

Winsome Wives and Humble Husbands

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[0 : 00] If you have a copy of the scriptures, I want you to open up to 1 Peter chapter 3. 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, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

Do not let your adorning be external, the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold, jewelry, or the clothing that you wear. 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.

For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, and you are her children if you do good, and do not fear anything that is frightening.

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Take this word now, Father, and apply it to our hearts. We ask in Christ's name, amen. I'm not sure if you guys are familiar with it, but a couple of years ago, there was a book that came out that was called A Year of Living Biblically, and it was written by a non-Christian, and the idea behind the book was that this guy was going to try his best to live according to all the commands of the Bible in a very literal fashion for a solid year.

[2 : 05] Now, the point, the purpose in doing that was for him to demonstrate the absurdity of Christianity. What he wanted to do was to show that Christianity was not consistent, that no one really lived by all the principles laid out in the Bible, and that all we ever do is really pick and choose the parts of the Bible that we want to listen to, that we want to heed.

And so the result was fairly predictable. He selectively chose which parts he would really focus on, the parts he was able to. He interpreted things very literally, ignored centuries of Christian theology teaching that the ceremonial and civil aspects of the law of Moses no longer applied.

He approached it just from sort of a base sort of mentality about the Bible without any discretion, without any listening to what the New Testament authors really have to say about how we approach the Old Testament.

And so he came away in his own mind accomplishing what he had set out to accomplish, to critique Christianity and demonstrate to a certain point it's absurd. And then about a year ago, there was another book that was written that was very similar to that one.

But this one was written by someone who is a Christian. I think they are. They claim to be. They don't demonstrate a real biblical Christian approach to the Bible. But the book that was written was this time called A Year of Biblical Womanhood.

[3 : 27] And so the idea behind this book was to critique the conservative view of biblical manhood and womanhood and claim that those who teach that you should live according to the Bible's principles upon masculinity and femininity and the differences between men and women, likewise pick and choose from the Bible.

And it's an inconsistent view. And so she took the same approach. She ignored the distinctions between Old Covenant and New Covenant, ignored the reality that many of the laws pertaining to women under the Old Covenant law have been abrogated by Jesus and by the apostles.

And so she tried her best to apply things literally. And in fact, many times took a number of passages completely out of context. So, for example, because in Proverbs 31, we are told that the godly woman's husband is known or highly respected at the gates of the city.

She went out and held out a sign saying, Dan, that's her husband's name, Dan is awesome by the city limits, as if that was somehow adhering to Proverbs 31, which contained no commands for women, by the way.

There are commands concerning husbands in Proverbs 31 and how they're to respond to a godly wife, but no commands for women. Ignoring the historical context, at the gates of the city in ancient Israel was the place where the local rulers, say the city council, you might call it, the elders of the city gathered and they made decisions and they deliberated on things.

[4 : 58] And the whole point of Proverbs 31 is that the godly woman's husband is known and well respected among these decision makers of the city because he likewise lives his life in such a way and his wife doesn't disrespect him in the community so that he retains the respect that a man ought to have.

She in no way detracts from the respect that he gains from the community around him. And so she approached the Bible in this way, ignoring context, ignoring distinction between Old Covenant and New Covenant.

And her whole point was to say that those who would apply passages such as 1 Peter 3 and say that they still apply today are inconsistent. And because they ignore many passages in the Old Testament directed at women, they shouldn't literally maintain that these apply still today.

But the first thing that I think that we need to get straight in our minds before we delve into this passage is that this chapter and these seven verses addressed first to wives and then to husbands are for us today.

They are for us. They are not time bound. They are not culture bound to the first century. Now I know that it's tempting to take that kind of approach to this passage because there are cultural pressures all around us that say something other than what the Word of God has to say about masculinity and femininity and relationships between husband and wife.

[6 : 27] The world says one thing. The Bible says another. And so it's tempting to dismiss these sections of the Scriptures and say that they're outdated. They're outmoded. Existimated. They belong to the days that are gone and past.

It's even more tempting, I think, here in 1 Peter to do that because as we saw a couple of weeks ago, Peter in this same passage in chapter 2 addresses the relationships between slaves and their masters.

And so it's tempting to say, well, because slavery no longer exists, and of course we would say that we shouldn't endorse slavery and carry over slavery, we also shouldn't endorse and carry over Peter or Paul's views of the relationships between men and women and husbands and wives.

We should let all that go to the wayside. It's all first century stuff that we can forget about. But when we talked about slavery, we saw that there is an implicit critique of slavery throughout the New Testament.

It's explicit in the Old Testament, actually. It's implicit in the New Testament. And what we saw is that the apostles understood and knew that if the gospel ran its course, slavery would eventually have been eradicated.

[7 : 38] And in fact, it was only the influence of the gospel after the Reformation that led eventually to the end of slavery in Western Europe and the United States. It was the gospel influence of the Word of God permeating through the culture that eventually did away with it.

The apostles were well aware of that reality. But even more importantly than that, we have to recognize that Peter's not treating, and Paul in his letters does not treat marriage in precisely the same way that he deals with this social institution called slavery.

Because marriage for the apostles is not a social construct. It is a God-ordained institution. And the roles of husband and wife within marriage are not the product of cultural bias.

They are the product of God's creative mandate in the Garden of Eden. You can see it clearly, for instance, in Ephesians chapter 5. You can turn there if you want to, where Paul has very similar words to Peter.

He addresses wives and husbands in a very similar manner. You may be familiar with this passage, Ephesians 5, 22. Through wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

[8 : 51] And then he goes on to talk about the relationship of husband and wife and how the relationship between a husband and wife mirror Christ's relationship to the church. And when you get near the end of that passage in verse 31, he quotes Genesis 2, 24.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery, he says, is profound, and I'm saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

So the Apostle Paul, in dealing with the different roles of husbands and wives within marriage, says that this is an issue that goes back to creation.

Because when God originally formed the first married couple, he intended for that marriage and all marriages subsequent to it to be a picture of the relationship that Jesus has with his own bride, the church.

So just as Christ loves the church and lays his life down for her, so every husband ought to love his wife in such a way that he's willing to lay down his life, his priorities, his desires, and his goals to see that his wife becomes holy and sanctified as Christ does for his own bride.

[9 : 59] And likewise, as the church submits to Christ as a godly leader, so also Christian wives ought to submit to their own husbands. It becomes a mirror, a reflection of Christ's relationship to the church, and that was the original intent for marriage in the garden.

So that when we approach 1 Peter 3, verse 1, we should not dismiss it as outmoded and outdated. We should see it as Peter reaffirming and applying God's original design for marriage laid out in the garden of Eden.

Before the fall, before sin had entered in, this relationship of leadership and submission is not a product of sin.

It's not a result of a fallen world. It's God's design before sin ever entered into his creation. So these words are for us.

That's the first thing you need to get that. You need to understand that before we move anywhere in this passage. The second thing that I think is necessary for us to address today, given the world and the culture in which we live, and we have to kind of confront this question head on, is that the apostles, and here Peter specifically, Peter is not a chauvinist.

[11 : 25] Peter is not looking upon women as if they are in some way inferior or less than the men to whom they are married.

Now, we look at this passage and we think, huh, goodness Peter, six verses for wives and one for guys? Why do you only give the guys one verse? Why do you spend six verses talking to the ladies?

And so our immediate reaction, sometimes just reading through this passage, is to say, Peter, maybe you're a little bit too strong on this submission stuff. Back it up a little. Maybe two verses for women and two for guys. Balance it out a little bit.

Make it even. But the reality is that Peter, in presenting things in an unbalanced way here, in addressing wives and then husbands, is countering the view that was prevalent in his day.

You see, these kinds of instructions to husbands and wives are not unique to the New Testament. In fact, if you read many of the Greek moral philosophers that Peter and Paul would have been very familiar with, they have similar lists of responsibilities within the home.

[12 : 31] And so they will often address slaves and masters. Then they will address husbands and wives. And then they will address children after that and parents. But one thing that you notice if you read through these Greek moral philosophers is, they never directly addressed wives.

Never. They never do that in their writings. Oh, they want wives to be submissive, but they command the men of the house, they command the husbands to make their wives submissive, to ensure that their wives are submissive to them and to others to whom they ought to be submissive.

They did not consider women to be worthy of being directly addressed. So just in the way that both Peter here, in Paul in Ephesians 5 and then again in Colossians 3, they begin by directly addressing the women, overturning, fighting against that view of their world that did not even consider women worthy to be addressed.

Peter here considers wives as those who are able to choose to submit, not to be forced into it, not to be made to do it by their husband or by their culture or by anything else.

He addresses them as individuals who are capable of making a decision on their own. He doesn't treat them as objects. He doesn't treat them as someone's property.

[13 : 59] So from the outset, if you begin and you just compare the way that Peter addresses women to the ways that other writers outside of the New Testament addressed these issues in the home, you'll see very quickly that Peter does not stand out among them as some sort of chauvinist.

But there's something else happening here that if you know a little bit about the world in which these things are being written. He says here in verse 1, Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, we're going to see in just a second, that means some of them are not believers.

So Peter assumes here that some of the women who will read this letter and who are now believers, who are in Christ and in the churches to whom he's writing, some of them do not have believing husbands, which means that they have a religion different from their husbands.

That was unacceptable in the Greco-Roman world. A woman's religion was determined by her husband's religion. In fact, the religion of everyone in the household was determined by his religion.

Yet Peter here assumes that women have the ability to trust in Christ apart from their husband's permission.

[15 : 14] In other words, Peter does not assume that every woman will simply follow and be exactly what her husband is. Peter assumes here that women who hear the gospel and respond to the gospel ought to be able to live their lives in obedience to the gospel, even if their husband does not.

So there are some background issues that if you understand will help you to see that Peter's not a chauvinist. But there's also something that he says that we'll focus on more in a few minutes toward the end of our passage in verse 7 where he refers to the wives of these husbands as heirs with you of the grace of life.

Which means that for Peter, wives share equally in the salvation that husbands receive through faith in Christ. So we are saved in the same way.

We receive the same eternal inheritance. There's not some sort of eternal distinction between men and women such that God treats women spiritually one way and men spiritually another way.

God saves men one way and women another way. No, in terms of salvation, there are no distinctions. In terms of salvation. In terms of value and worth.

[16 : 37] That assumes that we are equally worthy and valuable in the sight of God as men and women. Both, as Genesis chapter 1 tells us, both male and female created in the image of God.

So Peter is not a chauvinist. And the words that Peter writes here under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit are for us.

So let's dive in and let's see what these words written for us actually tell us. They tell us, first of all, mostly some things about wives and how wives are to conduct themselves in relationship to their husbands.

So we begin in verse 1 where we're told the primary command here of wives, be subject to your own husbands. Now let me just pause for a minute there and before we go any further, I want you to sort of mentally make a note of the fact that he says be subject to your own husbands.

Paul says the same thing when he addresses wives and tells them to be submissive. The idea here is not that women are to be submissive to every man in society. It's that they are to be submissive to their own husbands.

[17 : 45] And so this is not a program for society at large. This is a blueprint for biblical godly marriage. Wives submit to your own husbands so that even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

Peter envisions a possible situation in which a Christian woman is of course married to a non-Christian man. This phrase, they do not obey the word, means they do not believe.

Peter uses this term obedience to the word or obedience to the gospel a few times in this letter. And what he means by that phrase is believing the truth, similar to what Paul said when Paul spoke of the obedience of faith.

So if you just look up in chapter 2 to verse 7, I can demonstrate this for you. He says, So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, so there's a contrast between those who believe, those who don't believe.

For those who do not believe, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. So these people stumble, he says, because they disobey the word as they were destined to do.

[19 : 05] So here in these two verses, disobedience to the word is parallel with those who do not believe. It's the same thing. And then if you look over again into chapter 4, chapter 4 verse 17, we are told that it's time for judgment to begin at the household of God.

And if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? It's again the contrast between the household of God, believers, and those who do not obey the gospel, non-believers.

You see? So when Peter says here that some Christian wives will have husbands who do not obey the gospel, what he means is some of you will be married to men who do not believe.

They are not followers. of Christ. And the thing to highlight here is that does not create an immediate exception to the command to be subject to your own husbands.

It does not. Because remember, this pattern for marriage was set at creation. It's not dependent upon where you live or when you live or to whom you are married.

[20 : 20] It is a pattern that holds for all people everywhere and is binding upon all of us. But of course, if you're married to a non-Christian, it does make it difficult.

It does mean that there are going to be difficult issues that you have to confront, situations in which you have to be very wise and make good decisions.

And so what Peter goes on to say here is he begins to outline a way of living a submissive life that will work for both those married to believers and those married to non-believers.

So we need a very clear pattern and he lays a very clear pattern of behavior out for all wives that will work regardless of your situation. Now I say work and you have to be careful.

Listen to what he says. 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.

[21 : 30] So, they may be won. When I say this works, whether you're a Christian or a non-Christian, what I don't mean is that it makes everything in marriage smooth and easy.

It doesn't. And I don't mean that it automatically will lead to the conversion of your unbelieving husband because it may lead to that but it may not lead to that.

So be very careful in how you read this passage. Don't read it as a promise. If you, Christian wife, submit to your unbelieving husband, eventually he will be saved.

That's not what Peter is saying. But what he is saying is if you do want him to be saved eventually, here's the best way to go about seeing that effect take place in your marriage.

Continue to submit even when married to a non-believer. We know, of course, that that submission is not ultimate. He's not the ultimate final authority in the life of his wife.

[22 : 35] That's never the case. That wasn't the case when we talked about our submission to the government. We saw there that that submission is not ultimate. If the government tries to force you to disobey the word of God, then you no longer, in that instance, submit to the government.

Slaves, or in our day, employees, being forced by their employer to do something that is immoral and unbiblical, can at that moment refuse to submit to the will and the authority of their boss in those instances.

And I would say the same thing about wives. In an instance in which an unbelieving husband or a disobedient believing husband tries to lead a wife into sin, at that moment, she may refuse, not submit.

Now, where do I get that from? I mean, am I saying that just because I want to say that and it sounds good? I'm not. I think it's here in the text. You just have to read carefully.

If you remember, the ground that we laid for refusing to submit to government in those circumstances or refusing to submit to a slave master or a boss in those instances, the groundwork that we laid was that the foundation of all of this is fear of God.

[23 : 54] The motive for submitting to human governments is that God has put those governments in place and ultimately, we fear God. So you see, at the end of his instructions to us regarding submitting to governments in verse 17, honor everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the emperor.

And so what we said was that fear of imprisonment, fear of punishment by government officials should not be a Christian motive for obeying the law.

Rather, fear of God is a Christian motive for obeying the law. And we saw the same things when it came to servants. Verse 18, servants, be subject to your masters with all, and my translation says respect, but it's the same word, it's fear.

Be subject to your masters with all fear. Fear of whom? Well, we just couldn't command it in the verse right before it. Fear of God. Fear God.

So that even for a servant or for an employee, we don't do what our boss wants us to do because we fear reprisal or being fired. We do it because, ultimately, we fear God.

[25 : 04] Well, I see the same motive present for wives. Verse 2, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. That word, respectful, is the word fearful.

Fearful conduct. When your unbelieving husband sees your fearful conduct, he may be one to Christ, potentially. What does that mean?

It certainly doesn't mean when he sees you cowering before him. Be fearful of your husband. That's not what the text means. It would make absolutely no sense. The point is, when he sees that you live your life in fear of God, he sees the conduct of your life characterized by a holy, reverent fear.

He will take notice. And he may. He just might be saved because of what he sees. So the ultimate motive for wives' submission to her husband is fear of God.

He has set it up. He has designed marriage. He has established it. He has commanded submission. And so, out of deference to him who rules over all, wives submit.

[26 : 22] Not because they're afraid of their husband. Not because of cultural pressure. But because of their relationship with God. Which means, that fear of God ought to drive them to refuse to submit to their husband if he attempts to lead them into sin.

So it's not absolute, ultimate submission. It is a tempered submission. It is a submission under the ultimate sovereignty and authority of God himself.

Now, I think one of the things that Peter can help, especially wives with, is it can help a wife to see what is the best way to go about winning over a husband?

Because, the context here, remember, is, even in marriage to an unbeliever, your conduct may win him over. So, the real question that we have to ask, and that I think Peter is addressing here, is, what does the life of a submissive wife look like such that it has the greatest possibility of winning over her husband?

And, of course, Peter is talking about unbelieving husbands, but I think that you can apply his instructions here even to wives who are married to believers. Whether that believer is a good, godly leader, and yet, at times, a wife will want to, she doesn't agree with the direction he's going, and she'll want to have some influence in the marriage.

[27 : 57] How does she do that without violating his God-given role as a leader? How does a godly woman interact with a godly husband if she thinks he might be going the wrong way? How does she interact with him?

Or, or a woman who's married to a Christian, but who's not a good leader in the home, how does she, without usurping his role as leader, help to, in some way, influence, and lead, give some guiding advice at times?

How, how can a woman, in a godly way, win over her husband? How can that be done? And Peter warns us against two methods.

He warns us against using two methods. So listen carefully, ladies, this is what you, you don't want to do, okay? He says that they may be won over without a word by your conduct.

And so, the first warning that we can see here is that the, the way to influence is, is not by trying to make your voice louder than his voice.

[29 : 02] is not to, to try to constantly talk and, and, and convince and persuade with your words all the time. The, the, the best weapon in a wife's arsenal for influencing her husband is her life.

She lives her life, first he says, we saw, in fear of God and then in purity which is defined by the Lord. So that as, as a husband, unbeliever or believer begins to see his, his life at odds or his decisions at odds with the godly character of his wife, he is able without her having to, to yell at him and complain and gripe at him, he is able to see eventually that something is askew here, something is wrong and if he's a non-believer it may be that he sees a lifestyle different from his own that's better than his, more content than his, more joyful than his.

And he becomes curious as to what that is or as a Christian he may see my wife is a godly woman and the direction that I'm going right now is not a direction that I could ever see her going.

He began to see that something is wrong. Now, that takes an incredible amount of patience because to be just really honest with you, we are a little bit dense and thick headed at times, most of the time.

It may take a long time for a man to discern and see the conduct of his wife and how it differs from his own or it may take him even longer to see the motives and the reasons for the differences between their conduct.

[30 : 51] So it may be that a non-believer married to a Christian really believes for a long time the differences in their conduct is that she is traditional or she is snooty and just doesn't want to associate with certain people or he just believes that she is just thinks she's better than everybody else or something.

He may for a while maybe for a long while believe that that's the motive for the different character and conduct of her life. But the patience of a wife is a patience to pray and wait and hope that eventually he'll see beneath the conduct alone and he'll see the motive fear of God and a purity that comes not from your own private morality but a purity that comes from conviction based in the word of God.

It takes incredible patience for a wife in a frustrating marriage to follow that course of action.

It is much easier to try to win him over with a lot of words and Peter says don't do that. Let it be your conduct. Let it be your life. And then he gives us another he gives ladies another warning verse 3 how are you going to win a husband over?

Verse 3 Do not let your adorning be external the braiding of hair the putting on of gold jewelry or the clothing you wear 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.

[32 : 38] Not only is there the temptation I think many times for women to try to influence their husbands by just being louder and having a stronger voice in the home than their husband has but there's also the temptation to be seductive to use your physicality your sexuality to influence his decisions to twist his arms to get him to do what you want him to do when you want him to do that because 90% of the time men are more easily influenced by that than women are.

And so in the vast majority of marriages in that department the wife holds an advantage an upper hand and it would be very easy for many women to use that to try to win over their husband to their way of thinking and get what they want and Peter says no that's not the way that you'll conduct yourself in the home.

He does not say that wives cannot dress well. He does not say that they cannot look nice and all those sorts of things. What he says is they cannot use their beauty as a means of getting their husband to do what they want him to do.

Rather, he says, they use their character again. It comes back to the same issue. Their inner character, who they are to win them over. Look what it says. Verse 4, let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.

Let that win him over. So there is the danger of trying to be the louder voice. There's the danger of trying to use sexuality to win over a husband.

[34 : 31] And Peter says, neither of those are appropriate for the way that a wife influences and wins over her husband. Rather, instead, let it be her character.

Let it be her fear of God, her pure conduct. And he says, a gentle and quiet spirit. I think again, that goes back to the business of not being the louder voice.

Not trying to force your voice into everything there. Now, I know that there's a temptation to say, but that's not who I am.

That's not my personality. I'm not gentle and quiet. It's not my personality, so I can't do that, to which the only thing I know to say is, but it's the word of God.

And our personalities are often not what we perceive them to be. I think that we oftentimes confuse personality with the sinful effects that may come from our personality.

[35 : 32] Nothing wrong with being an extrovert, but when you intrude on people's lives, your personality leads you into a sin that you're more prone toward.

Nothing wrong with being an introvert either, but when you sit quietly by and do nothing, when people need your help and a kind word, your personality has led you into a sinful tendency that you have.

So it does no good to say, that's not me, that's not my personality, you're confusing the sinful tendencies of your personality with your personality.

Don't make that mistake. It's the word of God. But Peter doesn't leave us there. He's going to give the wives an example.

He's going to give you an example from the Old Testament in verses 5 and 6, which to be honest with you, the first time that I read it seemed a bit strange to me, but we're going to try to clear it up.

[36 : 32] Verse 5, for this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by submitting to their own husbands. As Sarah, so here's the example.

First he says the women of old, which is probably all the patriarch's wives, so Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah, all of them, and now he's limiting it down though to one, to the matriarch of the Jewish family line.

As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, Lord. Calling him Lord. What does that mean? Well, if you read that book, A Year of Biblical Womanhood, she took it to mean that she had to call her husband master, because that's one way to translate the word Lord, and so she called her husband master all the time for a year, just trying to make the scriptures sound absurd.

But I ask myself the question, when did Sarah call Abraham Lord? I didn't remember that, I couldn't think of it, so I did some searching and I found there's only one instance in the entire Old Testament where Sarah refers to Abraham as Lord, and it's in an interesting place.

In fact, I want you to turn there just so you can see this. It's in Genesis chapter 18. Genesis chapter 18. I don't know if you remember the story of Genesis chapter 18, but this is where Abraham is visited by three men, turn out to be angelic visitors, he's visited by three men, who tell him and reiterate the promise, you're going to have a son.

[38 : 09] In fact, you're going to have a son very soon, they're telling him. Of course, by this time Abraham and Sarah are old. So we pick up in verse 9 and they say to Abraham, where is Sarah your wife?

And he says, well, she's in the tent. The Lord said, so now this is God speaking, I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.

Here's where Sarah comes into the story. Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now, Abraham and Sarah were old. In case you don't know what that means, advanced in years, he says.

And the way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. So she can't have babies anymore, physically, just can't happen. So Sarah, sitting in the tent, overhearing the conversation, so Sarah laughed to herself, saying, after I am worn out and my Lord is old, shall I have pleasure?

The only place in the entire Old Testament where Sarah refers to Abraham as Lord or Master. After I'm worn out and my Lord, my husband is old, what is the point of pointing back to this weird passage, what is Peter doing?

[39 : 27] I think that what he's showing us is that even in the most absurd of statements and moments, even when Sarah, to her own mind, is alone in the tent where she thinks no one can hear her, even in that moment where she's making an offhand comment, she speaks of Abraham in a respectful manner.

And I think that's a large part of what it means to be a godly, submissive wife. Peter is saying, look at the example of Sarah, even when she doesn't think anybody can hear, even when she's just making an offhand comment, she speaks in such a way that it bestows upon Abraham the kind of respect that a wife ought to bestow upon her husband.

This is how godly women think about and talk about their husbands, whether they have a good godly husband or not. This is what characterizes them.

This is what it means when he says that she obeyed Abraham. She deferred to him and gave him the respect that he deserved, even when nobody was looking.

And he says, and you ladies, you are her children. If you do good, and do not fear anything that is frightening.

[40 : 51] So now we've come full circle in Peter's statements here, because now we're back to conduct and we're back to fear, but now Peter says, don't fear anything frightful, don't fear anything in the world, don't fear your husband, don't fear cultural pressure, don't fear anything else, but like Sarah, at all times, respect, submit to, and think of your husband in ways appropriate to a godly woman.

And if you do that, you're her children. In other words, if you do those things, you're like Sarah. It's a pattern, it's a template for what submission looks like in real life.

And then Peter turns his attention to husbands. Verse 8, finally, all of you, I'm sorry, verse 7, that's next week, likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

There are two things here that Peter enjoins upon husbands, how we are to think of our wives. We see how wives are to think about and respond to their husbands.

Now, how are husbands supposed to think about and treat and respond to their wives? Well, he begins by saying that we are to live with your wives in an understanding way, and we're going to come back to that.

[42 : 30] But then he says that we should show honor to the woman as the weaker vessel. The weaker vessel. What does that mean? I don't think it's anything complicated at all.

I think what Peter is saying here is that you recognize that you are stronger physically than your wife. You see that, right? I mean, that's 99.9% of marriages.

Anybody could go out and find, you know, a female Olympic weightlifter who's stronger than her husband who works in an office. Okay, everybody could find that. But that's the 0.01%.

99.9% of marriages, the husband is physically stronger, physically more able than the wife. Which is Peter's way of saying, understand that your wife is different from you.

Men and women are not the same. It doesn't matter what others might tell us. Open your eyes and look. We're not the same. We are different from one another and that's a part of God's creative design.

[43 : 37] And so Peter says, first of all, recognize that your wife is not like you. She's created differently. And because of her differences, you are to honor her.

You are to respect her. You don't look upon her differences and because of those differences, just treat her if she is in some way less than you or inferior to you. We're both created in the image of God and yet given different physical, sometimes psychological characteristics.

We function differently. We have different roles in the home and in the church. There are real differences and we ought not to look at those differences as men and think that those differences elevate us or make us better in any way.

We ought to honor, that is respect our wives for who they are as different and unique, as feminine, female. They are different from us and that's not a thing to be slighted, that's not a thing to be looked down upon, that's a thing to be rejoiced in and to be honored about your wife.

So first of all, when it comes to our differences, we honor our wives because of those differences. So you don't think that your wife is somehow inferior to you because she needs you to open a jar of peanut butter for her.

[45 : 01] You don't think, ha ha, I'm the man. There you go. Well, I do that sometimes. I do that sometimes because it's funny. But you don't actually think in your mind that she couldn't get this open if I weren't around.

It's a good thing I'm here. A good thing, I mean, she needs to have a man around to open up the jars, right? You don't think in those kinds of ways. You don't think that because you're physically stronger that you can therefore physically impose your will upon your wife.

Or psychologically intimidate her because you know that you're stronger than her. And use that to get what you want and force her into compliance. No.

Precisely the opposite. Because of the differences, because she's weaker physically, you honor her. It's one of the things that you love most about your wife.

We love the differences, we honor the differences, but then we recognize that fundamentally, as Peter says, they are heirs, or literally they are co-heirs with you of the grace of life.

[46 : 16] That's a significant phrase. Jesus. Remember that towards the beginning of this letter, Peter began by describing our salvation. If you'll look back in chapter 1, he says in verse 3, he says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

According to his great mercy, he's caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance. He's caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection, life of Christ to an inheritance.

And now he says that husbands and wives are co-heirs of life, of the grace of life. That means that you are no more spiritually significant before God than your wife is.

Being designated as the head of the home or the spiritual leader does not make a man more spiritually significant than his wife, because we are equally saved by the blood of Christ.

We are saved by faith in Christ. No man has ever been saved or deemed worthy of salvation because he was a man. Salvation comes to us by the grace of God through faith in Jesus and in no other way.

[47 : 37] Man, woman, child, regardless of your ethnicity or your race or your sex, it comes to us by faith alone in the work of Christ alone.

And we would do well as men to remember that in that regard, in that regard, we are the same. How different this is from the worldview that surrounded Peter.

A world in which men were not only dominant, they weren't simply the spiritual leaders, they were the spiritual deciders. And a woman was left hopeless if her husband abandoned the faith.

She was without hope either. And yet for Peter, a woman could believe without her husband believing. And a Christian husband ought to see his believing wife not as a believer because of his decision, not as a believer because he came to Christ, but as a co-heir by grace through faith of the grace of life.

That is a transforming view of the relationships between men and women. It may not seem revolutionary to us now, but believe me, it was revolutionary for Peter's first readers.

[49 : 00] And if we don't as men begin with an understanding that our wives share the same kind and depth of relationship with God that we do, then we will begin to think that we are the leaders because we know the Bible better.

We are the leaders because we are more spiritually significant. We are the leaders because we are just better spiritual people. And Peter says, no, you honor your wife.

She is a co-heir with you of the grace of life. And if you fail in this, if you fail in this, your prayers will be hindered.

They'll be hindered. He said at the beginning of verse 7 that we are to live with our wives in an understanding way. I think what that means is that we are to live, it says literally, according to knowledge.

Live with your wives according to knowledge. What knowledge? The knowledge that we have that he outlines for us of the distinctions between husband and wife that are a cause for honoring your wife and of the level playing field in the spiritual realm that is a cause of rejoicing that you are co-heirs with your wife.

[50 : 09] And if you don't live out your life within the home as a husband according to that correct theological knowledge that we receive from the word of God, your prayers will be hindered before him.

The spiritual vitality of your heart depends in large measure as a husband upon the way that you regard and treat your wife. And if you cannot see that, if you do not believe that, far fewer of your prayers will be heeded by God.

He doesn't say they'll never be answered. He says they'll be hindered. To fail to honor your wife, to fail to rejoice in the differences rather than laud them over her, to fail to rejoice in your common salvation that you share with your life brings spiritual ruin to the life of a man.

Ruin. A lot, a lot is at stake in how we behave in our homes toward one another.

This is not something that Peter addresses. This is sort of as an offhand sort of thing. He's just going to chase this rabbit for a little bit. This is integral to everything that Peter has been saying up to this point in this letter.

[51 : 39] You remember why he began addressing these various areas of submission in our lives? To governments, to slave masters, or now to bosses, employers? You remember why he began addressing that?

He began addressing that because we have a calling. According to chapter 2, verse 9, you're a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

How do we do that? How do you proclaim the excellencies of Christ? How can you do that? Well, one of the daily means by which you can do it is by ordering your home according to the word.

your neighbors, your family members, your friends, they will see a difference in your home. They will perceive it, they will know it is there, and in that you are proclaiming the excellencies of Jesus to the world around you.

So that what is at stake in our homes is not merely our own temporary happiness and how we feel about our spouse and how our children react to that.

[52 : 56] What is at stake here is whether or not we will be good evangelists in our lives. Will we proclaim his greatness and his excellence in our homes?

Let's pray. you have blessed us tremendously with the gift of marriage.

While there are some here I know who are not married, some who are no longer married, these instructions concerning the ultimate foundation, our fear of you, our regard for you in all of life, they are powerful for every one of us, an antidote to the sinful ways that often obscure the glory of Christ to those around us.

And so my prayer, Father, is not that you would merely give us happy Christian homes. We want that. My prayer is that in our homes, in our lives, in our workplace, in the way that we interact with people around us all the time, that in all that we do, we would reclaim the excellencies of Christ.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.