

Subject: *Submission in Marriage*

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:1-7*

In chapters 2 and 3 Peter is dealing with the matter of Christian submission. He already wrote about submission to the government (2:13-17) and submission in the workplace (2:18-20). Here in chapter 3 Peter writes about submission in the home. In all three areas—government, workplace, and home—submission is the right thing to do; it's the way to honor God. But it can also be the difficult thing to do. Christian submission is for the real world, not for an ideal world. Peter acknowledges that it is hard to submit to unkind, ungrateful people. Still yet, believers must submit to government when it is unchristian or even anti-Christian, like the situation in First Peter under the Roman Emperor Nero. Christian workers must submit to their bosses when they are unkind and overbearing. Christian wives must submit to their husbands when they are not Christians and they are difficult to live with. There is a common theme that runs through all this. Submission is not easy. It may involve suffering. Yet submission honors God and it is the right thing to do. There is only one exception and that is when submission would require a Christian to disobey God's will.

1. Submission in a mixed marriage

A mixed marriage is one in which there is a believer married to an unbeliever. The situation here in chapter 3 is a Christian wife who is married to an unbelieving husband. That often happens. The Bible is clear that a believer should not marry an unbeliever. **2 Corinthians 6:14** *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?*

However, it is possible that both husband and wife are not saved when they get married, but one becomes a Christian after they are married and this becomes a mixed marriage. Or both husband and wife profess to be saved when they get married, only to find out that one of them is actually not a believer after they are married. This is a mixed marriage situation.

The Bible teaches that a wife is to be submissive to her husband. This is a principle for every marriage. See **Ephesians 5:22-24**.

Submission does not mean the wife is inferior to her husband. The word "subjection" means to place one equal under another. There is submission even in the Trinity. **1 Corinthians 11:3** *But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.* Submission does not mean that a woman should submit to all men. This is not a male-female issue. It is a husband-wife issue.

Submission does not mean that the husband is always right. The wife submits to her husband because it is the right thing to do. Now this is the hard part. The wife should submit even to an unsaved husband (vs. 1, "if any obey not the word"). Even if the husband does not obey the gospel and he does not obey the commands of Scripture as a believer, the wife should submit.

The wife is not to preach or nag, but to convince her husband by her godly life, her "chaste" (pure) lifestyle along with "fear" (of God). **Proverbs 31:30** *Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.*

The word "adorning" is the Greek word, *kosmos*, from which we get our words "cosmetics" and "cosmetology." It means "order, beauty." The Greeks spoke of *kosmos* (order) and *chaos* (disorder). So when a woman puts on cosmetics, she is putting her face in order. The point is that a godly wife focuses on inner beauty and character, a "meek and quiet spirit."

Peter refers to women in the OT and Sarah as an example of godly submission. Now we know the times have changed, but has God's plan hasn't changed. Think about this. Peter wrote this about 2000 years ago, but he pointed to the example of Sarah who lived around 2,200 years before that. The principles of the Bible are timeless truths for all ages. God's blueprint for the family has not changed.

Peter writes one verse for husbands (vs. 7). A husband should be considerate ("dwell with them according to knowledge"). He should live with her according to the truth of God's Word, unlike the heathen, unchristian men who give little or no respect to their wives. A husband should treat his wife with honor. She is weaker physically. He is to show kindness and respect. He should treasure his wife as they share the grace of life together. God designed marriage to be the most important earthly relationship. A good husband will want to cultivate that relationship and make it the best it can possibly be. When a husband treats his wife the right way, he can pray with confidence, but if he mistreats her, his prayers are "hindered." When things are not right at home, it affects our fellowship with God.

2. Submission in a model marriage (Ephesians 5:22-33)

This is the most complete text on marriage anywhere in the Bible. It shows us how to have God's blessing in marriage. The main responsibility for the wife is respectful submission for her husband. The main responsibility for the husband is sacrificial love for his wife. It will take another message to deal with this great text.