

## Wives and Husbands: Radical Surrender

Context: When we approach this passage right off the bat we see the word “likewise” – or “in the same way” – so obviously this passage, even though it is the beginning of the chapter, is part of a greater context which includes what was just written, namely that we, because of who we have become in Christ, must submit to the authority that has been put over us. Reasons given 1) for Man, that is for a testimony to put to silence those that would try and characterize us as troublemakers and 2) to honor God who put these things in place for our good.

### 1 Peter 3:1-7

1 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, 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. 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. 7 Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you[a] of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

1. **V 1-2** “1 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, 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.”
  - a. The word “likewise,” means “in the same way,” or in the same way that servants must be subject to masters, so we are to be subject to their husbands.
  - b. The command here is to be subject, that is in the Greek hypotasso, which is the same word used for submission that we saw used throughout 1 Peter 2, when speaking of obedience to the governing authorities or servants with masters. This is a military word used to denote a ranking of oneself under.

- i. This is not a new command, we see it in **Colossians 3:18** “Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” –
  - ii. It is consistent with our identity as believers, just as it is consistent with us being humble and in general. It is part of the new identity that we have in Christ. What is the identity that we have in the fall? It is insecurity, jealousy, resentment, and rebellion against authority. Its excuse making for why rules don’t apply to us and trying to get around them. That is NOT supposed to be us. We should be known as those that are humble and known as a group where the wives are submissive.
  - iii. **Eph 5:22-24** “22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.”
  - iv. Marriage is representative of Christ and the church and this representation is very SACRED. God expects that this sacred relationship be treated with awe and reverence. You wouldn’t desecrate the Holy Temple if you were in Jerusalem as a Jew, then don’t desecrate your marriage. When a wife see’s her husband, she should see Christ’s authority, not because her husband is deserving, smart, strong, loving, or even a believer, but because of the awesome picture that marriage is of Christ and the church.
- c. What is the reasoning behind the command? God does not have to explain himself and we are not to hold court and put God on trial for a command that we don’t happen to like, but when there is an explanation, it can help give context to a command so that we can interpret the command correctly.
- i. Notice the motivation here in this passage is not based on authority, the created order, and all the things that other passages of scripture list as reason for husband-leadership.
  - ii. The motivation here is WINNING an unbelieving husband to the Lord.
  - iii. Do you have an unbelieving husband? What does that Bible say for women that don’t have a believing husband? “be subject to your own husbands.” Be pure. That they may be won without a word.
  - iv. This rubs us the wrong way doesn’t it? Why does that rub us the wrong way? Because the sinful nature 1) hates be told what to do 2) wants to

be in charge (power) 3) to do something BIG. Something powerful. Something that shows strength. We are hoping in our sinful nature that it says something that appeals to our pride or American culture, which is PREACH. Work hard and be outspoken. Be BOLD. Know all the right **arguments** to **convince or even force** your husband to be a believer. Some of that is a veil for venting our frustration that someone dare disagree with us, but some of that may be well meaning.

- v. Won without a word? It almost sounds like won by humility and reliance on God's power. We need reminders because that goes so much against the sinful nature that it is impossible without God's help, which is there if we are willing to roll that onto him in trust and faith.

2. **V 3-4** "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."

a. What not to do

- i. The word adorning here is the Greek word "kosmos" – meaning in the context decoration, that a wife's decoration should not be in hair, jewelry, or clothing.
- ii. Some have taken this next passage to that makes a rule against braiding hair and etc, but I think the point of the passage is the heart. Braiding in that day was a fashion statement and a status symbol and was not what we think of as a French braid. If we make the mistake of making outward rules, we will miss the context of the original rule and by that, we mess the point. The point is the heart.
- iii. Do not find your identity in your APPEARANCE
  - 1. But what does the world say? Dress up and look as good as you can. Look at how GOOD you will look if you buy these clothes, these Jewry, this makeup. It also says to you, "Everyone else looks like this!" It taints every commercial, every TV show, Netflix, and social media post.
  - 2. What does the sinful nature say? This is huge, because your heart will deceive you! It wants to conform to fit in with everyone else, maybe get as much attention as it can, or, if unable to do either of those, feel worthless because the standards that society are just

too unattainable. But the sinful nature WANTS to look good, but while the sinful nature wants to look good there is a bondage that comes from the world and a vanity and emptiness and it will never satisfy.

- b. Wives are to decorate with what? A gentle and quiet Spirit.
  - i. Gentle (the word here is prays, pronounced pra as) – which mildness of disposition. It represents the opposite of self-assertiveness.
  - ii. Quite (hesychious – hesu-he-ous) – which has the idea of not making much sound, or even tranquil. It represents the opposite of loud or outspoken.
  - iii. What does GOD say about sinful nature, that it is precious.
  - iv. What does the World say? The world, especially in America, values brash, loud, gaudy, attention getting, showy pride. The world is wanting you to be that – it is pulling you, deceiving you, and it is subtle and subliminal. Just as with appearance, behavior is being taught through media and it taints every commercial, every TV show, Netflix, and social media post.
  - v. What does the sinful nature say? Gentle and quiet? No thank you. I want to be HEARD. I want to be treated FAIRLY. I want stick up for myself and take care of myself, and LIVE for MYSELF. This is always what the sinful nature says.
- c. This has so much to do with IDENTITY.
  - i. If I let the world, the sinful nature and the enemy define who I am that I will ALWAYS be fighting for myself. Always at war. Always demanding my rights and I can tell you there is no peace in that.
  - ii. Some of you may have been bitten by this poisonous snake of vanity and pressure from the world to look a certain way, or maybe you have relied or even enjoyed looking a certain way.
- d. Christ wants to set wives free from that.
  - i. From what? From the impossible standards, from feeling worthless, from feeling cheap, from the constant treadmill of wanting MORE. – in Him we can accept that we just don't have to do that anymore.
  - ii. Christ has come to give you an entirely new identity and it is time to realize that and set us free from the vanity of the world. He wants you to be free.

- e. If you struggle with this, maybe you can pray something like this, “God I am so glad that you have given me a new identity in Christ, that you have made it so I no longer have to dress like the world, or look a certain way, or find my value and identity in my appearance. I thank you that you give me the peace and confidence that I can have a meek and quite spirit – which is what YOU Find valuable.” Meek and quite is PRESCIOUS in the sight of God.
  - f. **2 Cor 5:4** “For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.”
3. **V 5-6** “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.”
- a. The appeal to wives here is the Heroines of the Bible, the “holy women” that we know of from Sarah to Deborah to Ester to Elizabeth (the mother of John the Baptist) to Mary (the Mother of Christ) and others.
  - b. These are the women who “hoped in God” – These women did not all necessarily have the money to buy nice cloths, or own a hundred pairs of shoes, but they hoped in God. That is, they didn’t have their focus here below on the worldly concerns of the earth, obsessed with worldly success.
  - c. They go before us as examples of how they adorned themselves with a gentle and quite spirit. They go before us as those that submitted to their own husbands.
  - d. Why does it say, “You are her Children?” That is, you are of the same spirit as Sarah, the mother of Isaac, the son of the promise, the mother of the nation of Israel, if you follow in her footsteps.
  - e. There is an exception clause here and that is that IF you do not fear anything that is frightening. What does that mean?
    - i. You know how much strength and faith it takes to live gentle and quite and submissive to your husband? How much you must trust God? Having a gentle and quiet spirit and submitting to one’s husband requires tremendous faith.
    - ii. Why? There is nothing that will make you want to take control and act out of the sinful nature than fear. Do you fear the Lord or do you fear

the world? Do you fear circumstances? It is this fearlessness that leads to a meek and quite spirit.

- iii. Ultimately we do what Christ did, in which submission is entrusting ourselves to a faithful creator who judges justly, as it says in **2 Peter 2:23**

4. **V 7** “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you[a] of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

a. **Ephesians 5:25 -33** “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.[a] 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own sinful nature, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one sinful nature.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

b. In the same way, that is, in a submissive obedient way, Husbands are to live with their wives in an understanding way.

i. What does it mean to be understanding?

ii. The word here is gnosis (no-sis) meaning knowing or knowledge and understanding. Do you KNOW your wife? As in, do you know her personality? You her likes and dislikes, what is special to her, what her needs are, her moods and opinions. Understanding means knowing your wife’s weaknesses and accommodating them out of love.

1. Do you just treat your wife like a man, as if there is no difference in sensitivity between a man and a woman. That is disobedience to this.

2. Do you forget things that are important to her? That is disobedience to this passage.

3. Do you dismissing your wife's moods and opinions when she is upset as being crazy?
4. Please, don't say that you cannot understand your wife. This is an excuse, and we know we can do all things through Christ.
5. This is the tendency of the sinful nature, where a man expects his wife to be the same as he is. If she was, then there would be no need for the command to live in an understanding way, but because God created us to complement each other, there are differences and those differences must be appreciated and not ignored.

c. Why should husbands be understanding? There are two reasons:

- i. They are heirs with you of grace – that is, they are loved by God, and he will protect His daughters. We are on the same team. We don't need to be against each other in competition with each other – men are competitive in Adam, in the first Adam, but in Christ we are loving and self-sacrificial.
- ii. So that your prayers are not hindered. The treating of your wife without understanding and honor will hinder your prayers before God. Because how can you come before God while you are showing a lack of love to someone? **Matt 5:24** “23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” The Bible teaches that if we regard (that is, cherish) iniquity in our heart, the Lord will not hear me (**Psalms 66:18**).
- iii. One way we cannot be understanding, and regard iniquity in our heart, is making excuses for disobedience, and that is what we do, isn't it? “Well, SHE said ...” when what she does shouldn't matter at ALL if our aim is self-sacrificial love. We have grieved the Spirit and have quenched the Spirit and our prayers become hindered.

- If our identity is rooted in creation and rooted in love, then what happens to self? Well If love is heartfelt selfless devotion to another, then self goes away. It dies.

- If self goes away, then you are free because self is the very foundation of fear, resentment, hurt feelings, and anger and frustration. When self-dies, so do these other

things die. You don't care about the things that bothered you before because that isn't even in your mind and you are free from all that hurt.

- **You know that only walking in constant fellowship with God can bring that about?**

- How do we get there? How about praying this, "I thank your God, for giving me the strength to submit to my imperfect husband. I thank you that, though I have been argumentative and contentious, that you give me new life to be submissive and meek." For the men, "God I thank you that in you I have a new identity and a new way of expressing masculinity and leadership, which is loving and understanding of my wife and her needs. My leadership is for her benefit, not my own, and I thank you for the life of Christ given to me to live that out."