nothing more encouraging in the year to come than to know that Christ’s rank and position is His by hereditary right! He is the very Son of God, and by virtue of His divinity alone He rules.

But Christ has also earned this position and power. He has earned that on the cross, where He defeated His enemies and ours. There He overcame sin and death. He conquered Satan. He did battle against the wicked world and He overcame. Because of the work Christ accomplished in His death, God has given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Christ sits at God’s right hand and rules over all creatures great and small, in heaven and on earth! And everyone is called to render Him service, obedience, and honor.

Christ sits on His throne in heaven right now. He is Lord! This gives us hope for the year to

behavior of children and young people toward the elderly men of the church. The point is, out of our fear for God flows our honor toward the old men of the church of Jesus Christ, and a real desire to follow their example of wisdom to be like them. Old age is a God-honored age. What is inherent in this command of our text is the subsequent blessing that God bestows on His church when we honor the old man.

### III. *The Blessing*

The blessing that this command implies is that of the preservation of the church. Since God is eternal, the Ancient of Days, He has chosen the way of honoring the elderly of the church as a way to preserve His church. Look at contemporary Christianity today.

It has totally ignored the old ways of the church gone before. The Lord’s Day is desecrated. This was not the way of the New Testament church in the past. Worship is polluted. This was not the way of the church in the past. Heresy prevails. The confessions of the past, written by a church strong in the Lord,

are ignored. The time-honored ways of God held by the elderly saints are despised. And when warning is given by the old, they are ignored, even despised, right along with God’s ways. As a result, the church is crying out for members. And those churches that boast of thousands in attendance—notice, I did not say *members*; they only *attend*—these churches are here now and gone with the next generation. God preserves His church today when we give heed to the wisdom and the warnings of the aged men of the church. It is not as if their way is infallible, but they do hold the church in check. They do offer the ways of wisdom. And God uses this to preserve His church from one generation to the next. This is God’s blessing on the church by way of honoring the face of the old man.

Children, young men and women, rise up before the hoary head. Stand in his presence and honor him. The eternal God, the Ancient of Days, commands you to fear *Him* by honoring the aged. When this is done, we shall see our children’s children and peace upon Israel.

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dom, therefore, he can testify of God's ways with him, his family, and the church. The old man contains a wealth of knowledge that young men ought to tap into and learn from, in order that they too can be wise. But most importantly in all this, the simple old age of men is to be honored. These men of the church have been in the world longer than the younger and God has sustained their lives here. God has given them length of days. And because God has bestowed on them such honor, they become fit representatives of God.

How sad when our present society views old age as a curse. How sad when the wicked view the maladies that befall the old as dishonorable and even a reason to put such people out of their misery through euthanasia. Age, even though fraught with maladies, in God's eyes is honorable because it represents Him as the Ancient of Days. Jehovah, the I Am That I Am. Furthermore, this Levitical law points out clearly that *fearing* Jehovah God is the reason for rising up before the hoary head and honoring the face of the old man. This concept of fearing God has been the one underlying theme of this series, as well as of the series on the virtuous woman. The upright man walks in the ways of God's commandments. He does so because he fears Jehovah.

The fear that characterizes the godly man of the church, the man of faith, is a deep reverence for God. He bows before God with reverence because he knows God as the ancient of days. He has a deep-seated respect for God. He stands in awe and amazement before the works of God and His wisdom. Who is so great a God as our God? We fear God, children and young men and women of the church, because the Spirit of our risen Lord abides in us. We have been given eyes to see God, ears to hear Him, and hearts that understand who He is. Christ has overcome the power of sin that has held us in its sway. He has loosed the bonds of corruption that held us. And now we know who God is and we love and honor Him. We fear God.

Because of this we fear the old men of the church who exhibit their own love and fear of God. We have the same respect for them as we have for God. We admire the wisdom of their experienced faith. We sit at their feet and hear them and learn from them. In all things we honor them. When as a youth I watched the elders walk down the aisle into church, I viewed those elders with awe. I was, at least as a child, afraid of them a little! And when they came to our house on family visitation with the pastor, I was on my best behavior. That should be the

come because this Lord who sovereignly reigns in the heavens is our Savior! When He went to the cross He did so on our behalf. He conquered sin, Satan, and death for His people chosen of God! He now sits in heaven and reigns over all things for the church.

His rule is for our benefit. That in turn means that whatever may befall us as His children is for our good.

How often we have to remind ourselves of that, do we not? When life does not always go the way we want it to, we can quickly blame it on someone or something. And we forget that our Lord is sitting in heaven directing our lives and the life of the church unto His perfect end. So, as we stand at the very beginning of a new year let's remind ourselves of the truth that is before us: in this year to come Christ is Lord! He lives and reigns over all things! He directs our lives and everything in them in His great love for us. If that is true, then we need not fear or worry.

There are two virtues mentioned here in Revelation 1:8 that characterize our Lord. These virtues should give to us great comfort too. The first is: He is almighty! An earthly lord or king may be powerful

and may exert much authority and sway over his people, but there is one thing he is not. He is not *all* mighty. As mighty as he may seem, his authority and his power can be challenged and taken away by another. How many times

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that has happened in the kingdoms of men. As much power and ability an earthly king may wield, he is never all mighty. Well, the same is not true of our King, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is all powerful in His control over all creatures. The heathen may rage, the kings of the earth may set themselves against God and His anointed to break away from His rule. These wicked people of the earth even imagine a vain thing, which is that they have successfully broken away from the sovereign rule of Christ over them. But they have not. They have not because they cannot! The unbelieving world has convinced itself that man can set his own course in this world. In the year before us, man will go his merry way and increase in his wickedness. The wicked will ignore Christ and do what is right in their own eyes, all because of their foolish imagination! They will continue to think they are in control and not Christ.

But Christ reigns, fellow

believers! He even now in His power and might directs the nations and the peoples of this earth. Does Christ even direct them in their way of foolishness and sin? Yes, He does! All in order that the world might become ripe for judgment! All of these things take place in order that Christ might bring about His second coming. “Behold, He cometh with the clouds and every eye shall see Him someday!” Every man will give account to this Lord of heaven and earth. In the year 2017 we need not fear the wicked, though they are loud and boastful, though they are filled with rage against God. Our Lord is almighty! He reigns over the wicked with a rod of iron.

There is one other virtue that gives us great comfort in the year to come. Christ is unchangeable in His might. The Lord is He which is and was and is to come almighty! That means that Christ is ever the same. There is great comfort in that for us, you know! When we look back across the year that now has disappeared, we see that so many things happened to us and our loved ones. There has been so much development of sin in this world. The world increases in sin so rapidly! To look to another

year really can be frightening. Everything is constantly changing. What will I or my family have to endure. The future is unknown and so, so uncertain. But there is one thing we can be sure of in this year to come: Jesus is and was and is to come the same. He is the same in His great love toward us. That love never changes!

God has chosen us in Christ from eternity and we have been saved in Christ. Christ is not going to turn away from that love for us. Neither will Christ allow His chosen people to walk away from Him. We are His. We are held in His almighty hand. He loves us, and He will love us in this year to come too. And remember, saints of God, Christ is and was and is to come almighty too! That means His power and authority over all things will never diminish. He will direct all the affairs of 2017 for our good and our salvation. That we cling to in faith. Not one

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event of our lives or of this world will slip by Christ and His rule. He has them in control. Even when life

seems so chaotic, even when all the events of our lives seem to swirl around us, Christ is there and He holds these events of our lives in His hand.

the principles of these laws do abide. Paul writes in I Timothy 5:1, 2, “Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father...; the elder women as mothers.” An elder here does not refer to the office of elder in the church. It refers to an elderly saint. Peter writes in I Peter 5:5, “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.” The gray hair is a crown of glory! Now that is honor. That is adornment! The point is: the principle set forth in this particular law of Moses is timeless! It is to be observed in the church of Jesus Christ today. In fact, it is *important* that it be observed.

## II. The Reason

God gives us the reason an old man must be honored in this law we consider: “Fear thy God: I am Jehovah!” God is Jehovah. This name literally means, “I Am That I Am.” This name brings to mind what we learn in Isaiah

46:9-10:  
“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God,

and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and

I will do all my pleasure.” God is. He has no beginning and no end. We cannot say of God that He was or will be. God is. He is eternal. Time has no influence on Him. Jehovah is identified in Daniel 7 as the Ancient of Days. God reminds the nation of Israel through the command to honor the aged man that He as God is from eternity. His eternity is a part of His essence, His identity. That is revealed in His name Jehovah. The evidence of this is that He has dwelt among His people since the beginning of time until now. God’s church is referred to in Scripture as the ancient people.

You see that face of the old man of the church—that face with its wrinkles and blemishes? That face is representative of God! The old man is time honored! He has lived through the hardships of life, the twists and the turns that life has thrown at him. He has had to battle

with sin in his life, sin in himself and sin in others. He has been called to defend the faith

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against those who oppose it and to preserve those who would have slipped from it. The old man of the church has dealt with difficult matters, and God has seen him through. In wis-

taken on certain wrinkles and blemishes. His hair, or perhaps his beard, is turning gray. There are crows-feet around his eyes if the man is given to smile a lot, or a crease in the forehead if he is given to frown. His nose or ears are getting bigger. His eyebrows are getting bushier and his neck starts to hang. These are signs of old age. And we can smile at such a description too. But the idea of this command is: *honor* the face of the old man! And the word “honor” means view that face of an old man as an adornment! An adornment! Again, in our society a man starts getting a certain age and he wants to get a facelift or find a cure for his baldness. Some dye their hair in an attempt to hide the truth that they are getting old.

Scripture here looks at it from a different point of view. A man’s old face, his gray hair, his wrinkles, are an adornment that ought to be viewed as an honor. The younger men of the church, when looking on the old man, may not view him as useless or washed up so that it is time to put the old guy out to pasture. He is called upon to look at the face of an old man and honor him for his age! To stand before such a man with deep respect and reverence.

To reinforce this whole idea, we must remember that the verse we have before us is one of the Levitical laws! It was considered a capital crime if a young man did not show such reverence to an old man. It was not just a nice gesture on the part of a young man to rise and give honor to the old man. It was a requirement. There was no lackadaisical attitude allowed by a boy or young man toward his elders. It was something that parents saw to diligently in the instruction of their youth. We have indeed become lax in this. Little boys and girls need to be disciplined when they show disrespect toward an adult in any way.

Neither can we use as an excuse that this is an Old Testament law and custom that is no longer required today in the church of Jesus Christ. It may

be true that it is not a capital crime to show disrespect to an elder, but it is still a sin. Perhaps

a young man ought not to stand immediately when an elder walks into the room—although now that I am considered an elder in the church, I could appreciate that custom. But it is no longer a requirement that is forced on a young man today. We are no longer subject to the Levitical laws today. But

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## II. The Meaning

It is for this reason He gives us His name: I am Alpha and Omega. That name gives us every reason to be filled with hope in the year to come. Christ is Alpha and Omega. These are the names of two letters of the Greek alphabet. Alpha is comparable to our A and Omega is comparable to our Z. In other words, these two Greek letters are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet, just like our A and Z are in the English alphabet. By using these two letters of the Greek alphabet as a name, Christ, in essence, is saying this of Himself—I am the first and the last. This is further explained by Him in our text when He attaches to this name the words “the beginning and the ending.” Since we have already found out that Christ the Lord is the Alpha and Omega, it is left to us to find the meaning of this name therefore.

What message is Christ conveying to us this New Year when He says to us: I am the Alpha and Omega? And what assurance can we derive from this name in the year to come? There are several ideas expressed in Scripture itself that ought to be applied to the thought given us in this name of Christ. The first is this: Christ is God! Christ is divine! This means that Christ is first just as God is first! God is from eternity and to all eternity.

As the divine Son of God, so is Christ. We read of this in John 1:1, 2. Christ is God and was with God in the beginning of all things. And since all things are to God, that is, they find their end in God and His glory, so also is this true of Christ according to His divinity. God is not only first but last! So is Christ. That, then, the Scriptures ascribe to Christ. He is before all things, by Him all things consist, and to Him are all things! He is the first and the last according to His godhead. That truth first of all.

But there are two other truths concerning Christ that are really on the foreground in our text. The first of these two truths is this: Christ is the first and the last in the counsel of God! Before time began in eternity, God in His counsel decreed Christ as the firstborn among many brethren. Christ is first. He is the beginning of all things. All things in history therefore center in Christ. He was the reason all things were created. He was the reason we were chosen as God’s elect people. He is first in the eternal counsel of God with respect to our salvation. This is why Christ has the pre-eminence. Christ is the firstborn of the church. From eternity God elected His people in Christ.

What practical significance does that have for you and me in

the year 2017? This. Never—never—will God view you and me apart from Jesus Christ this year. God has chosen us in Him and saved us in Him. We are His

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always and ever. That we need to know when we confront sin in our lives in this year to come. Our sins rise up against us, prevailing day by day. We can become so weary in our battle against sin. But we must cling to the truth that we belong to Jesus Christ. Christ is first, and we are chosen in Him. When the troubles of this life threaten to take away our joy and happiness, and when circumstances of life threaten to rob us of our contentment and peace of heart, we must remember this: just as this day is the first of the year, so also is Christ first. And just as this year will end 365 days later, so Christ is the end of it all. All things are for Christ, and if we be Christ's, then all things are for us too!

But that brings us to the final idea expressed in this name. Christ is the beginning of our salvation and the end of it too! And it is really this idea that stares us in the face in the verse we consider. Christ came in His first advent to bring us salvation. He has accomplished this on the cross and in His resurrection. He began the work of

salvation at that time. And at the end of time, in His Parousia, His return, Christ will bring that salvation to its perfect end. He is the beginning of our

salvation and He is the ending of it. And He is everything in between too. He that has begun a good work in us will be faithful to complete that work too—which means once again that Christ will preserve us in this year to come. His promise to you and me is sure! He is coming, and He carries with Him the final work of the salvation of the church. When He comes He will dispel all night for us and usher us into that kingdom where God and the Lamb are the light of it. And the light that shall shine will be the perfection of that kingdom. All sin will be gone and all our enemies will be destroyed. It will be a kingdom of peace and true joy and happiness! That kingdom is coming, people of God! It is coming again in 2017. Christ even now is establishing His kingdom all over this world—in the hearts of His elect people. And that kingdom will be brought to its completion soon enough!

### III. The Hope

That is what gives us the hope necessary to carry on

the church too, when children and young men and women do not show the honor that they ought to the aged saint—men or women. When I was young, I was scolded severely if I presumed to call an older man or woman by their first name. It was Mr. or Mrs. with no hesitation. When I worked in the south, I noticed that young men and women addressed all their seniors as “ma’am or sir.” As a child I knew that when an older saint walked into the room, I must immediately get out of my chair and offer him my seat, even if there was nowhere else to sit.

There is something about that attitude toward the elderly that is lost today. And I say that because it is not a good thing! Old men are out of touch with the times, it is said. They are not progressive enough. They are stuck in the old ways. They hold the church back from developing.

Oftentimes this is the assessment made about the older men of the church by the younger. When, in fact, the

younger men of the church ought, rather, to consider that there may be a reason such older saints bulk at the impetuous changes the new generation

wants to make without giving them much thought. Maybe there is wisdom in the old ways. There is, after all, a reason things were done the way they were done. The old men have a place in the church to caution the young that they do not foolishly, without thought, follow a path they ought not to walk. Solomon teaches us there is no new thing under the sun. That which has been shall be. The old man has lived to see what has been to warn against what perhaps shall be. Children, how much do you honor adults in your behavior? The saying is still true today, “Children ought to be seen and not heard.” How well do you follow that rule when adults are present? Is the adult given that respect by you? How often a child cuts into the conversation of the adult rather than sitting, listening, and learning.

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our elders is reinforced when the law here adds, “and honor the face of the old man.” I’m sure that we as little chil-

dren have looked closely at the face of our grandfather at one time or another. Or noticed, as a teenager, while speaking with an older saint, that his face has

we consider together the place of old men in the church.

## HONORING THE HOARY HEAD

### I. *The Command*

The term “hoary” is not all that familiar in modern English. It simply means the white-haired or gray-haired man. The term “hoary” comes from the frost that settled in Palestine usually on the higher slopes of the mountains, but at times on some of the inland plains. This was known as the hoarfrost. We here in Pennsylvania are familiar with such frost. Usually in the late fall, when the temperatures at night hover around freezing, a heavy vapor freezes in the air and settles on the tops of the grass. When it does, the grass is covered with a layer of white. That was referred to in Israel as hoarfrost. This idea is applied to elderly men whose hair was losing its pigment and changing to a gray or even a white. As such the hoary head was meant to describe men who had entered into their 60s, 70s, and older. And that is what is meant in our text today as well. The hoary head refers to the older men of the church, despite whether their hair has changed color or not. The term refers, as a general rule, to those whose children are grown and moved out of the house to begin families of their own.

The command here in Leviticus 19 states, “Thou shalt *rise up* before the hoary head.” According to this command a young man was obliged to stand up when an old man entered the room. Once the elderly saint passed by the young man might be seated again. But so long as the aged man stood before him the young man would stand as well. This was a custom observed among the Jews. In fact, it was considered, to use the words of a commentator who is considered a scholar in Jewish law, it was considered an “abominable wickedness” if a young person did not rise in the presence of the older man.

This was true because this act revealed a deep respect and reverence for the place of the senior in their lives. It was an act of honoring the elderly saint. This is an act, of course, that is long forgotten in the present age and society in which we live. This is due in part to the man who has reached his senior years. He considers old age a bane, a curse. He wants to stay young and he sees no honor in himself now that he has turned old. He insists that younger men call him by his first name and treat him as a peer. But this is also due in large part to the society in which we live, where little honor is given to parents, or magistrates, or others in authority. We live in a rebellious age and this creeps into

again in the year to come. Our King, our Lord, is coming! He is directing everything that is taking place in our lives and in the church and in the world. He is the first this year and He is the end of this year. He is there in the beginning of time and He will be here at the end of time, when the years will cease to exist for us. We must look for Him with that hope too. Hope is a patient waiting for and longing after something that is to come. That is what must characterize us as we look for Christ’s return. That is what motivates you and me in our homes and families in the year to come. That is what must give us the zeal to carry on the work of the church in the year to come. That is what must motivate us in our individual lives in this year to come. Christ is coming! What reason for joy in the year to come. We may not say: “Oh, Lord, just take me out of this world! I just want to go to

heaven!” Christ places you and me in this world for a reason! It would be wrong for us to mope about in the year to come and be miserable! That is not why God has placed you and me in this world—to sit about and say how much we do not want to be here. We

||| *All things are for Christ,  
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must rejoice in the year to come! We must approach this year with zeal! Christ is coming. He will preserve my going out and my coming in! Praise His name! The hope that is mine gives me incentive to live and be fruitful in God’s kingdom! God give us that hope in this year to come.

Christ is our King. Onward Christian soldiers—onward into this new year we go! We fight against all evil and stand for the right! And when Christ comes again we will be found standing in faithfulness to Him.

Come, Lord Jesus—come quickly!



**THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR**

January 8, 2017  
No. 3862

*Honoring the Wife*  
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Dear Radio Friends,

**Introduction**

In the next couple of broadcasts we consider the upright man's calling toward his wife. Today we examine I Peter 3:7: "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

Give honor unto the wife, Peter instructs husbands. Does not Peter have that the wrong way around? Ought not wives show honor to their husbands? Does not Peter himself teach in the verses preceding this verse that the wife is to hold in reverence her husband? Why would Peter here teach that a husband is to show honor to his wife? It is to show the error of those husbands who lay heavy burdens on their wives and exploit them as if they are of lower status in marriage. It is true that a wife certainly must show honor to her husband for his God-given place in the marriage. But honor is not given *only* to those who are in authority. Honor, esteem, even respect—these do not rely on a

person's position of authority. Husbands are in duty bound to show honor to their wives.

There is something else that becomes evident in the instruction of Peter in this verse. Peter is addressing Christian husbands and wives. We mention this not because it is only in a marriage between two believers that the husband receives this calling. All husbands are commanded by God to treat their wives with tenderness, love, and respect. We mention this, rather, because the Christian husband has an additional reason to honor his wife. She is an heir together with him to the grace of life, Peter tells us. That is truly significant because a believing husband recognizes that in his wife. He *loves* that in his wife. And it is this fact that motivates him to show honor to his wife. So, Peter here addresses believing husbands about their believing wives. This injunction we consider.

**HONORING THE WIFE****I. Who She Is**

After addressing the godly wife in the verses that precede

**THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR**

January 29, 2017  
No. 3865

*Honoring the Hoary Head*  
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Dear Radio Friends,

**Introduction**

Today we finish our series of broadcasts on the upright man. This also brings to an end the time I spent with you on the Reformed Witness Hour. It was a joy as usual.

We have learned that the upright man is one who fears God and keeps His commandments. He does this when he is a young, single man. When he marries he tends to the things that will please his wife and walks in all faithfulness with her. If the Lord is pleased to give him and his wife children, then he must be diligent in the instruction of his children. The father must have a profound influence on the heart of his children. This is what we have learned in our series up to this point.

Now the upright man is old. His children have left the home to make lives for themselves in this world and in the church. Some of them, perhaps most of them, marry. Others determine that they can serve the Lord in single life. But the man and his wife have now become empty-nesters. Their young have left the nest.

The passage we consider today addresses the place the elderly man has in the church and families. It is a passage that needs to be preached on more than what it is. We read in Leviticus 19:32, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD." This passage instructs us in how we are to view the older men of the congregation and of our own family. How are we to treat the grandfather?

This particular Word of God in Leviticus deals exclusively with how the younger men and women, the children and grandchildren of a man, are to view him and honor him. Since this passage is found in the Old Testament, we cannot help but notice the picturesque language used to describe our dealings with the elderly man. That will come out as we explain this particular verse. And it will, we pray, reveal concretely that God always demands of His people proper respect and reverence in His church. This is the way He has chosen to preserve His church in its generations: through reverence and honor of those He has given this to. So

They will know God's Word. They will know the great truths of Scripture, because father labored hard with mother to teach them. But that is not what makes believing parents glad. You see, a young person can walk about cocky in his knowledge of what the church teaches and what the Bible teaches, but can still be a fool. A mere knowledge of God's Word is not enough! A child must grow up to be *wise!* *Wisdom* is the key. A father must teach his children to be wise! And wisdom is different than mere knowledge.

Wisdom is the ability to apply that knowledge of God Word to the various circumstances of life. A person is wise when he can take what he has learned and make right judgments, solve spiritual problems in a godly way, and discern between what is God-pleasing and what is not. Fathers, your children have not attained just because they have learned a certain body of knowledge. A child has attained when as he grows he begins to show spiritual discernment. When he is not questioning the ways of the Lord or the Scriptures. When he sees the wisdom of God's Word and how specifically to apply that Word in all situations. A wise child is one who has been trained properly to distinguish the path of Jehovah from the path the wicked take. And then, with understanding, walk in the way of the Lord.

Such is the *goal* of our instruction and the *fruit* of an upright father's prime desire—to win the heart of his children.

### III. A Great Rejoicing

When such fruit is evident, then according to verses 24 and 25 it results in joy and gladness. We do not need to define what joy and gladness are. A righteous and wise child make for happy parents. Father and mother, writes Solomon, will be glad. Both will be. The father that begets his children and the mother that gives birth to her children together will be filled with joy of heart. What a beautiful picture of a sound, healthy, spiritual family. The father and his wife who together have conceived and given birth to their children dwelling in a happy home with them. Not only when they are small children, but when they come to years of discretion and years of maturity. There is joy in this kind of a family.

And that joy comes out in the way of rejoicing. Father and mother verbalize that joy. They rejoice together with their children. They rejoice in God. They express to God their praise and thanksgiving for the children they were given by God's grace. My son, give me your heart!

My father, it's yours!

our text, Peter turns to the godly husband. The injunction that he gives the husband is this: dwell with your wife according to knowledge. Live with your wife, treat your wife, deal with your wife, *according to knowledge*. In other words, knowledge must be the standard according to which you must live with your wife. The knowledge that the child of God possesses is substantially different from the common knowledge of men. Our knowledge is that of faith, that is, it is a knowledge by which we understand all things in the light of God and His Word. It is a knowledge that God has worked in our hearts by His grace, a knowledge by which we are made to understand the truth about God, about Christ, and about ourselves. And it is in this knowledge that godly husbands are enjoined to dwell with their wives.

This knowledge of faith includes an understanding of a godly husband's place in the marriage as well as the place of his wife. The believing husband knows why God has created the woman and why God has brought to him his particular wife. This knowledge consists of two particulars that Peter points out in our text. The first is this: the wife is the weaker vessel. The man and woman in the marriage relationship are not equal. The man is stronger and the wife weaker. So Peter

points out an inequality in the marriage bond.

But then, in the second place, he points out the equality that exists between husband and wife. They are heirs together of the grace of life. They are equals in salvation, grace, and eternal life. This is what every believing man must know about his wife. Now, we need to look at these in a little closer detail, of course.

Our wives, godly husbands, are the weaker vessel in our relationships. Now, there are those, on the one hand, that misinterpret this passage to mean that the wife is a weak, almost pathetic, little creature that has no strength in herself and must rely on the superior strength of her husband. On the other hand, there are those who chafe under the designation God gives women in this verse. In pride they refuse to bow before this Word of God. But the word "weaker" here in this verse means "weaker." Neither can the meaning of this Word of God be interpreted differently because the woman is called a "vessel." Some say that Peter here is talking only about the physical anatomy of a woman. She is weaker than a man physically. This is ordinarily true of course, but the term vessel makes reference to the woman in general—both physically and psychologically. In marriage

there are two vessels that God unites together into one flesh: the male and the female. Of these two vessels the man is the stronger and the woman the weaker.

But this term “weaker,” remember, is not aimed at hurting a woman’s self-respect. That a woman is weaker does not mean that she has less wisdom, less spirituality, or less worth in marriage. We have already found that is not the case in our series of broadcasts on the virtuous woman! Rather the term “weaker” is spoken to a godly husband in order that he might realize that his wife is a precious, valuable, but fragile vase that can easily be broken by him. A harsh word, demeaning comments, brushing her aside as being of no account—these can break her! It can hurt her irreparably!

She was created by God in such a way that she leans on her husband for support

...just as the church leans on Christ and draws her life out of Christ, so also the wife draws her life and strength out of her husband.

and strength. She is dependent on him for her life. To use Paul’s example of Christ and the church, just as the church leans on Christ and draws her life out of Christ, so also the wife draws her life and strength out of her husband. Both a husband and wife ought to know this. This is the knowledge according to

which a godly husband must dwell with his wife. This at one and same time comforts the wife and warns the husband.

That is the first truth a husband must understand about his wife. The second is this: she is an heir together with him to the grace of life. Or, very simply, she is a co-heir with him in salvation. That is what the grace of life refers to. God is no respecter of persons when it comes to His grace. Just as a master merits nothing over a slave, or a Jew over a Gentile, so also a man merits nothing over a woman. Grace has no merit. It is the free, undeserved favor of God that He displays to those whom He wills. The husband is not greater than his wife, neither the wife greater than the husband, but, on the contrary, both are undeserving of God’s favor. Both of us,

husbands and wives, are sinners deserving only condemnation, but God has shown us

His grace. And by that grace He has freely given us life—life eternal, that is.

You see, we were lost in our sins and trespasses and subject therefore to death. In fact, from a spiritual point of view we lived in the midst of death. We not only were guilty to

upright children. The father *of the righteous* shall greatly rejoice. When father gains the hearts of his children and they observe his ways, then they become righteous. That word “righteous” in our text here is an interesting term because it is usually used of a judge who maintains the right by dispensing justice. He makes right judgments. He is honest and fair. The idea when applied to our children is that they grow up and make good judgments in life—judgments that are in accordance with God’s commandments. Further, it means that our children will be honest and fair in their dealings with others.

Now, it is obvious that such righteousness is the fruit of the labors of righteous parents. The Hebrew term here does not point to the righteousness we have before God on account of the work of our Savior. We well know that we are justified before God not on account of the way our parents teach us. We are justified in the blood of Christ alone. That is a given. We who were guilty before God of the sin of Adam and our own personal sins are declared righteous before God because Christ has suffered our punishment to deliver us from our guilt. And that our children walk righteously before God in the way of His commandments is indeed entirely an act of God’s grace too! A father can

do everything right. He can give of himself to his children. But if God has not chosen a particular child to be His own; if God has sovereignly rejected that child in eternity, then no matter what amount of labor is bestowed on that child, he will not be righteous, but rebellious. Let us not forget, God’s decree of sovereign election and reprobation cuts through the heart of the church too. The salvation of our children takes a work of God’s grace in their hearts.

But God *does* use means. If a father thinks his children will turn out to be righteous despite the way he lives or the bad example he leaves, he will be sadly mistaken. God still saves by His grace, sometimes despite the neglect of father, but God ordinarily uses the means of an upright father to nurture the seed of the covenant. God will not continue to save in the generations of those parents who neglect their calling before God. God will not continue to gather His church among families whose children are taught only to look good on the outside, without a thought of what they look like to God on the inside. But God does give fruit upon the diligent labors of a man who seeks the hearts of his children. They will be righteous.

And they will be wise. Yes, dad will have taught them the fundamentals of the Scriptures.

rationalism, to modernism, to post-modernism, to hedonism. How can godly parents keep up with all these fast-moving changes that overtake each new generation?

The way a father prevents a barrier between himself and his children is by saying, “My children, observe my ways!” This very statement implies that a father opens up his own life and heart to his children. While they are still young, he enters into their lives and becomes one with them. He shows them attention, he is interested in their lives, he talks with them, plays with them. He studies God’s Word with them and discusses his

own spiritual values and goals. He gives them his affection. He encourages them. In short, he involves

himself in their lives. His life is immersed in the lives of his wife and children. For the sake of his children a father will be willing to set aside some of his own pursuits and passions in order to take time out to be with his children. When he lives so closely with his children, he will be able to say, “Observe my ways! This is how I, when I was young, dealt with the same problems or dilemmas you confront. I had to deal with these kinds of

pressures too when I was young. I had to come to a decision pleasing to God too in my use of technology and modern trends. Maybe my decisions were made in my use of a transistor radio and you need to make decisions regarding your smart phone, but the decisions are the same. Observe how I have overcome the hazards of youth that will draw you away from God. And observe the way I live now. I have matured. I’m your father and have learned a few things along the way.” And children will be willing to follow father’s example simply by observing the way he lives now. They will *not* say, “Oh, he does that because

...because his children  
are his friends—he has made  
a heart connection with them—  
they will observe and follow  
in his ways.

he is old,” even though they might tease him about that. But because his children are his friends—he

has made a heart connection with them—they will observe and follow in his ways.

## II. A Gracious Fruit

The fruit of making this our prime desire as fathers is given us in verse 24: “The father of the *righteous* shall greatly rejoice; and he that begetteth a *wise child* shall have joy of him.” An upright father, when raising his children properly, will produce

before God because of sin, but we were wholly given over to the power of sin in our lives. But God’s grace is this: the power by which He freely delivered us from the guilt and hold of sin and made us partakers of life in Him. God’s grace is seen in the cross of Christ. By means of the cross, God graciously delivered us from the guilt and power of sin. Christ conquered for us sin and its power. Christ through His blood made us righteous who were guilty before God. We have been justified and sanctified through His powerful work. By means of this, Christ overcame the hold that sin and death had over us. And He earned for us the right to eternal life. It is that life that we have within us right now. The life of Christ even now is to be found in us. And we will live unto all eternity with God and with His Son Jesus Christ.

That is what believing husbands and wives must see in each other—they are heirs together with

one another. Both a husband and wife share in the common misery of sin and both share in the blessed joy that Christ has saved them! Both of them are believers who have been incorporated into the family and

household of God. A husband and wife are first and foremost brother and sister in the family of God! They both have been adopted by God. They both were given faith. And both of them have been promised the glory of eternal life in heaven. They are heirs to the possession that God has promised them. It is for this reason that both a man and his wife give honor to one another. They are one in salvation. This provides all the reason to dwell with each other according to knowledge.

## II. Dwelling with Her

Now, with this in mind husbands are called to dwell with their wives. We ought to notice what is implied in this idea. The husband is called to *dwell*

A husband and wife  
are first and foremost  
brother and sister  
in the family of God!...  
It is for this reason that  
both a man and his wife  
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They are one in salvation.

with his wife—to live with her, to spend time with her. That implies, in the first place, that the husband must seek in his wife the closest of all friendship and fellowship.

Christ enters into a most intimate bond spiritually with His church. The husband is called to enter into the most intimate of bonds with his wife. She is to be the closest of all friends, the one to whom he tells his

secrets—all his secrets, the one with whom he cries and laughs. He consults her in decisions and speaks to her of his hopes and desires. This is not a bond that lasts a year or two or three the most. It is a bond that a man enters into with his wife so that he dwells with her his entire lifetime. It must not be something that wears off in our middle-age years, so that we wander elsewhere for our friendship. A husband must always consciously dwell with his wife and make her the center of his life!

*A husband must always  
consciously dwell with his wife  
and make her the center of his life!*

Also implied in this is the headship of a husband over his wife. The husband seeks to dwell with his wife. It is true that the wife also dwells with her husband. He must be the center of her life too. But it is the man that is given the command: dwell with her according to knowledge. This implies that the husband is called to establish and maintain the relationship. God holds him responsible for that. When the husband allows this to slip, he will be held accountable for that in the day of judgment! The husband must consciously exercise his headship. His is a weighty position in the marriage and the family as a whole.

Headship also implies rule. A husband is called by God to rule his home. Everything that has to do with rule is implied in his calling. The man must provide for his wife. He must see to it that she is cared for and that her needs are supplied. The husband is called to protect his wife and keep her, spiritually as well as in every other way. The husband is held responsible before God to instruct and guide his wife and home in the way of truth and righteousness. He must exercise his headship to see to it that his wife, together with him, walks circumspectly before God, always seeking His face. This means the husband leads in devotions—family worship. He sees to it that the family is in church on Sunday and his children trained properly in the Word of God. We must realize, husbands, that someday you and I are going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. And we will be asked: What did you do as the head of your marriage and home? What will you answer? All this is implied in dwelling with your wife according to knowledge.

Plus, all this has to do with honoring our wives. “Ye husbands, dwell with your wives, giving honor unto the wife.”

Plus, all this has to do with honoring our wives. “Ye husbands, dwell with your wives, giving honor unto the wife.”

If I can influence your heart in the right way, your outward behavior will follow. A father can teach his children the way of godly living, but godly living must be *rooted in* the hearts of our children! That is why this passage of God’s Word expresses the very core or essence of proper child rearing.

*An upright man who fears God  
must be able to penetrate  
the barrier that society seeks  
to create between  
himself and his children.*

An upright man must follow this principle: Give me the hearts of my children!

But how does a father put this principle into practice? That is the all-important question. Solomon explains, “Let thine eyes observe my ways.” Or, in other words, watch me and follow my example. We remember, once again, that this is the inspired Word of God we consider today. Just as with the Song of Solomon we considered last broadcast, we need to be reminded of that because of Solomon’s great sin. He certainly was not the best of examples to his children. In fact, he was a downright lousy example. Certainly we would not want our children following after Solomon’s example. But we must remember that the Proverbs contain the wisdom of God in raising children, and

that includes the passage we have before us today.

An upright man who fears God must be able to penetrate the barrier that society seeks to create between himself and his

children. The world surges forward in its developments. This is so true in its technology,

first of all. When I was young, the transistor radio came out, and young people began to carry their music with them outside of the home—unsupervised by parents. Then there were the eight-track tape players and cassette tapes on which were recorded the music of pop culture. And that was just the beginning. It has gone from CDs to Mp3s or live Internet that can be carried in a person’s pocket—a little instrument a young person can use to gain access to all the filth and hedonistic lifestyle available in the world. With that the trends in entertainment change too. The television and movies have gone from family-orientated entertainment to sex and violence, the super-human strength of men, and such fantasies as the age of dinosaurs or extra-terrestrial intelligence. The philosophy from one generation to the next seems to change so quickly from

were interested in was outward appearances. You only wanted me to look clean on the outside so that people would not judge you as being a bad father. You did not really care about me! You only cared about what other people think of you!”

It will either be that reaction, or it will be the opposite, that our children are mere robots going through the outward actions of faith without truly believing. They will be little replicas of father and mother, but without the faith of father and mother. The church will become a social club where everyone follows the rules to be a part of it. Our children will grow up to have good morals, but with no real conviction of faith. They will say the right things, they will follow the right mode of operation in the church, but with no real knowledge of sin and salvation in Christ. Then eventually the structure of the church will slowly break down and the church itself will begin to crumple.

Children will start living like the world, with the false sense of assurance that they are saved

anyway. Solomon as a father does not say to his son, “My son, give me your behavior.” He says rather, “My son, give me your heart!”

*A father can teach his children  
the way of godly living,  
but godly living must be rooted  
in the hearts of our children!*

Ah, yes, the heart! There is such a horrible misconception of what the heart is in the church today. The heart is often made synonymous with feelings. Follow your heart means follow your feelings. What makes you feel good at the moment, go with it! But that is not the scriptural idea of a person’s heart. The heart is the very spiritual core of a man’s soul. Solomon writes in Proverbs 4:23, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” As the heart goes, so go one’s thoughts and desires. If the heart is filled with sin and wickedness; if there is no fear of God in the heart, then all of a person’s thoughts, desires, and actions will follow in the way of the heart. Where a person’s heart is at spiritually, from there will all the issues of life proceed. This is where fallen man’s depravity is rooted—in his spiritual center, the heart. If the heart is depraved, so will that person’s outward behavior be corrupt. But if that heart is where the Spirit of our risen

Lord dwells, then that Spirit will direct the thoughts, desires, and actions of a man. A good heart spiritually will produce good thoughts, words, and deeds. This is exactly why Solomon says to his children: Give me your *heart!*

What is implied in the term “honor” here in our text is that the wife is a precious possession. She is something highly valued. That does not mean that she is on a par with expensive furniture or crystal or what have you. She is not a possession in that sense of the word, of course. But what is emphasized here is that the wife is of extreme and immeasurable value. She is to her husband the most highly prized of all people. Her price is far above rubies. He that has a wife has a good thing. That is how a husband must always view his wife.

He has received from God, in his wife, the most cherished possession of his life.

And because she is so cherished, so valuable to him, he is called upon to honor her.

As we mentioned, this does not mean that he is called to hand over the rule of the home to her. On the contrary, the honor that must be given to the wife is that of deference, favor, love. We must give regard to the opinion and desires of the wife. We must be considerate of her and listen to what she says. In other words, a God-fearing husband does not treat his wife as a piece of dirt, ignoring her and degrading her, and even despising her. The husband may not simply go his own merry way

with no regard for the needs and wants and cares of his wife. Some husbands can be that way, you know. They are so busy with their own pursuits that they have little regard for their wife. They spend their time at work or out with the guys. They come home late. And when they come home they care little about what goes on in the home and family or in the life of their own wife. There is little conversation that goes on. They simply cohabit the same house with their wives. Oh, maybe it was different at first when he was trying to woo

her. When he dated her and perhaps was first married to

her, his attitude was different. But as the years go by he forgets about her and acts like she does not even exist. That is wrong of a husband. He must always assign to his wife that place in his heart and life that holds her in high esteem. All other pursuits, all other desires must be pushed aside and the wife must take top priority in his life. In this way, the husband is to honor his wife.

Maybe this is the test that we ought to apply to ourselves, husbands. Ask yourselves: When I am finished with work, where do I enjoy going the most? Is the answer, home to my wife and children? Is that the place I would most want to be? If you

honor your wife, if you love and cherish her as the most valuable person and thing in your life, then your answer will be home. If your heart lies elsewhere, you are not honoring your wife! If you dread going home, or when you get home you would rather turn to the TV or a computer screen, then you are doing dishonor to your wife!

We are to honor our wives! Why? Because the life of a godly, believing wife depends on her husband. She needs our attention and praise. That is the reward of a virtuous woman, you understand! Her husband rises up and calls her blessed! She needs the honor of her husband. We honor our wives also because they are heirs together with their husbands of the grace of life! She is that one person in the whole world that God binds together with her husband in such a way that she is his support and even his strength. We need the spiritual advice and wisdom that a godly wife can give us. We need her to anchor us in the truth. God has bound us together with our wives in order to keep us strong spiritually. That is why we are called to honor our wives, husbands. We need them! We need them just as much as, maybe even more than, they need us!

### III. Blessed by Her

That is why a godly husband

is truly blessed by his believing wife. No wonder Solomon writes in Proverbs 31:12, “She will do him good and not evil all her days.” If you were to read the rest of Proverbs 31 you would also find out just how a godly wife is a blessing to her husband. The most important way a wife is a blessing to her husband is stated in the last part of our text: she prays together with him. She is there with him in his home, and the two of them raise their prayers to God on each other’s behalf. She prays with her husband and for her husband. That is a constant means of blessing for him.

But when friction or disputes arise, and the husband fails to give honor to his wife, then his prayers and hers are hindered. How can one pray when the relationship between husband and wife is not right? When we are angry with each other? When we as husbands do our wives wrong, how can we pray? We cannot. Our prayers become shallow and ineffectual. But when the right relationship prevails in our marriage, then our prayers as individuals and as a couple rise up to God unhindered. Such, then, is the calling of the husband toward his wife. When it is right, we find a vibrant, warm, and happy marriage. God give us hearts that honor our wives.

## GIVE ME YOUR HEART

### I. Father’s Prime Desire

The salvation of our children is not something that drops automatically from heaven simply because they are born to believing parents. Salvation does not belong to them because it is their right, being born into the sphere of the church. Salvation is a work of God’s grace—sovereign, free grace. God chooses whom He wills, and these He saves. At the same time, believing parents are given the promise of God’s covenant that God will save in the line of their generations. God is pleased to do this, however, in those families where father (and mother, of course) diligently labors to raise his children in the fear of the Lord. It is not that our labor as fathers saves our children. But God uses the means of godly fathers who are willing to nurture their children to save in the line of generations. This is done when a father touches the hearts of his children with his life in the home. That, of course, is how a believing father addresses his son in the verse before us here in Proverbs: “My son, give me thy heart!” That must be the prime desire of a godly father in his relationship

with his children: he must desire their hearts.

But we need to understand what this means. It does not mean, “My son, give me your outward behavior.” This is how much parenting is performed, I’m afraid. And it is easy to fall into this way of thinking too. A father can insist that his children follow all the right actions that make them look good on the outside. “Here is what you must do, children, in order to be a good Christian. You must go to church. You must attend catechism. You need to marry a person from the church. You must memorize and defend these certain doctrines of the church.”

Do not misunderstand my point here. I am not saying these things are wrong and we ought not to insist on godly living. We certainly should! We need to teach our children good behavior and good, godly habits. But we

|||

*That must be the prime desire of a godly father in his relationship with his children: he must desire their hearts.*
|||

*as fathers must not merely be interested in outward behavior—*

a going through the proper motions of one’s faith. When fathers do only this with their children, one of two things will happen. Either the child will rebel against his or her parents when they come of age. He will say, “All you

**THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR**

January 22, 2017  
No. 3864

*Give Me Your Heart*  
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Dear Radio Friends,

**Introduction**

A responsible, upright man is a blessing in home, church, and society. Our unbelieving society is at a loss for such men. Many men choose a life of irresponsibility and selfishness. They boast in their drunkenness and unproductive life. Even if they do marry they let their wives run the family while they indulge in their sports and drinking. This is not true of the man who fears God. He does not follow after the godless example of the unbelieving man, but rather chooses to walk responsibly in the ways of God. This is true of him already in childhood and youth. And it is especially true of him when he matures and takes his place in family and church. He is repelled by the wicked ways of the unrighteous man.

The last couple of broadcasts we devoted to the upright man's relationship with his wife. Today we turn to the relationship a father must establish with his children in the home. Again, we are dealing in the main with the relationship that a *father* must establish with his children

in the home. Some time ago we addressed the relationship a virtuous woman establishes with her children. Today we focus our attention on the father in relation to his children. We do so from the point of view of Solomon's word to us in Proverbs 23:24-26, which reads, "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice. My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."

This passage strikes at the very core of what every believing father must seek to establish with his children. And although Solomon addresses his son here, making this passage very personal, nevertheless it needs to be applied more broadly to include the daughter as well as the son. Every father must seek to win the hearts of his children in order that he can turn their hearts to the Lord. That is the key to Christian pedagogy, to child rearing. A father must say to every child whom God is pleased to give him: Give me your heart!

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*The Marital Bond*  
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Dear Radio Friends,

**Introduction**

In marriage God binds a man and his wife into one flesh. The husband, as we have found, is the head in this relationship, and his wife is given him by God as a help. Together they make up one whole—one unit with two sides, just as a coin has two sides. That is what Scripture means when it speaks of a husband and wife being one flesh. Such a relationship is meant by God to picture for us the intimate relationship of Christ and His church.

This idea cannot be separated from the words of Solomon in the verse we consider today. We read in the Song of Solomon 2:16, 17, "My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies until the day break, and the shadows flee away." Although we will concentrate on the bond of a husband and wife in marriage, nevertheless we cannot overlook the fact that this book of the Bible is actually God's love-letter to His bride, the church.

There is something more to this verse that we must discover too. We are not talking about the relationship of a husband and wife in the abstract in this verse, neither in this entire book, for that matter. It is one thing to say that God has mysteriously bound a husband and wife into one flesh with each other, but it is another thing to live constantly with

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stantly with this awareness before one's consciousness. It is a husband's calling before God and his

wife to enter into an intimate life of love with his wife. He must live as one flesh with his wife in order that, as a result, his wife will be able to say from her heart, "My beloved is mine, and I am his!" Or, using but a different word order than does chapter 6:3, "I am by beloved's, and my beloved is mine!" These words are those spoken by a wife concerning her husband, and can be words spoken only because she is living in an intimate relationship of love with her husband.

To understand this, we must



realize that it is Solomon's wife that is speaking the words of our text. A discourse is taking place through chapters 1 and 2. Solomon had just spoken to her. The words we consider today are the response of Solomon's spouse that she now expresses in her great love for him. And it is this response of a wife toward her husband we wish to consider in our broadcast today.

## THE MARITAL BOND

### I. *The Upright Husband*

Here is the description this loving wife gives to her husband: "he feedeth among the lilies." This language is poetry, of course, and therefore is symbolic. If we read through this Song of Songs we find the symbol of a lily used frequently. Not only does this husband feed among the lilies, he is himself a lily. Solomon states in verse 1 of this chapter, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." The lily referred

to in this verse and in the verses we consider is the white lily. We appropriately call it the wedding lily—probably because of the references to it in the Song of Solomon. As such the lily is a sign of beauty and royalty. Jesus states in Luke 12:27, "Consider the lilies how they grow: they

toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The lily is also known for its fragrance: We read of that in the Song of Solomon 5:13: "His cheeks are as a bed of spices, sweet flowers: his lips are like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh."

This is a fit description of the upright man, that is, the man who fears God and keeps His commandments. White is a symbol of purity. It speaks of a godly man's holiness, his consecration to that which is good and pure. He is freed from the lusts that characterize the thorns around him, since he has been freed from sin in the blood of Jesus Christ. The upright husband is cleansed and purified through the death and resurrection of his Savior. Though his sins were as scarlet, he is made whiter than the snow in the precious blood of his Savior.

The godly husband has been molded by Christ for holy service to God and to his wife. This purity is the upright husband's beauty. The ugliness of sin has been washed away. He is beautiful in the sight of God.

As the psalmist writes, God beautifies the meek with salvation. This is true of that husband who fears God. This is also

Solomon also writes in this Song, chapter 4:5, 6, "Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins *which feed among the lilies*. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, will I get me to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense." Ah yes, godly men, the marriage bed is undefiled, but adulterers God will judge.

### III. *The Lasting Bond*

The passage before us places before a husband a bit of knowledge that no godly husband ought to ignore. Marriage is a sacred bond, intimate and holy unto the Lord. It is not a

human institution. It is a God-created institution that every man who fears the Lord holds sacred and dear. He may not treat it as an ordinary bond that he shares with his wife. The vows he takes at the time of marriage are not to be tampered with. God looks down from heaven and guards this sacred institution. Woe to that man who insults his wife, who says to her that he loathes her or that he finds her undesirable. God will judge him. Woe to that man who in his lust leaves his wife and seeks to drink waters out of another cistern! Woe to

that man who looks down on his wife and treats her as a commoner instead of the royalty that she is. She is his lily! White: pure, undefiled, and arrayed in a beauty to which Solomon in all his grandeur cannot be compared. And in this bond of love we can only pray that our wives will say of us what Solomon's wife said of him: "My beloved is mine, and I am his!"

How long does this relationship last? Until the day break and the shadows flee away. That is how long her beloved feeds among the lilies. He lives in the midst of his church with the

wife of his bosom until the end of his life. When the day breaks and passes away into the darkness of death; when the shadows of this life flee away, then this bond of marriage ends. There will be no more marriage in heaven. But until our days on earth come to a close and the light of our earthly life is extinguished, we strive to establish the intimate relationship of our marriage. Then love and marriage become a lasting bond. Such is the calling of the upright man in marriage. God bless the lilies of the valleys. May those lilies grow in our homes and in the church.

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makes me know that by the way he lives with me! I joy in that knowledge!

He belongs to me! He is my love. And, likewise, I belong to him!

He has eyes only for me. I am sure that he thinks of me as the best thing that has ever happened to him in life. That is the kind of love that a wife must feel and know in her life with her husband. But the question is: How can a husband make his wife know this? We do it, first of all, by telling our wives that we love them. We must speak our words of devotion to them. I have heard a man say: "I do not have to say anything to my wife to make her feel wanted and loved. She should know that. After all, I am married to her, am I not? To express to my wife that I love her is not necessary! That is all sentimentalism." That is not true, beloved saints! How often God speaks of His love for us in Scripture. He showed His love by sending the very Son of His love to death to save us from sin. How often we hear Solomon express his love and devotion to his wife in this Song!

But it goes beyond words too. An upright man will by his deeds make his wife know she is the beloved of his life. She is the one he desires. She is the one he adores. She is the one

he views as the most beautiful woman in the world—no matter

how old she gets. She is the love of his life. His desire at the end of a day or night of

work is to come home to his wife. And when he is with her, he spends time listening to her. He shows her that her life is important to him when they are apart. He speaks with her about his goals and his frustrations as well as his joys. He discusses with her his failures and fears. He does this because his beloved is his! And he makes her to know, too, that he is hers. His eyes are not roaming to see if there is something better for him out there. We live in an age when pornography and movies and billboards and magazines and even commercials on TV lure a man's eyes away from his wife. We live in an age when everything is permitted sexually. Women in the workplace do not care if a man is married. It just presents to them more of a challenge. An upright husband gives his wife the assurance that these thorns of the world mean nothing to him. His wife is his lily; and as a lily among thorns, so is his love among the daughters of this world. Listen to the Word of God in chapter 7:10: "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me." This, too, is why

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the sweet smell that the godly husband emits. It is not the sweet smell of his wife's favorite cologne. It is the sweet smell of a godly life. In other words, the purity of his heart comes out in his life. He lives in that purity. The life of a godly man rises up to God as a sweet smelling savor, and God is pleased with him.

Beautiful symbolism, is it not? This is the description God gives to that husband who fears him. And this is what a godly wife sees in her husband as well. Are we lilies, men? Is the beauty of the Lord our God upon us? Can our wives see by our walk of life our deep love for God and our desire to keep His commandments? Does such love for God show itself in our daily walk with our wives?

It should, you know! Because this Song of Solomon is written about the relationship of Christ and His church. Our text is the church's response to her loving husband, Jesus Christ! He is the lily of the valley! He shines forth in His royal beauty. He is the Son of David who in his rule is pure and holy. He it is that offered Himself up as a sweet smelling sacrifice to God. He it is that makes us holy by means

of His work in our sanctification! And the upright husband is a picture of Christ! He has set us up in our home and family, in our marriage relationship, to be a godly example of Christ. The failure of a husband to be such a picture to his family is a horrible failure to his family and to God! A husband must be a lily!

But then, so must be a godly wife. She is a lily too. Notice what Solomon says about his wife in Song of Solomon 2:2: "As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." All other women are but thorns compared to my wife. She is a lily among thorns. The point is: she too is a lily. And everything we have said about her husband can be said of her as well. She too is pure and holy. She too is cleansed from the impurity of her sins in the blood of our Savior. She too is fitted by God to be a sweet smelling savor to Him and to her husband and family.

It is not as if this relationship between husband and wife is one-sided. She too, as a godly example to her husband and children, must show herself to be one who fears God and loves His commandments. The words of our text, though spoken by a wife about her husband, nevertheless

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imply a sanctified relationship between the two.

This purity of heart and life must be evident in the wife's life too, because she is a picture to her husband and children of the church of Jesus Christ. As the church deeply loves her Savior and Lord and submits to Him, so also the wife must deeply love her husband—with that love of Christ. And that love must exude from her toward her husband as well. This is what children must see in order that they might desire the same relationship with their spouse and with Christ when they grow up. That is the beauty of the symbolism of the lily.

But there is more. Do not forget what our text teaches us: the husband is he *that*

*feeds among the lilies.* The idea is that the godly man leads his life among the lilies. He feeds his flock there and abides in the valleys where the lilies are found.

We read in chapter 6:2, "My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies." Here we find the husband picking lilies in his gar-

den. The idea of this symbolism is that a godly husband lives and seeks a wife in the realm of the lilies! He found his wife among the daughters of Jerusalem—in the realm of the church among believers.

Though it is not our intention today to go into this idea at length, nevertheless we do stress to young men to look for a wife among those who fear God. The church is the place where lilies grow—both men and women who are lilies. The believer must live his life in the church. And it is among the God-fearing in the church that we seek out and find a wife. It is among the God-fearing that a wife looks for a husband. Such is the idea expressed here in this Word of God. And that has some

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real practical significance for us too. Believe me, to find a wife among the lilies will avoid some very real heartache and pain in marriage. It can mean the difference between a happy and fulfilling life and a miserable life of strife and perhaps even divorce.

## *II. The Joyful Relationship*

Now, we need to take note in this connection that the words spoken in the verse we consider are that of Solomon's wife. But more, these words are the inspired Word of God to us. Where Solomon failed in his life, this passage of God's Word points to the joyful relationship between an upright man and his wife. It is said that this Song of Solomon was written at the end of his life, when he had come to a realization of his sin and the proper relationship that belonged to a husband and wife. And that relationship is expressed in these beautiful words, "My beloved is mine and I am his." These words of the spouse of Solomon express what ought to be the very heart of every marriage. My husband is mine and mine alone! He belongs to no one else. He is my exclusive possession, *and* I am his. I belong to him too. I am no other man's possession. I give myself to no other man, but I remain exclusively my husband's.

Now, we need to know that this is true of the very essence of marriage. When a man and woman marry, they become one flesh. Christ commands us, "What God joins together, let not man divide asunder." The husband in whose heart the Spirit of Christ lives is given

that knowledge. He belongs to his wife—alone. God has bound him to his wife and she is his. She is one with him. And he is one with her. This is why we can say in a real sense that this passage is speaking of Christ and His bride the church. They are one flesh with each other. Christ belongs to His church. He was chosen from eternity to be the Head of His church. At no time is Christ viewed by God apart from His church. He was sent as her Redeemer and Lord. Neither is the church at any time without her husband. She is His. She is His body, of His flesh and blood. There is an intimate bond of union between Christ and His bride. It is this bond that is reflected in the marriage of a man and his wife. In fact, this becomes one of the motivating factors that causes a godly man to seek out his wife in all things. Just as the church is so very dependent on Christ, so also the wife, when tied together with her husband, is so very dependent on him. They joy in each other. They dwell with each other. They are friends with each other.

But it is one thing to *say* that this is true of a man and his wife's relationship. The point is: the husband must *strive to live* in the joy of this relationship. This wife of Solomon in her life with her husband could say: My beloved is mine! He loves me with an exclusive love. And he