

Submission of Wives & Husbands

1 Peter 3:1-7

Intro

[ex. One of my favorite drives is 71 between Brady and Llano — *rock fence* ...]

- [tie-in to G.K. Chesterton fence illustration — “you are out for a walk in the country and you come to a fence...” — *EXPAND*]

My contention is that ***biblical submission*** is a *fence* that we did not create...[expand]

submission — *to willingly place oneself under the authority of another...*

- *Now, when it comes to the fence of ***biblical submission***, we have some decisions to make...*

Will we leave the fence as we found it?...

- Will we seek to move the fence?...

Will we try to cut a hole in the fence?...

- Will we seek to destroy the fence altogether?

I can't make that decision for you — nor would I want to...

But I can tell you what I intend to do...

My goal is to *leave the fence where it is* and do my best to explain what our passage has to say about the fence of *biblical submission...*

Now, to remind ourselves of where we are in 1 Peter, let's start in 1 Peter 2:11 and move on from there...

1 Peter 2:11-25 (NKJV)

11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,

12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

[expand — live as pilgrims / live in obedience to God so that others may come to know the Lord...]

13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme,

14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.

15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—

16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.

17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

[expand — *biblical submission* to governing authorities as good citizens so that we may please the Lord and represent the Lord before unbelievers...]

18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.

19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.

[expand — house servants are to submit to their masters / even if their masters are harsh / because this patient submission will bring a commendation from God...]

21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

**22 "Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth";**

**23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return;
when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;**

**24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree,
that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.**

25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

[expand — believers are to submit because *this was the example the Lord Jesus / and the Lord Jesus submitted to death so that we might be saved through Him...*]

BIG IDEA — True biblical submission is ultimately submission to God / He is the reason for the submission / And He will bring His good purposes to pass through the submission... [expand]

REMEMBER — Submission to God is gain / but our enemy, Satan, lies and says that submission to God will result in loss...[expand]

To remind ourselves of this strategy of Satan, please turn to...

Genesis 3:1-5 (NKJV)

1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;

3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Satan — the serpent of old — deceived Eve into thinking that submission was for fools — that rebellion against God would bring true freedom...

- But unfortunately, the opposite was true — Adam and Eve's rebellion against God resulted in *immeasurable loss*...

So, my argument is that ***submission to God*** — which is the heart of all *true submission* — is ***great gain*** — but we must believe that it is great gain if we are to commit to it...[expand]

With that said, would you please turn to the passage that we will be studying this morning...

1 Peter 3:1-7 (NKJV)

1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,

2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward— arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—

4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,

6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

I've divided this passage into two sections...

1) Submission of Wives

2) Submission of Husbands

Let's move into our first section...

1) Submission of Wives (vs 1-6)

1 Wives,

Here the Apostle Peter addresses married women...

Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands,

Here Peter connects the willing submission of wives to the willing submission he has already written about...

All Christians are instructed to submit to ruling authorities...

- Household servants are instructed to submit to their masters...***

Peter reminds Christians that the Lord Jesus submitted to the will of the Father even under incredibly difficult circumstances...

- ***And now Peter exhorts wives to submit to their husbands...***

Please notice the phrase that Peter uses in vs 1...

be submissive — *to willingly place oneself under the authority of another in an orderly fashion...*

I believe that the primary emphasis is that wives are to willingly place themselves under the leadership of their husbands...[expand]

- [expand — a wife must willingly place herself under the leadership of her husband / a husband is not called to make his wife submit to his leadership...]

IMPORTANT — The Lord Jesus refuses to make us submit to His leadership — we must willingly choose to submit to Him... [expand]

Continuing on in vs 1...

Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands,

This is a *vitaly important point* — wives are called to submit themselves to the leadership of ***their own husbands***...[expand]

The Apostle Paul writes something very similar in his letters to the Ephesians and to the Colossians...

Ephesians 5:22 (NKJV)

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Colossians 3:18 (NKJV)

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

So we see that the instruction is clear — wives are called to submit to the leadership of *their own husbands* — and only their own husbands...

- All women are not to submit to all men — that is a false and dangerous teaching...[expand]

Now, to truly understand the importance of biblical submission in marriage, we must understand that the institution of *marriage itself* is ultimately a picture of ***Christ and the church***...

- If we can understand and accept this reality then as husbands and wives we will be able fulfill our roles in marriage...

With this in mind, would you please turn to...

Ephesians 5:22-33 (NKJV)

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

[expand — Just as Christ is the head of the church so the husband is to be the head of his wife...]

But what does this headship look like?...

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Husbands are to love their own wives *just as* Christ sacrificially loved the church...[expand on servant leadership aspect...]

VITALLY IMPORTANT — A husband's leadership of his wife should look like Christ's leadership of the church...[expand]

Continuing on in vs...

26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Please notice the *end goal* of the Lord Jesus' *sacrificial servant leadership* — the end goal is a *glorious, spotless, holy church...*

- In other words, the Lord Jesus *wants the best for His church!...*

And this is to be the motivation of every Christian husband...

Every Christian husband should *sacrificially* lead his own wife — that his wife might become *as glorious as possible* in the eyes of the Lord...

- Husbands — your sacrificial servant leadership of your wife should be motivated by your desire to see your wife receive the maximum amount of glory in Heaven...

You should want your wife to be honored by the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ — you should be motivated by *that day*...

- You should lovingly lead and serve your wife in such a way so that she is freed to pursue the Lord Jesus with all her heart, soul, mind and strength...

Husbands, I imagine that you wanted your wife to receive an appropriate amount of glory on your wedding day — you wanted that day to be special — you wanted your bride to be honored...

- Likewise, as husbands, now is the time to prepare our brides for ***that day*** — for the day that she will stand before her Savior at His Judgment Seat...

If you can help her receive greater glory on that day by ***sacrificially loving and leading her here and now***, shouldn't you do it?...

- The Lord Jesus — the Head of the Church — did not come to earth to seek His *own glory* but to seek *the glory of His Bride*...

So then what is our job as husbands?...

To simply follow the example of the Lord Jesus and seek to sacrificially love our wives so that they might be receive the maximum amount of glory from the Lord on *that day*...

Continuing on in Ephesians 5...

28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

Husbands, loving your wife — actively seeking her good — is the best thing you can do for your **wife** and for **yourself**...[expand]

30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

- [expand — husband and wife are a picture of Christ and the church...]

33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Husbands are to love their wives just as they love themselves and wives are to respect the loving leadership of their husbands...

Please turn back to 1 Peter 3:1-2...

**Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,
2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.**

Two important points

1) Christian wives should submit to the leadership of their Christian husbands...[already made this case...]

2) Peter additionally instructs Christian wives to submit to their husbands even if their husbands are not believers...

And Peter gives this instruction because Christian wives can witness to their unbelieving husbands through their godly conduct within the marriage...[expand]

chaste — *modest, blameless...*

fear — *reverence, respect...*

And it seems clear that **1 Peter 3:1-2** has been proven true countless times...

- Many, many godly wives have led their husbands to the Lord through simply living out the Christian life in the home...

[ex. Ron & Paula Arbaugh of Calvary Chapel San Antonio / Lee & Leslie Strobel...]

Now, as we move on in 1 Peter 3 from vs 1-2 and into vs 3-4 we must not miss the flow of the passage...

- People sometimes lift vs 3 out of context and completely miss what Peter is communicating...

So let's look at the flow of vs 1-4...

1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,

2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

**3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward—
arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—**

4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

Can you see what Peter is doing here?...

As he gives Holy Spirit-inspired instruction for Christian wives he is exhorting these wives to focus *primarily* on who they are *inwardly*...

- Notice in vs 3 — Peter *doesn't* say that women can't pay attention to their outward appearance — but that their *adornment* (that which serves to beautify) shouldn't **be merely outward**...

In other words, Christian wives shouldn't focus *only* on their outward beauty — but should also — and more importantly — cultivate inner beauty — **the incorruptible beauty of a quiet and gentle spirit...**

- [example — Reality TV personalities — often very attractive outwardly with beautiful hair, flashy jewelry and expensive clothing — but they are empty / no depth of character...]

So, instead of fixating on the outward appearance, Christian wives are exhorted to focus on who they are inwardly...

4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

As a Christian wife focuses her *primary attention* on the Lord — and not on her *husband* or her *appearance* — then she will be cultivating **the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit...**

incorruptible beauty — *imperishable, immortal...*

gentle — *meek, kind, forgiving...*

quiet — *still, tranquil, peaceful...*

*Interestingly, **the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit** reminds me of something that Matthew records in...*

Matthew 12:18-21 (NKJV) [please turn there]

**18 "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,
My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!
I will put My Spirit upon Him,
And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.**

**19 He will not quarrel nor cry out,
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.**

**20 A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench,
Till He sends forth justice to victory;**

21 And in His name Gentiles will trust."

Please turn back to 1 Peter 3 as we move into vs...

5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,

Peter is reminding Christian wives that this has always been the example of godly women...

- Godly wives have always been *inwardly adorned* with **the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit** — submitting to the leadership of their own husbands...

Now please notice in vs 5 that these **holy women** were able to submit to their *imperfect husbands* because these holy women **trusted in God...**

This is foundational to the entire subject of biblical submission...

A Christian wife is able to submit to the leadership of her husband *not primarily because she trusts in her husband* but because ***she trusts in God...***

And so it is with each and every area of the scriptures...

This is the fundamental question that each of us must answer is — ***do I trust in God?...***

- Because if I ***truly trust in God*** then ***I will obey what His Word says even though I don't know how it is all going to turn out...***

When I fail to do what God says in His Word then I admit that ***I don't trust Him*** and I ultimately believe that ***I know better than He does...***

- Now, there is something very interesting about the Greek word for **trusted** here in vs 5...

It means ***to hopefully trust in — to expect with desire — to look forward to something with confidence that it will come to pass...***

- You see, when a godly wife submits to her husband's leadership then she is trusting that God will use that submission for ***her good and for God's glory...***

This truth cannot be overstated...

Just as in the Garden, Satan continues to promote the *lie* that *submitting to godly leadership will bring loss...*

- Instead, the truth is that a godly wife who chooses to submit to the leadership of her husband ***can look forward expectantly*** to what the Lord will do in that relationship...

And the godly wife knows that *she will not receive a full reward* for her faithfulness here on this earth...

- So she looks forward to the Judgment Seat of Christ, confidently assured that her faithfulness to the Lord will not be overlooked...

This brings us to vs...

6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

Peter highlights Sarah as an example of one of the **holy women** of former times...[give quick sketch of Sarah...]

Now Sarah calling Abraham lord is a reference to...

Genesis 18:12 (NKJV)

Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

In using this phrase, Sarah was demonstrating that she submitted to the leadership of her husband...

- [expand on Sarah following Abraham as he received the call of God to go to Canaan...]

Sarah is an especially interesting example as Abraham made errors along the way and yet God continued to protect Sarah as she sought to submit to the leadership of Abraham...[expand]

Please notice the last part of vs 6 once again...

if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

New English Translation

“when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so.”

In other words, women become spiritual daughters of Sarah when they choose to do what is good...

- When they obey what God says in His Word — *without fearing what others might say or think...*[expand]

*We move now from **Submission of Wives** to our second section...*

2) Submission of Husbands (vs 7)

7 Husbands, likewise,

Please notice that this is the same structure that was used in vs 1...

- *Christian husbands are also to submit...*

But they are not called to submit to their wives...

*Instead, they are to **submit directly to the Lord** and treat their wives in a way that pleases the Lord...*

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding,

dwell with — *to live together in the same home...*

with understanding — *with consideration / acknowledging that your wife is different / she is not like you...*

- [expand — the home can be a place of *peace* and *understanding* or a place of *chaos* and *strife*...]

And the truth is that the husband is the primary determiner of the spiritual state of the home...

- If the husband is walking in obedience to the Lord — sacrificially loving and leading his wife — and dwelling with her with understanding — then the Lord will honor that household...

Continuing on in vs 7...

dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife,

honor — *revering, esteeming, valuing...*

- [ex. watching a documentary about sprinters — they honor their medals and trophies — put them in display cases...]

Obviously, a Christian husband is not to place his wife in display cases — but he is to honor his wife even more than he would value an olympic gold medal — realizing that his wife is of infinite value...
[expand]

Continuing on in vs 7...

giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel,

Christian husbands are to honor their wives, recognizing them as the physically weaker member of the relationship...

- [expand — husbands should honor their wives by carrying heavy things / by physically protecting their wives, etc...]

This is not an insult to wives — it is a simple acknowledgement of how things really are — of how God created things to be...

IMPORTANT — A Christian husband is not to bully his wife because he is physically stronger — instead he is to care for and honor her...

Peter continues...

and as being heirs together of the grace of life,

being heirs together — *co-heirs, joint heirs...*

grace of life — *eternal life, the fulness of life that we receive by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ...*

As we put the pieces together we understand that Christian husbands are to live peaceably with their wives — acknowledging that their wives are different than they are...

- And Christian husbands are to honor their wives and care for them understanding that though their wives are physically weaker, their wives are *co-heirs of eternal life*...

For more on this subject, would you please turn to...

Galatians 3:26-29 (NKJV)

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

- [expand — all believers (male or female) are sons in the sense of inheritance / all will receive a son's inheritance...]

Back to 1 Peter 3:7 as we wrap up this verse...

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

This is a solemn warning that Peter gives to Christian husbands if those husbands fail to submit to the Lord's instructions...

If Christian husbands fail to obey the instructions of vs 7 then their ***prayers will be hindered...***

hindered — *rendered fruitless...*

In other words, if we husbands are treating our wives poorly then God doesn't want to hear what we have to say...[expand]

- [ex. Father whose daughter is being treated poorly by her husband...]

So, husbands, if you want God to listen to your prayers...

Then dwell with your wife with understanding, giving honor to her, as to the weaker vessel, recognizing her as a co-heir together with you of the grace of life...

- Treat your wife well — serving her as you lead, sacrificially loving her just as Christ loved the church...

Conclusion

Well, we have covered a great deal of ground today and I trust that there is much for each of us to consider...

- So as we close I would simply ask, ***what will you do with the fence of biblical submission that you find as you walk through the Word of God?...***

Because its not your fence — you didn't create it...

- Will you choose to leave the fence as it is and seek to live your life faithfully within its confines?...

Or will you seek to reorient the fence as you see fit?...

Only you can make that choice...

Let's pray...