

HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WIFE AND HER HUSBAND

TEXT: I PETER 3:1-7

Introduction:

1. I have entitled tonight's message, "Harmonious Relationship Between the Wife and Her Husband" (I Peter 3:1-7).
2. I realize most people are accustomed to the phrase "husband and wife," rather than "wife and husband," but in our text tonight God places the wife first (3:1).
3. Furthermore, the first six verses are addressed to the wife, and only one verse is directly addressed to the husband (3:7).
4. This could mean the wife is six times more important than the husband; I am not sure. I am still studying this.
5. I have preached this text before on Mother's Day, but this is not a Mother's Day message. We are going through the book of I Peter and this is where we are tonight.
6. However, I do believe every day ought to be Mother's Day, just as every day is the Lord's Day.
7. I realize God has set apart one day out of the week for us to worship, and this day we call the Lord's Day. But I think you will agree that every day we ought to be worshipping God, praying, and reading our Bibles, etc.
8. "This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).
9. And just as we rejoice and praise God every day, we ought to honor wives and mothers every day, and thank God for them.

I. WIVES ARE TO BE IN SUBJECTION TO THEIR HUSBANDS

1. First Peter 3:1 refers specifically to wives, but the Bible teaches that all Christians are to be submissive (cf. 2:13-15, 17, 18; 5:5).
2. First Peter 2:15 says that this "is the will of God..."
3. It is God's will that we be submissive to those God has placed in authority over us. When George W. Bush was president, liberals were very disrespectful and they said terrible things about him.
4. Now that Barak Obama is president, conservatives are disrespectful and are saying terrible things about him. As Christians we need to be careful about this.

5. When the apostle Paul said to the high priest Ananias, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall," he was reprov'd for it and he apologized (Acts 23:1-5).
6. By submitting we are putting ourselves under the authority and rule of another. This means children are to submit to their parents, citizens to government, employees to employers, and wives to husbands (I Peter 3:1).
7. All of this is dealt with extensively in Scripture (cf. Romans 13:1-7; Eph. 5:21-24; 6:1-3, 5, 6).
8. Sometimes Christian wives can win their unsaved husbands to the Lord by being submissive to them (I Peter 3:1, 2).
9. Of course, if Christian women were more careful about this they wouldn't find themselves in this predicament. Second Corinthians 6:14 says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"
10. I realize many women get saved after they are married. The good news is that many unsaved husbands get saved through the godly example of the wife (3:1, 2). I have seen this many times.
11. The question is often raised: what if the unsaved husband makes demands that are unbiblical?
12. Some Christians teach that the wife must obey no matter what. However, I think the Bible teaches the wife should obey unless the unsaved husband wants her to do something unscriptural.
13. The Bible gives many examples where believers had to disobey authority because that authority wanted them to violate God's Word. Consider the story of the Hebrew midwives.
14. Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill all the male babies. This is similar to China's one-baby policy, except in China they are killing the female babies.
15. Exodus 1:17 says, "the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive."
16. Exodus 2 tells us Moses' mother hid him for three months, and then put him in a little ark of bulrushes and placed him by the river's edge.
17. How about the prophet Daniel.
18. Daniel was a law abiding citizen and he submitted to King Darius and to the Media-Persian government that was over him. Daniel was not rebellious. He was not a lawbreaker or troublemaker.

19. The presidents and princes of Persia sought to find occasion against Daniel, but could not find any fault in him. So they put together a foolish law which made it against the law for Daniel to pray.
20. Daniel knew he had to keep praying, and he knew that it would be disobedient for him not to pray.
21. Daniel knew that God had to come before the king.
22. So there was a conflict, and Daniel understood that in this conflict he had to obey the Higher Authority.
23. A similar problem came before Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Bible readers have wondered why Daniel is not mentioned in Daniel chapter 3.
24. More than likely Daniel was out of town. In any event, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship the golden image, and were cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.
25. This is a good time of year for us to remember the wise men who traveled from the east to see the baby Jesus. King Herod gave strict orders to the wise men: "And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also" (Matthew 2:8).
26. However, God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod. They did the right thing by obeying God rather than Herod.
27. That's exactly what Peter and the other apostles said to the council: in Acts 5:29, "We ought to obey God rather than men."
28. Now, let us apply this principle to I Peter 3:1 and Ephesians 5:22 and other Scriptures, which teach wives must obey their husbands.
29. Wives must obey their husbands, unless the husbands are instructing their wives to do things that are contrary to Scripture.
30. Over the years we have had quite a few unsaved husbands order their wives to stop attending our church. One husband allowed her to come but not to tithe. In some cases the wives wisely stood their ground. Regrettably, some wives obeyed their husbands and their families were devoured by the devil.

II. WIVES ARE TO HAVE A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT (3:4).

1. First Peter 3:3 has been interpreted various ways. Some have taught that it means Christian women should never wear jewelry.
2. However, I think Peter is speaking of excessive, gaudy hairstyles and jewelry and attire (cf. Isaiah 3:16-24).

3. According to Scripture, it is "the inner man" that is important -- "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible" (3:4).
4. Christian women should dress modestly. First Timothy 2:9, 10 says, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."
5. Low cleavages and short skirts are very inappropriate, especially for Christian women. Older women should set a good example for the younger women (cf. Titus 2:3-5).
6. I saw a picture of the rock singer and actress Cher in the newspaper the other day. Though she is now 64 years old, she still looks as trappy and sleazy as ever. What a mess!
7. First Timothy 2:9 says, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety."
8. The only time we see the word "shamefacedness" in the Bible is in I Timothy 2:9. *Strong's Concordance* says the word means, "a sense of shame or honour, modesty, bashfulness, reverence, regard for others, respect."
9. Contrast that with the women described by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 3:16 -- "Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet."
10. Godly women can win their unsaved husbands to Christ by their "chaste conversation" (I Peter 3:2).
11. Not by nagging. Nagging doesn't win souls. A loud nagging wife does more harm than good and usually pushes her husband further away from the Lord. I have seen this.
12. However, I did read one time how nagging apparently did some good. A British lady named Barbara Peers frequently nagged her boyfriend about getting married. She nagged him about buying a house, and how many children they would have, etc. In fact, she nagged him about everything.
13. Doctors said her continual, persistent nagging paid off. Her boyfriend, David Logan, 25, was knocked unconscious in a 100-mile-an-hour motorcycle accident while practicing for the Isle of Man Grand Prix.

14. The doctors said that without regaining consciousness his brain would deteriorate and he would become a vegetable. But after 17 days of nonstop nagging he regained consciousness and spoke!
15. The Bible has much to say about this sort of constant nagging (Proverbs 19:13; 21:9, 19; 27:15).
16. The Bible way to win the husband is by the chaste conversation (conduct) of the wives (I Peter 3:1-6).
17. George Muller told the story of a drunken German man who had a godly wife. One night at the tavern he bragged to his drinking companions that though it was very late he could bring them all to his home, get his wife out of bed and order her to cook a meal for them.
18. Which is what he did. However, after a while, his friends were disturbed by the rude way this man treated his wife, and one by one they rebuked him and left.
19. Finally he was left alone at his dinner table and got under great conviction. He went into his bedroom and prayed with his wife and got saved.

III. HUSBANDS ARE TO HONOR THEIR WIVES (3:7).

1. Husbands are to honor their wives "as unto the weaker vessel" (3:7).
2. "Weaker" does not mean inferior, less intelligent or less spiritual, etc. It simply means weaker physically. That is the norm.
3. "Heirs together" refers to a marriage in which both the husband and wife are saved. They are partners who work together.
4. When husbands fail to honor their wives, their prayers are "hindered" (3:7).
5. Some men treat their wives nicely during the courtship and honeymoon but soon start taking them for granted.
6. I heard about a young man who was crazy about a beautiful young lady and he went out and bought 365 pretty postcards. Every day he would send her a different card with a mushy poem on it.
7. Every day she would go to her mailbox and get a new card.
8. At the end of the year she got married -- to the mailman.

CONCLUSION:

1. One of the most wonderful verses in the Bible is Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

2. That is a very high standard that God sets for the husband.
3. Matthew Henry said, "The love which God requires from the husband in behalf of his wife will make amends for the subjection which he demands from her to her husband; and the prescribed subjection of the wife will be an abundant return for that love of the husband which God has made her due."