

1 Peter 3:1-7

In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, ²as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. ³Your adornment must not be merely external – braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; ⁴but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. ⁵For in this way in former times the holy woman also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; ⁶just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. ⁷You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

We just ended chapter two by talking about submitting to authority. What do you recall from that lesson? It is important to recall this anything you can because it will come into play for today's lesson. There is a God ordained order to everything. Things tend to get difficult when we try them out of order. Think about trying to write an essay before learning words, taking an exam before going through the class, running before learning to walk, or eating mostly desserts and only a little bit of regular food. None of these scenarios would work out well, and it is the same way when we put things into an order other than the order God has prescribed. The last lesson spoke of a hierarchy of authority and how we should submit to those in authority over us. We begin this lesson with the same idea of submission.

This chapter begins with Peter speaking to wives in the groups of believers he is writing to, and he tells them to be submissive to their husbands. When Peter says "In the same way", he is telling the wives that they should submit to their husbands as we should submit to those in authority. In God's order of things, the husband sits at the top as the leader of the household. We see this same kind of language can be found in Paul's letters.

Ephesians 5:22-23 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church,

Colossians 3:18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

It is worth noting that women are not called to submit to ALL men. They are only called to submit to their husbands. There can be much discussion about what this actually entails. There

are people who believe a woman should have no say in the household and others on the other side of the spectrum that say a woman's words have just as much or more authority than a man's. Two things can be said for certain. Wives are to be subject to their husbands as to the Lord and they are to submit just as one does to authority figures on earth. This means that wives are to follow the leadership of the husband that God put in their lives. However, just as we should not submit to authority if that authority contradicts God's commands, wives are also to submit to God's law and authority and commandments above all else. Sometimes, the conversation stops at wives because the discussion gets too heated. However, God has plenty to say in the scriptures about husbands should act. We will get there soon, but let's finish looking at what Peter has said to the wives.

Most have probably heard the saying "actions speak louder than words." This is a statement that Peter would undoubtedly agree with. While how we dress and "adorn" our external bodies is important, how we act is of even greater importance. In addressing the wives, Peter tells them that their chaste and respectful behavior can change a husband's ways. It can even bring them into obedience to the word. At the heart of this behavior must be a gentle and quiet spirit. This is a spirit, or attitude, that does not stir up trouble, but one that creates peace and portrays love. This, as Peter says it, is imperishable. So many times, couples get into arguments because of the tone that we take and not the content of what is being said. It is important to approach your husbands with a gentle spirit. Speaking of husbands, let's see what Peter has to say to them.

For this I want to bring attention to what Paul has said about this subject, just as we did with wives.

Ephesians 5:25,28 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loves the church and gave Himself up for her; So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself

Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

Husbands, we are supposed to live with our wives in an understanding way. I think the biggest thing that we can understand is that they are people made in the image of God and sinners saved by grace just like we are. We are all on the same playing field, and it is only because God ordained it that you are the leader of your household. We also need to understand that women are different than men. They think differently, act differently and have different needs. Also, women are generally weaker (physically) than men. We must keep ourselves in check to ensure that we do not physically hurt our wives.

If we are to love our wives, as the above two scripture references say, we have to understand who they are and how God made them. I cannot emphasize enough that we are to LOVE our

wives. Let's not get confused about this type of love either. This isn't the type of love that disappears when you don't get your way, when you feel hurt or wronged, when you are having a bad day or when you realize your wife doesn't look the same as she used to. First of all, all of these things are self centered. If you read the Ephesians 5 passage, you will quickly find out that loving your wife has nothing to do with yourself and your desires. It has everything to do with laying down your life for hers as Christ did for the church. It is a choice to love someone this way, not a feeling. Sure there are feelings that you have for your wife. Have those feelings ever changed? If we are honest with ourselves, we can think of a time when our feelings did change, and it is probably because we let the "what about me" mentality get in the way. Also, this is not a call to cower down and not be the leader of your home. It is a call to a different kind of leadership, a call to be a servant leader. Being part of the Trinity, Christ carried all of the authority of God. Yet He still served others. He taught with authority and led by example, but still showed love to others by serving them and ultimately by laying down His life for theirs. This is the kind of leadership husbands are called to.

Application

- Wives
 - Are you submitting to your husband in the way that God has commanded?
 - Is there a part of your spirit that is not gentle and quiet?
 - In your interactions with your husband, were voices raised? If so, was it because of the heart that you approached the situation with?
- Husbands
 - Are you leading your house well?
 - Are you submitting to God's authority so that He may lead you in the way you should be leading your family?
 - Are you treating your wives with understanding, respect and love?
 - Do you really love your wife as Christ loves the church or is it just a feeling?
 - What is one thing you can do to show your wife that you love her?

Final Remark

I leave you with this. Take the time to really look at your marriage, family and life. Are you living up to the standard God has set? The honest answer is no because we can never live up to that standard (praise God for sending Jesus to do this on our behalf). Take as much time as necessary to examine your life and pray about how you can live with your spouse as God has commanded. When things start to get put back into the right order, it becomes much easier. When your marriage is "put back into order" it becomes something greater than you could even imagine. If you are not married, think about how these can apply to your future spouse.