

HUSBANDS AND WIVES - 1 Peter 3:1-8

January 17, 2021

It was in March of 2020 that we were going over 1 Peter, and then the virus hit, and so we changed course and went over a number of other subjects for the remainder of 2020 and the first few weeks of 2021. But now we're back in 1 Peter, and are starting in chap. 3. And we were talking back then about how we are to conduct ourselves as Christians, and specifically, we talked about this area of submitting to those in authority over us.

1 Pet 3:1. It says, "*in the same way*", and this is referring back to 1 Pet. 2, and the point is that wives are to submit to their husbands like workers are to submit to their masters, and like citizens are to submit to the governing authorities.

- This word submit means to be subject to, to rank yourself under, and it was used as a military term. Now this doesn't mean women are in any way inferior to men, but for the marriage to work, or any aspect of our society, there needs to be those who are leading, and those who are following, those who are submitting. And only then can there be real peace, order and productivity, i.e., real blessing from God. Workplace

In the marriage relationship, women are to submit to their husbands, and this is not saying husbands are more important, or that wives are intellectually or spiritually inferior, but that submission is the design and pattern that God wants for the marriage relationship, and that it is necessary for the well-being of families and society in general. This says that a wife has her own husband and has a special relationship with her husband, and she is to submit to him, and not someone else's husband, which makes sense.

- A wife is to submit to her husband whether he's a Christian or not, for the verse speaks about husbands who are disobedient, which could mean they're not Christians. Some of the wives who had just gotten saved may have wondered if they needed to submit to their non-Christian husbands, and God is saying that yes, they are to submit. 1 Cor. 7:12-16

But he's saying there's a good reason for their submission, and it's in hopes of winning the unsaved husband, to see him turn from his sin, turn to the Lord, and be saved.

And we see this play on words, that the husband who is not obeying God's word can be won to the Lord by the wives not saying a word. Oftentimes we think that the way we change the behavior of another person, the way we persuade another person is by our words, but this is saying that's not what God wants the wife to do with her husband.

- And so a key principle in a wife evangelizing her husband, in reaching her unsaved husband is not by her words but by her actions. That's because the woman's actions have a lot more affect than her words - her actions speak a lot louder than her words.

1 Peter 3:2. This word chaste means holy and pure. And respectful means behavior that is showing respect and honor, is reverential, not behavior that is dishonoring, disrespectful, or disobedient. Eph 5:33. And it says that the man observes it, the man can see the woman's behavior. Her behavior then is not hidden, but is obvious, is visible, is easy to see.

1 Peter 3:3. Now we read what this behavior should not be. You see we're talking about a woman's spiritual appearance, and not her physical appearance, not her adornment, not her jewelry, clothes, or hair. We know that many unsaved women focus on their jewelry, clothes and hair, on their outward appearance. And we see this in the world all the time. Is. 3:16-26 - Of course it's fine to have nice jewelry, nice clothes, nice hair – there's nothing wrong with these things, but that shouldn't be a woman's focus, and it shouldn't be overly done, it shouldn't be done in a way that distracts & detracts from her character. Now a wife does not want to look dowdy, unkempt, have messy hair, or look in a way that embarrasses her husband. And so a wife, shouldn't focus on her outward appearance, and think her outward appearance is what's most important. Prov. 31:30

1 Peter 3:4. The focus of the wife should be on her heart, and we read that it is hidden. And we are talking about her spiritual heart, her spirit, her soul that you can't see, but what God can see. And a wife must realize that she, in her heart, is first to submit to God, to respect God, to be humble before Him. And as she does this, as she loves God and is humble before God, then she'll be humble before her husband and submit to him and respect him.

This imperishable quality wives are to have is the hidden person of the heart. What is most valuable is that which you can't see, that which is in your heart. What's most important is not that which is external, it is not clothes that perish, and get old or worn out, or hair that needs to be fixed up every day. It's a quality from God that is internal, that is spiritual, that is imperishable, that is then seen in outward ways, in ways that please God and can spiritually affect people. A wife then who is saved is to have a godly and humble heart, a heart that loves and trusts God, that is then seen in her actions towards her husband.

These two words, gentle and quiet, go together. The word gentle is speaking of a person who is humble, who doesn't struggle or fight against God, or against others. A gentle person does not easily get angry or mad, or combative, and does not quickly or immediately get upset with others when they do something they don't like, or when bad things happen. He or she is one who accepts trials, and the difficult circumstances of life. A person like this is not one who is weak, but one who is strong, internally strong, one who's looking to God and is trusting God, and gets strength from the Holy Spirit to be self-controlled, to not yell or blow up or lash out when things don't go right.

The word quiet goes along with the word gentle, for a gentle person will be a quiet person. And I don't mean a person who is not talking, who does not say anything, but one who has a tranquil spirit, a peaceable demeanor. Vines defines it as "*tranquility arising from within, causing no disturbances to others.*" The submissive wife will have this gentle and quiet spirit towards her husband. She won't be getting mad, angry, or retaliating against him, but in her heart will be humble towards God and towards her husband, resulting in a gentle and quiet spirit.

And this quality in a wife is precious in the sight of God. And what's most important for a wife is that she is a child of God, and that she is serving and responding to God. God loves this when He sees us like this, as ones who serve and respond to Him in this way. But others see this too, and in this case, the husband is to see his wife like this. And God is saying that the way to win your husband is not so much by what you say, but more-so, by what you do, by your actions, by your outward behavior. And what's interesting is that of all the godly qualities God could have stated here, He speaks of having a gentle and quiet spirit, which means it's very, very important.

1 Peter 3:5-6. Peter gives the example of women from the past who had this character quality, who were godly women, who were righteous in the sight of God, and were ones who lived holy lives. They were ones who hoped in God: they looked to God, trusted God, and got strength from God. They were submissive, saw that God had placed their husband in authority over them, and then they placed themselves under their husband's authority. And this is how they adorned themselves, which means they saw that their character, their spiritual clothing, was much more important than their physical clothing, and how they physically looked. And they knew this could have a positive effect on their husband, and if they were unsaved, could be used by God as a means to lead them to get saved.

The example is given of Sarah, of Abraham's wife. And she was submissive to Abraham, and she showed that submission by obeying him, by doing what he wanted her to do, even though Abraham was far from perfect, still sinned, and didn't always do what was right. And she called him lord, meaning she recognized that God had placed him over her, that he was her husband, that he was her master. Gen. 12, Abigail – 1 Sam. 25

Wives then, spiritually speaking, are Sarah's children when they live and act like her. But you see here that the wives are to do what is right without being frightened by fear. This word "*fear*" is a strong word meaning frightening or terrifying. Oftentimes the wife, being at home, sees needs with the children, or things that need to be done, or things that need to be purchased, and the husband is not seeing things like she does, or maybe he is slow to take action, or he is lazy, or he is combative, and this can be frightening to the wife, for she's thinking of the consequences if no action is taken.

Now I'm not saying wives don't need to take action at times, for maybe they should. But the lesson here is that the wife is to trust God, and have a gentle and quiet spirit, and this will have a powerful impact on her husband, whether the husband is saved or lost. Now messages about submission usually aren't accepted by unbelievers. Indeed, some of the problems in this world are because the woman isn't playing her role, isn't looking to her husband, isn't being submissive. But as you know, problems also occur because the husband isn't playing his role, isn't loving, leading and caring for his wife like he should.

1 Peter 3:7. What do we learn here? A number of things: it says, "*husbands in the same way,*" meaning the husband is to be humble too, and is therefore to submit to his wife. For there to be a good marriage there must be this mutual submission, which is what Eph. 5:21 says – "*Be subject to one another in the fear of God.*" This mutual submission leads to good communication, good dialogue, to unity, and to the couple working together for God.

Eph. 5:22-27. Now the way a husband submits looks different than how the wife submits, for he is to love his wife, care for his wife, and help her to spiritually grow. And one way a husband can love his wife is by understanding her. This word understanding can also be translated as knowledge. This means the husband needs to know his wife, and what she's like, her personality, desires, needs, emotions, and live with her accordingly. The husband needs to listen to his wife, be sensitive to his wife, and to adapt to what she is like.

- Every woman is different, and the husband needs to know and understand his wife and love and care for her according to who she is, according to what she is like. And he needs to spend time with his wife, and talk to his wife, and learn what she's like, and this usually takes time. Prov. 20:5, Luke 2:46-47

But it says the wife is weaker, which means, in general, physically weaker. This isn't saying the wife is weaker in intellect or character - in fact, she may be smarter and more godly. The husband is to honor his wife, to respect her, for she too is "*a fellow heir of the grace of life.*" She too will receive this incredible inheritance in the ages to come. Eph. 1:3-14 - Back in the 1st century, women received little or no respect. And the husbands were often like dictators, and were very abusive, both physically and verbally, and most wives were mere servants who were to stay at home and do whatever their husband wanted.

And God wanted that view of women to change, and for people to see that men and women are equal, are loved by God the same, and are to be shown respect, and are to be listened to and understood. And the husband needs to see his wife is blessed just like him, and he is to never look down on his wife, but is to see her as his equal, for in God's sight, they are equal. And the wonderful promise is that God answers a husband's prayers as he lives with his wife in this way, as he loves her, respects her, and understands her. Eph. 5:28-33, Psalm 84:7