

Beautifully, Fearlessly Submitting to an Unbelieving Husband

1 Peter 3:1-6

1 Likewise,

“Likewise” (“in the same way”) in 3:1 seems to be connected to something **other than** “be subject” (willing submit) because 3:8 also begins with “Likewise.” Peter seems to be making a connection in 3:1 with what he said in 2:21-23. Peter seems to be taking Jesus’ example of patiently enduring by way of His continual entrusting and now applying that to wives whose husbands are not yet Christians. Compare “For this is how the holy women who hoped in God” in 3:5 with “continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly” in 2:23. See also 4:19. All genuine Christians, including wives whose husbands are not yet Christians, are called to follow Jesus’ example and live by ongoing faith in God. We continue to entrust our **s_____** and our **s_____** to our faithful Creator who always judges justly.

These ladies have come to trust in Jesus Christ, but their husbands have not. Their husbands do not yet believe the Gospel, have not yet been born again in connection with hearing and believing that good news, and so they do not yet worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. These sisters in Christ have husbands who do **not** share their theological beliefs and ethical commitments. Their husbands **aren’t** on the same page as them spiritually.

And in the Greco-Roman world in which these ladies lived, not being on board with your husband in the realm of religion could cause some serious conflict at home and bring some serious consequences in the community. The cultural expectation was that a wife would do whatever her husband did when it came to worship. His gods were to be her gods. For a wife to think and believe and worship separately and distinctly from her husband could be easily misunderstood by the community and could lead to lots of trouble between that woman and her man.

wives, be subject to your own husbands,

Generally, all of us (both genders and all ages) chafe and fight against the idea of someone else exercising authority over us, even though authority is God’s good and wise design for us and all of us are supposed to be living under someone else’s authority.

Specifically, wives struggle with submitting to the leadership of their own husbands. It’s not easy, and it’s made even more difficult by the fact that husbands often fail to love their wives and fail to lead well (either as passive doormats or as overly aggressive dictators).

Question: Why is it so hard for a wife to subject herself (willing submit herself) to her own husband? Why is it so difficult for a wife to voluntarily let her own husband take the lead in their marriage and home life?

Answer: Sometimes it’s because of the incompetence of her own husband as a leader. Maybe he’s a poor decision maker. Maybe he’s insensitive, unappreciative, and unloving. But it’s more than that. As a consequence of the Fall (humanity’s rebellion against our Creator), wives have a sinful tendency to resist being led by their own husbands. Wives try to be “the **n_____** that turns the **h_____**.” See Genesis 3:1-16, especially 3:16b, and compare the use of the same language in 3:16b with 4:7.

so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct. 3 Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— 4 but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.

Question: How can a Christian wife best influence her unbelieving husband toward believing the Gospel?

Answer: With her “s_____ e_____ and e_____,” she can attract him to her Lord. This kind of beauty is “p_____.”

This is the compelling beauty of a Christian woman’s c_____, not her c_____ or her c_____.

This is beauty without Botox. This is pretty without plastic surgery. This is a beauty that the poorest woman on the planet can radiate with, and it lasts.

A Christian wife is free to focus on being a wife. She’s not a preacher. There’s no need for her to nag, argue, or “pepper every conversation with Bible verses.” She can trust in God to work in the heart of her husband as she focuses her attention and her energy on being this kind of wife.

Question: Which kind of beauty should a Christian woman (married or unmarried) give the most attention to?

Answer: A Christian woman (married or unmarried) should give the most attention to her i_____ beauty.

E_____ beauty should **not** be the greatest passion or the highest priority of a woman who follows Jesus (whether single or married). At the same time, this is **not** a call for women to not care for their bodily beauty. This is **not** a command to be **unattractive**.

But a woman should not prepare and dress herself for the day in a way that follows our culture’s motto of “if you got it, flaunt it.” Dressing immodestly and exposing your bodily beauty will turn heads and attract eyeballs, but it dishonors your Lord and is not the way to win your unbelieving (or disobedient) husband. (It’s also **not** the way to find yourself a good husband, if you are a single woman. If he just wants you for your body, run the other way.)

Question: What wisdom can a young single man learn from this passage?

Answer: He can learn what to look for as he looks for a young woman to marry. He can become wise to the fact that there’s a greater beauty than bodily beauty. He can learn to **not** focus on skin-deep beauty as he looks for the woman he will marry and then grow old, gray, and wrinkled with.

Also, there is **nothing** here that encourages Christian ladies to “f_____ and c_____.” This is **not** a call to “m_____ d_____.”

The Bible clearly and strongly commands God’s people to not pursue romantic relationships with others who are not God’s people. Both gals and guys who follow Jesus should not get into romantic relationships with, date, court, or marry others who aren’t true believers in the Gospel.

5 For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

Such a submissive wife is not a weak, fretting, restless, anxious woman. She is strong and fearless. She does not live in fear of her husband. She does not cave to unholy cultural norms. The only One she fears is God himself. She has a beautiful quiet confidence in her God. Her hope is in Him, not in herself or in her husband. This woman’s husband is **not** her “rock.” She’s not looking inside herself or to her husband for strength. She’s looking to God. Her inner stability doesn’t come from the man she married but from the God she belongs to.