

1 Peter 3:1-6

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. *ESV*

Biblical Christianity unbinds women to find their worth and freedom in Jesus Christ their Savior. The early church, during the Roman Empire, was suspect to accusations because women were given equal standing in the church. The Roman culture marginalized women, even those of nobility. Meanwhile, men and women who had found the church to be the true community of Christ served the Lord together with no fear of degrading inferiority. In the church, men and women served differently, as outlined by the Apostles, yet no gender was greater than the other. No one was to feel inferior or marginalized. This radical community was raising the eye-brows of the public society. Many women were hearing of the saving power of Christ and turning to Him in faith and repentance. However, their husbands were slow to believe. Many times, this left them in a dilemma. Were they to live “free” at home under the leadership of their husband if he was not a Christian? The Apostle Peter has already addressed oppressed servants and oppressed citizens, and now he turns his attention to the seeming incongruity that was found in the marriage of a Christian woman with a non-Christian husband. To this situation, Peter applies the same truths of submission, and speaks of the hope that is available for the Christian wife who struggles to know how to honor her non-Christian husband.

Submission is a mark of faith. A Christian wife can submit to her unbelieving husband, knowing that she is doing so not out of insecurity or fear. She entrusts the care of her soul to her loving heavenly Father, not to her husband. This is how Christ entrusted Himself to the Father. He entrusted Himself to the One Who was closest to Him. She sees her husband not as the Savior, but as a means which God is using to draw her closer to the Lord. Even her husband is not the closest person to the Christian wife! She loses nothing in her standing in Christ by submitting to her husband.

She is to act in such a way, though, that her husband trusts in her.

An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.

--Proverbs 31:10-12

Peter has mentioned three groups of people who are to serve others in a submissive spirit: slave to the master, citizen to the governor and wife to the husband. **The gospel of Christ radically transforms the purposes for relationships.** Before a person

comes to Christ all relationships are utilitarian in nature. The Christian wife's submission to her unbelieving husband is not only for the shielding of her Christian faith from accusation of a social evil but it is for evangelistic intent. Her husband needs to witness the embodiment of Christ in the "every day" of life. **He needs to see up close the pureness of Christ and the reverence that is due unto the Lord as lived out in her relationship with him.**

Submission is the mark of having a Master. The husband is not the master. The Christian wife knows that he is not, thus she rests securely in the care of the loving lordship of Jesus Christ.

Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

--Proverbs 31:30

In this spirit she clearly displays that her master is not on earth but is in heaven. She loses no "rights" in this. Her husband is warned that he is not to crush her and that any injustices of abuse will be settled. Submission to her husband is directly reflexive to her submission to Christ. The woman who does not submit to her husband cannot say that she is rightly submitting to Christ. In submitting to Christ she can win the heart of her husband to Christ. **As the most trusted person in her husband's life, she becomes a valuable instrument for God's work in his heart**

The wife demonstrates that her marriage is not for her own personal fulfillment but because of Christ it has taken on a new and greater mission. *Marriage is a gift from God meant to display on earth the great pursuit of God in drawing people close to Himself for an eternal, pure and pleasurable relationship.* The most personal earthly relationship is a small reflection of the most personal eternal relationship that one can have through the saving power of Jesus Christ.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- 1. The more secure a woman's relationship is with Christ the more secure she will find her role with her husband. What are some evidences of a secure relationship with God?***
- 2. What is the difference between serving the Lord as master and serving a husband?***
- 3. How is a godly marriage a picture of the Gospel?***
- 4. Why is it important to entrust the results of our obedience to the Lord?***
- 5. What fears may a woman have about serving her husband selflessly?***
- 6. What is the main purpose of staying married to a husband who does not believe upon Christ?***
- 7. Who is the only one who can identify with a wife who gives of herself faithfully to her husband in an attempt to direct him to a saving relationship with God?***

*If you have any questions about this lesson,
please connect with me!*

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