

**Home : Sermons : January 21, 2007****“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands” – 1 Pet 3:1-6**

Introduction – The entire unbelieving world and most of the professing church today, will either stand in defiance to these verses, or desperately try to re-interpret them. “*Peter was obviously not aware of my husband,*” some of you may be tempted to think. But the point of these scriptures is that God knows precisely your situation and has a word for you. The gospel of Jesus Christ is radical – and it demands radical living. It demands, and it gives, grace and gracious living. And where there is death, the gospel declares resurrection. We are to live that gospel in our offices of husband and wife.

As heads of their households, the husband is responsible for the state of his entire family before God. But this never means that wives are off the hook.

Connecting with our “Husbands” Sermon and Setting the Context – The Ephesians 5 passage emphasizes the husband, mentioning the wives, and similarly this passage emphasizes the wives while mentioning the husbands (v7).

“Likewise...” – This is the important word in the first sentence, often unnoticed because of the controversy over the word submission or subjection. The comparison is to 2:21-25 and to the example of Jesus Christ. We are to “*follow His steps...who did not revile in return...did not threaten...(and) committed Himself to (the Father).*”

Context – “Likewise” is used to both offices of wife and husband (v1, v7). We cannot talk about authority, submission, or headship without the context of humility, self-sacrifice, and radical trust in our heavenly Father. As husbands and wives, we have very different marital duties, but they are both driven by a consistent, humble demeanor.

“Even if...” – Peter assumes that some wives that he is speaking to are in a situation in which their husbands are in great disobedience. He then connects what Christ’s demeanor accomplished (2:25) to what a wife can do with her husband (3:1). This is not a guarantee (1 Cor 7:16), but it makes repentance far more likely. It must also be said that this gives no room for absolute submission of the wife to her husband; he is never her only or final authority.

Her Duty – Wives are to be in submission to their *own* husbands (not to all men, ever), with chaste conduct coupled with fear – a reverence, even a trembling. She learns this, of course, from her husband’s and the church’s reverent fear of God in worship. Words of respect, honor, and deference come from her lips because of the office he serves and the God she serves. And what is “chaste conduct?” It might be best understood as cheerful obedience.

The Result – If a husband is disobedient, a wife’s godly demeanor will have great effect upon him. And notice, her words, if delivered without the godly demeanor, will fail.

Adornment Matters (vv 3-4) – The Greek is interesting – ‘*adornment*’ is ‘*kosmos*’, translated everywhere else, ‘*world*’. And literally, the end of verse three reads, ‘*...or putting on clothes*’. Obviously, a wife is to wear clothes, and a godly wife ought to dress well (Prov 31:22) and ought to care about her hair, for it is a glory to her and a sign of her husband’s authority (1 Cor 11:5-9).

Beauty from Within – And so there is no prohibition here of external adornment; there is a prohibition of placing the *priority* of adornment there. Loveliness for the Christian wife is to begin from the inside out. Adornment is to “adorn” that which is coming from within; it is not to hide what is really there. The incorruptible beauty of a meek and quiet spirit is not a personality trait (like being introverted), nor does it describe a lack of ability (can’t lead, rule, manage, or persuade others). It is the identification of a woman who has the life of Christ in her, who hopes and delights in God, and who submits to Him with holy fear and love – and it can be seen by all, adorned by her outward, feminine, beauty. We think gold or pearls are precious, but God says this demeanor is *very precious in His sight*.

Another Example (vv5-6) – Sara provides another example, specifically for wives. She and the holy women who *trusted in God* adorned themselves in this way. This is the natural overflow of trusting in God; this is what a faith-filled wife does. Peter points out that how she addressed her husband mattered because it was a part of her adorning beauty and godliness. “Think of him as a lord?” some, if not all of you, are thinking. Yes – do you see how far we have fallen from the Word? And verse 6 hints at the reason wives can be troubled with various terrifying fears – she has not cultivated a fear of God and a reverence for her husband.

A Reformed Marriage – The Word teaches us that we are to look from the church to marriage and from marriage to the church. If we preach a weak Jesus who is a loser (*no one will come to Him and He really wishes they would...*) is it any wonder why we have so many losers for husbands? If we preach that the church can have a breezy, informal, sentimental-centered relationship

with Almighty God is it any wonder why we have so many wives blowing in the wind with regard to their submission to their husbands? Wives are to look at what the Scriptures teach the church to render to Christ and not what we see the contemporary church rendering to Him.

Reforming Marriage/Reforming the Church – Reformation is often caricatured as stern, sterile, cold, simplistic and unadorned. This is a lie about what the church should be and what godly submission looks like. What makes submission of a wife to her husband *godly* submission? It is the same things that we are to find in the church's relationship to Christ – cheerful obedience, reverent fear, intimate friendship, thankfulness and contentment, expectation of greater things to come, adornment of beauty outwardly coming from an inward transformation, and words of respect and honor. And because she looks to her husband, she is to see and learn these things from him as a member of the church in relation to Christ.

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