

## 1 Peter Chapter 3

Verses 1-6: Peter's teaching on a wife's submission to her husband is similar to Paul's (in Ephesians 5:22-24). Disobedient or unsaved husbands are to be won over by the "conversation" (literally, "behavior"), of the wives. The woman is to emphasize her inner qualities, not just her outer appearance (verse 3). The references to "adorning" are not prohibitions against jewelry and dress; so much as they are a caution against merely beautifying the external, while neglecting the soul.

**1 Peter 3:1 "Likewise, ye wives,[be] in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;"**

"Likewise": (In chapter 2), Peter taught that living successfully as a Christian in a hostile world would require relating properly in two places; the civil society (2:13-17), and the workplace (2:18-25). At the start of this chapter, he added two more places: the family (verses 10:7), and the local church (verses 8-9).

"Be submissive": Peter insisted that if Christians are to be a witness for their Lord, they must submit not only to the civil, but also to the social order which God has designed.

"Own husbands": Women are not inferior to men in any way, any more that submissive Christians are inferior to pagan rulers or non-Christian bosses (Gal. 3:28). But wives have been given a role which puts them in submission to the headship which resides in their own husbands (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:4-5).

"If any obey not the word": Since obedience has been used in this letter to refer to believers and disobedience to non-believers, this is a non-Christian husband. In a culture in which women were viewed as lower than men, the potential for conflict and embarrassment in the marriage of a believer and unbeliever was significant, even as it is in contemporary society. Peter did not urge the Christian wife to leave her husband (1 Col. 7:13-16), to preach to her husband ("without a word"), or to demand her rights ("be submissive").

We have discussed in previous lessons that the husband is the head of the family. The husband and the wife are one flesh, not spirit. We see a very good example of that very thing here.

The wife who lives a godly life before an unbelieving husband will probably win him to Christ. Women who are Christians have a major role in the winning of their households to Christ. At the time this was written, the customs of the people had the wife in a very subordinate role. It was not the intention of Peter to go against the customs of the people.

Wives, who are peacemakers, hold the family together. The husband is the head of the family, but the wife is the heart. The husband builds the house; the wife makes it a home.

Women, do not nag your husband to become a Christian, which will run him off. Show him the love that is in you that was placed there when you became a Christian. He will almost certainly come to Christ, if he can see Christ in you.

**1 Peter 3:2 "While they behold your chaste conversation [coupled] with fear."**

“Chaste conversation”: Purity of life with reverence for God is what the unsaved husband should observe consistently.

Just because the wife is a Christian, and perhaps her husband is not, does not give her the right to rule over him. Show him that you respect his authority in the home. Christians respect authority, as we have been reading about.

**1 Peter 3:3 "Whose adorning let it not be that outward [adorning] of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;"**

“Outward”: Peter was not here condemning all outward adornment. His condemnation is for incessant preoccupation with the outward to the disregard of one’s character (verse 4; 1 Timothy 2:9-10). But every Christian woman is specially to concentrate on developing that chaste and reverent Christ like character.

The beauty of woman should not be an outward beauty, but the beauty of Christ within her. All of these things spoken of above draw attention to the flesh of the woman. True beauty comes from within.

**1 Peter 3:4 "But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, [even the ornament] of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."**

“Meek and quiet spirit”: Here is beauty that never decays, as the outward body does. “Gentle” is actually “meek or humble”, and “quiet” describes the character of her action and reaction to her husband and life in general. Such is precious not only to her husband, but also to God.

Notice the use of the word “man” above. You see, most of the time when the word "man" is used, it means mankind, not someone of the male gender.

Christianity is having a brand new heart. The heart of the Christian has been washed in the blood of Jesus. Beautiful actions and words come from a heart stayed upon God. Women and men are saved the same way. They must confess with their mouths the Lord Jesus and believe in their hearts that God raised Him from the grave.

**1 Peter 3:5 "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:"**

Again, we see the example of the role of women in the home regarding their husbands. Certain Old Testament saints (particular Sarah, verse 6), are models of inner beauty, character, modesty, and submissiveness to their husbands (Prov. 31:10-31).

We also know there were several women who changed the course of their society by their stand for God. Esther risked her life to save her people. Deborah was one of the more prominent judges in the Old Testament.

Judges 4:4 "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time."

She led her people (with her general), to victory over their enemies.

Judges 4:9 "And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh."

Deborah, who was married to Lapidoth, was in great authority in the land. Her authority, in God, did not alter the fact that her husband was in authority over her flesh. Her husband was not a weakling, by any means. "Lapidoth" means lightning strikes.

Huldah was a very prominent prophetess in the land who sent the message of God to her king and saved her people. The role of a woman and her husband is one thing, but the role of a woman with her God is entirely different. The spiritual calling always takes precedent over the flesh calling.

The woman's role pertaining to her husband has to do with the customs of the land. Her relationship to God is spiritual in nature. There is no problem with women subjecting themselves to their husbands in the flesh. It is the same thing as women and men (who are Christians), subjecting themselves to Christ in the spirit.

**1 Peter 3:6 "Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."**

"Not afraid with any amazement": There are potential fears for a Christian woman who sets out to be submissive to her unsaved husband, as to where such submission might lead. But Peter's instruction to the wife is not to be intimidating or fearful, but as a principle, she is to submit to her husband. This precludes any coercion to sin, disobedience to God's Word, or imposition of physical harm (Acts. 4:18-20; 5:28-29; Titus 1:6).

Notice lord is not capitalized in the verse above. Sara's Lord is God. This again, is speaking of the authority the husband has over the wife in the family. Women took their names. They did not take mans' names. Sara obeyed Abraham, because he was her husband.

**1 Peter 3:7 "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with [them] according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."**

"Likewise, ye husbands": Submission is the responsibility of a Christian husband as well (Eph. 5:21). Though not submitting to his wife as a leader, a believing husband must submit to the loving duty of being sensitive to the needs, fears and feelings of his wife. In other words, a

Christian husband needs to subordinate his needs to hers, whether she is a Christian or not. Peter specifically notes consideration, chivalry and companionship.

“As unto the weaker vessel”: While she is fully equal in Christ and not inferior spiritually because she is a woman (see Gal. 3:28), she is physically weaker, and in need of protection, provision and strength from her husband.

“Heirs together of the grace of life”: Here the “grace of life” is not salvation, but marriage, the best relationship earthly life has to offer. The husband must cultivate companionship and fellowship with his wife, Christian or not (Eccl. 9:9).

“Prayers be not hindered”: This refers specifically to the husband’s prayer for the salvation of his wife. Such a prayer would be hindered if he were not respectful of her needs and fellowship.

We now see that in the things of God they are the same. The woman is heir with faithful Abraham, because of her belief in Christ. The same is true of the husband. The wife, as the weaker vessel, is in the stature of the woman. She is generally of smaller stature than her husband.

Marriage, in the sense of the world, is a contract to live together and raise a family. It is a contract to be physically one. They two are one flesh. In the sense of the believers, marriage is a holy union. The marriage symbolizes the relationship with Christ and His church.

One of the very important aspects of prayer is the prayer of agreement. If husband and wife agree and are in harmony, this activates the prayer. Look what Jesus said about this.

Matthew 18:19 "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

God wants husbands and wives (on the earth), to act as a single unit. Pulling apart gets you nowhere. Working together gets the job done.

**1 Peter 3:8 "Finally, [be ye] all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, [be] pitiful, [be] courteous:"**

“Be ye all of one mind”: Be harmonious, from two Greek words, meaning “to think the same,” “to be like-minded”. The idea is to maintain inward unity of heart. All Christians are to be examples and purveyors of peace and unity, not disruption and disharmony (John 13:35; verse 17; Rom. 12:16; 15:5; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:1-2).

This has jumped from husband and wife to the relations of brothers in the church. The power on the day of Pentecost was the fact that they were of one accord. A church body should be a family. They should be more concerned with the needs of their brothers and sisters than they are with their own needs.

The song "Family of God" says it so well. The love that God puts in the heart of the Christian overlooks the faults of others. That kind of love is unconditional. Christians should be quick to forgive, knowing that God forgave them. Forgive that you might be forgiven.

**1 Peter 3:9 "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."**

“But contrariwise blessing”: “Blessing” means “to speak well of,” “to eulogize.” The blessing that a Christian is to give to the reviler includes finding ways to serve him, praying for his salvation or spiritual progress, expressing thankfulness for him, speaking well of him and desiring his well-being (2:23; Lev. 19:18; Prov. 20:22; Luke 6:38).

Look, with me, at what Jesus said about this.

Matthew 5:44-45 "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;" "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

The fact that we do not take vengeance on those who abuse us is what separates us as being a Christian.

“Ye are thereunto called”: A person to whom God has given undeserved blessings instead of judgment should seek the blessing he will receive when giving a free gift of forgiveness to someone who has wronged him (verse 21; Matt. 18:21-35).

**1 Peter 3:10 "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:"**

“For he that will love life, and see good days”: Peter employed apt scriptural confirmation of his exhortation (in verse 9), by quoting (from Psalm 34:12-16). The believer has been granted the legacy to enjoy his life (John 10:10). In this section, Peter gave straightforward advice on how to experience that rich joy and fullness of life, even in the midst of a hostile environment.

1. The requirements of the fulfilled life include a humble, loving attitude toward everyone (verse 8);
2. A non-vindictive response toward revilers (verse 9);
3. Pure and honest speech (verse 10);
4. A disdain for sin and pursuit of peace (verse 11);
5. And a right motive, i.e., to work the righteousness that please the omniscient Lord (verse 12; Matt. 5:38-48; Rom. 12:14, 17; 1 Cor. 4:12; 5:11; 1 Thess. 5:15).

The world's idea of good days and the Christian's view of good days are totally different. The world thinks to gain great wealth at any cost is the good life. The Christian is storing up his treasures in heaven. The tongue can kill, or make alive. It is a forceful weapon.

The truly good life is the life where you have no regrets. There are no evil cutting words to take back. Usually that sort of regret comes when a person has had too much to drink, and has said things he did not intend to say. Speak healing words from a heart of love.

**1 Peter 3:11 "Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it."**

The word "eschew" means avoid, (in the verse above). The Christian should be searching for peace. Jesus (our Leader), is King of Peace. To be filled with Jesus is to be filled with peace.

### **1 Peter Chapter 3 Questions**

1. Wives be in subjection to your own \_\_\_\_\_.
2. What good will this do, if you have an unbelieving husband?
3. The husband and the wife are one \_\_\_\_\_, not one \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The husband builds the house, and the wife makes it a \_\_\_\_\_.
5. What is wrong with outward adorning of the body?
6. True beauty comes from \_\_\_\_\_.
7. What does the word "man" generally mean?
8. How are women saved?
9. Where do beautiful words and actions come from?
10. Name several of the women who changed their society?
11. What was Deborah, besides a judge?
12. What does "Lapidoth" mean?
13. The woman's role with her husband is \_\_\_\_\_, not law.
14. What did Sara call Abraham?
15. Who is Sara's Lord?
16. Why did Sara obey Abraham?
17. What are husbands and wives heirs together of?
18. What does the world believe about marriage?

19. What is marriage in the sight of God?
20. What does marriage symbolize?
21. Finally be ye all of one \_\_\_\_\_.
22. What was one important factor of day of Pentecost?
23. God's kind of love in \_\_\_\_\_.
24. He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from \_\_\_\_\_.
25. What is the truly good life?
26. What does the word "eschew " mean?
27. To be filled with Jesus is to be filled with \_\_\_\_\_.