

## ***Wives & Husbands, What do you do with them?***

I Peter 3: 1-7

*"<sup>1</sup> In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over <sup>2</sup> by observing your pure and reverent lives.*

*<sup>3</sup> Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. <sup>4</sup> You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. <sup>5</sup> This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They put their trust in God and accepted the authority of their husbands. <sup>6</sup> For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.*

*<sup>7</sup> In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered."*

In our world today, this age-old situation, struggles in our relationships, arises almost every day. If we are not careful, tension will rise between a husband and his wife, and then what do we do? So, let's look at a few thoughts found here.

(1) ***How does the Lord intent for us, His children, to handle these situations in life?*** The relationship between a man and the woman. Perhaps, the one we have chosen to marry.

(2) ***What does this mean for us as men and women today?***

(3) ***What are some of the godly expectations, the Lord has for Husbands and wives who are part of God's family?*** These are a few of the thoughts which went through my mind and heart, as I read this passage. Today, for just a few moments, I want us to explore them as we look at this passage in I Peter. First, let me say, I don't have all of the answers, but the Lord does.

### **Illustration:**

*There were two lines of men standing in front of the Pearly Gates, waiting to get in. Each had a sign hanging overhead. The first sign read:*

***"FOR MEN WHO HAVE BEEN DOMINATED ALL THEIR LIVES BY THEIR WIVES."***

*The line extended as far as the eye could see. The other line, nearby, had a sign which read:*

***"FOR MEN WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN DOMINATED BY THEIR WIVES."*** *In this line, there was but one man.*

*St. Peter came over to the one man standing alone under the second sign ""FOR MEN WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN DOMINATED BY THEIR WIVES." and said, "What are you standing here for?" The man said, "I don't know. My wife told me to stand here."*

There are certain truths which never seem to change. Recently, I ran across something I thought was somewhat unsettling in my mind and heart.

**Illustration:**

*There is a law in Florida which makes it illegal for a woman who is single, divorced or widowed, to parachute out of a plane on any Sunday afternoon. Why on earth do they have such a law? Women, aren't you glad we don't live in Florida.*

**Illustration:**

*A church group traveled through Turkey to visit the sites of the seven churches of Revelation. As their bus went down a dusty road, they noticed a man riding a camel. The group stopped their bus to take a picture. It was only after they stopped, that they noticed that behind the rider, and the camel, was his wife walking along.*

*With the help of their interpreter, they asked the man, "Why are you riding while your wife walks?" He replied, "It is simple," "She doesn't own a camel."*

Men and women's relationships may appear to be different in a variety of ways, especially in different places within this world. But underneath the exterior, there are many of the same emotions and feeling to be dealt with, for all of us.

Our Lord created us, both men and women, and put these relationships in a specific order so that life would function as He intended. Peter was sharing these thoughts with those who had some questions back then, about those relationships. Some of which you would think would be understood, but, apparently, was not.

So, what is it that Lord expects of husbands and wives? BTW, there is no expiration date on this passage as far as I know.

***First - Wives, in the same way be submissive.***

*Peter had just explained what it meant for a Christian to act or react, as Jesus would have. He had just spoken about being submissive to the authorities over you, and masters. That portion was relevant to every believer.*

*Then, speaking of Jesus, he says, "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled insults at Him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats; instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sin, and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd, and Overseer of your souls." (I Peter 2: 22-25) There is a pattern in this passage we may need to look at.*

It was following this, that Peter then shares with men and women a few thoughts for them to take hold of: - ***"<sup>1</sup>Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,<sup>2</sup> when they see the purity and reverence of your lives."*** In the NLT we find a much softer translation: ***"<sup>1</sup> In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands."***

Peter knew that not every relationship would be pure, perfect and righteous in God's sight. Back in those days, many marriages were arranged. That meant, human ideas and thoughts got in the middle of everything. Many times, that means things can get messy. However, back then, the woman didn't have the opportunity to choose which man she would marry, most likely it was arranged by her father. Today, most every man and woman have the opportunity to choose for his or her self, who they will marry. It is our choice, right?

When we make that choice, however, once we make that choice, we have an obligation to commit to growing in love as we learn how to be the man or husband, the woman or wife, the Lord calls us to be. That commitment made before God, does not end simply because our mate is difficult to get along with. After all, we made the choice!

Peter is telling the wife here, you know the Lord, you know His forgiveness, you know His grace, and the power of His love, demonstrate that love and commitment. You should stay married, do not simply leave because you want to leave. Allow God's grace and strength to be yours, as you live out your life within your marriage commitment. That seem extremely difficult for some people to hear today. And, it is why we should take time to get to know who we are committing ourselves to prior to making that commitment.

It seems for most, everything in our world is quick and easy. When something displeases us, we simply get rid of it, and buy another one, or replace it. In truth, marriage has become very much a part of that cultural experience. If it doesn't work, dump him or her, find another and try again. ***That isn't what the word of the Lord says, that is what the world is telling us.*** We live in a selfish, self-centered, and pleasure driven world. Which believes that everything in life is be fun, exciting, and enjoyable. That is simply not always true.

Paul agrees with Peter when in Ephesians 5, Paul tells the woman to submit to the husband in everything. Those can be tough words to hear and swallow. Paul words leave no room to squeeze out of this commitment, although that may happen at times. That is why we need to use wisdom prior to making these kinds of commitments. James, when speaking of godly wisdom, says this; ***"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere."*** JAM 3:17 If we possess the wisdom of heaven, something, we obtain once we accept His forgiveness and submit to God, we will find that we might be able to better understand what the choses we make and the commitment we are entering into. In my mind and understanding, submission starts with God, then we can submit to an imperfect person in this world, with His love and strength. Peter say, submit to your husbands?

That bring us to the next thought to consider:

## ***Second - To be won over***

Peter tells us that when a woman becomes a ***"godly woman,"*** her character is changed, and she should be submissive, as the Lord leads her to be. Her changed lifestyle, will and does

make a difference in the heart and life of the home. Personally, women, I believe you are a key to a strong home even though men are charged with this responsibility of leading their home in God's Word. Godly women do make a huge difference in the home. And, in particular, their husband's lives.

So, he shares, ***"wives in the same way be submissive to your husbands,"*** or ***"wives must accept the authority of your husbands."*** What does he mean? Peter defines what he means: ***"if any of them, meaning the men you are married to, do not believe the Word, they may be won over without words, by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and the reverence in your lives."*** (vv.1-2) **Actions speak louder than words.** Peter may have been saying, don't nag or preach at him, even though he may deserve and or need it. Instead show him what your commitment to God means. What it means for both you and him. Be the godly woman. The woman the Lord created you to be. Lean on the Lord's strength to help you live as He created you to live.

Let your demeanor, your spirit, and your love for God, and your love for your husband, win him over to the Lord. This is all under the assumption of course, that you have a husband who ***"does not believe the Word."*** Or, may not be in the best relationship with God he could be. Live so that you may win Him Over!

Paul writes in I Corinthians 7, about marriage and says in verses 15-16,

***"But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances. God has called us to live in peace. How do you know wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know husband, whether you will save your wife?"***

What Paul was saying is, you don't know what your mate will do. However, just a few verses earlier Paul said, ***"if the unbeliever wishes to stay, stay with him or her."*** I think what he is trying to tell us, is this, ***"give it your best effort to show your mate God's love - meaning - your best effort to submit to God and thus to your spouse."***

If there is a chance your mate might come to know God, it will happen when he sees that you, despite what has taken place in life, were committed and stayed the course - not only stayed, you displayed godly love when love was not being displayed back.

### **Illustration:**

*A little boy at school was goofing around all day long, paying no attention to his school work. After repeated warnings, the teacher sent him to the principal's office. The boy came back and paid careful attention to the teacher for several minutes. But then he went back to his earlier inattentiveness. His impatient teacher approached him, "What was the last thing the principal told you?" The boy replied, "If I can stick it out for five more minutes, school will be over."*

Unfortunately, that is how some of us have tried to enduring our relationships, and it does not work. Five more minutes... We are not told to wait until the bell rings, and then run. We are told to submit, first to the Lord, then live a life which may cause your mate to think - wow - how does he or she do that?

Then lastly

### ***Third - Husband to be considerate and respectful***

*“Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner, and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.” (v.7)*

Now Peter speaks to the husbands, perhaps speaking to believing husbands, but non the less, to the husbands. Now, I know that the wording here has caused many women to turn off almost immediately, but we need to stay attentive just a few more minutes.

The reason I say that is, why would a none believing husband care about what the Lord says unto them? ***However, a believing husband, has been called to treat his wife with consideration, and with respect.*** Consider her feeling, her needs, and her desires in life. He did not say let her distract you, or lead you away from Him. He said, be considerate of her, and her needs in life. Treating her with respect.

I like the way the King James says it, a little better,

***“Likewise husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, give honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers may not be hindered.”***

Our wives may not be where the Lord would desire them to be, she may not have the knowledge you have, but we are ***heirs together in Christ***. Dwell with her, treating her with respect, helping her to obtain more knowledge in Christ, as she is open to it.

Giving honor to her means - ***help her keep her respect, that other see her as your wife and with all the authority she should have in that relationship.*** Protecting her person, supporting her, placing trust and confidence in her, as best we can as men who desire the best for her.

I believe Peter speaks of her as the ***“weaker vessel”*** for a variety of reason. Perhaps because, when God created her, he created her with a less substantial structure, than man. Thus, by nature, and constitution, we are the stronger beings physically, and as such, we should defend our mates. But then Peter makes it a point to say,

***“In God’s eyes, she holds a place as an “heir together with you, of the grace of life.”*** There is an honor due to all who share in the grace of God, given unto all mankind. Male and female. Now after sharing all of this today, let me point out something I consider extremely important. Peter mentions at the end of this passage, ***“so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”***

It may well be that Peter saw something happening in that day, which may still be taking place today. ***When we struggle with those we are married to, we struggle in our relationship with God.*** It is extremely difficult for someone who struggles in marriage, to maintain a strong prayer life, and thus, a close walk with God. The reverse is important as well. It is extremely difficult for someone who is struggling in their prayer life, to maintain the kind of relationship

they should have in their marriage. As, our prayer life goes, so goes our walk with Him, and everything else we deal with in life.

***I learned something years ago that I found truly important, everything in God's church is built upon relationship, first with God and then with each other.***

The marriage covenant is extremely important, for, who is closer to us than the one we are united with in marriage. No one! Therefore, I believe Peter is saying - ***do whatever it takes for us to get it right with God, and our mates, so that we don't find ourselves wondering away from God.*** If you chose to marry, do everything within your grasp to make that marriage work.

If you stay in a relationship with someone you believe doesn't know God, or His Word, or isn't living it, then do so with a heart and attitude that gives its best effort, to win that person to Him.

- Wives, in the same way submit
- Submit is such a way as to win him over - living a godly life
- Husbands, consecrate and respect your wives

This is what the Lord expects of us, you and me – even today!