

“Marriage and the Gospel” // 1 Peter 3:1–7 // I am an Alien #6

[1] 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, [2] when they see your respectful and pure conduct. [3] Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—[4] 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. [5] For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, [6] as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. [7] 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.

- Oh my goodness. I told you two weeks ago when I preached on submission to authority that I couldn't imagine a more unpopular topic. I lied. This would be a more unpopular topic. This passage ought to have a wick coming out of it, by how it makes people blow up.
- It's unbelievably misunderstood, and abused. I'm going to do my best to tell you what Peter means here, but it doesn't matter what I say, I'm going to get beaten like a piñata.
- People in our day hear this and they from the beginning says, “this is crazy, I don't believe this” and then they go and find someone who'll explain away what Peter says here, why he doesn't really mean what he says... Romans 1 calls that the suppression of truth; Paul says that there are many who twist the Scriptures to their own destruction.
 - You can be a Christian and disagree with me about this passage, but I would say not a happily married one, because this is God's plan.
- So I'll start by reminding you of the Lordship of Jesus. Basic idea is this: we don't follow Jesus b/c each issue he teaches makes the most sense to us, but because He is Lord and His word is sovereign.
 - If you are the kind of person that has to be convinced of each individual issue before you will obey, then you don't really understand the Lordship of Jesus!
 - A lot of people feign love for this book but you can see they don't because of their attitude toward passages like this one.
- We obey Jesus because He's Lord. We don't vote on each individual issue. For some of you, the issue is not what we'll talk about today; it's the Lordship of Jesus. You need to decide, “Is He Lord?” If so, then do what He says...
- To those of you who doubt... I would just have you consider what a mess marriages are in our culture right now... (the divorce rate is at an all time high; more and more people are avoiding marriage; 41% of children now are born out of wedlock¹). I would say what we're doing isn't working. For a lot of you in here, your marriage is just not healthy. You might not be divorced, but you're just two roommates living two separate lives under one roof. Marriage is not a union of sacrificial love. So don't brush this off so quickly thinking that we have figured out a better way. I would humbly suggest that we haven't!
- You say, “Well, we don't want to go backwards. This passage is going back into old, chauvinistic patriarchy.”
- No. Most of you have never really seen this lived out.
- It reminds me of what G. K. Chesterton says, “The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried.”

¹ <http://nation.foxnews.com/culture/2010/05/07/41-babies-born-out-wedlock>

[1] Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands

Likewise. What does that mean? “In the same way.” If you remember, we’ve been talking about various relationships and earthly institutions that God has set up. Government; authority structures, etc. God has two purposes in those.

- to reveal Himself
- to keep order

Likewise, in the same way, marriage is an earthly institution God has set up to reveal Himself and provide stability. There is a leadership component that God has given man to play in the home.

This has nothing to do with women not leading in the workplace or government or society; it doesn’t say “women be subject to men.” It has only to do with the home.

Wives are not told to be subject because they are inferior.

- There is no hint of that in this passage! In fact, it’s downright denied. Peter says to the husbands, “your wives are heirs with you of the grace of life.” The promises and privileges of salvation are equal.
- When God talks about the creation of male and female, He says male and female are both created in the image of God.
- So, there is no hint of inferiority.
 - (You say, “What about the line about them being the weaker vessel?” Doesn’t that imply inferiority?” No, that’s not what that means. I’ll show you that in a minute.)
- The roles we play do not imply inequality. If I am playing in a baseball game, and an umpire makes a call I am supposed to abide by, that doesn’t mean he is superior to me. In a different context, he may have to submit to me.
- There is a submission in the Trinity: 1 God, 3 persons. They are all equally God. Yet, Jesus said that He was submitted to the Father. He said, “I only do what the Father tells me to do.” Equal in essence; different in role.

You say: “Well, the guy that I am married to doesn’t deserve my submission.” That’s not the point.

- It has nothing to do with whether your husband brought you flowers; it has to do with Jesus’ command.
- Your husband may not deserve your submission, but Jesus does.
- Peter talked about our life being spiritual sacrifices. So, you think of your submission to your husband is an offering to Jesus.

Before we go on, let’s note the instruction to husbands: “Give honor to the wife as to the weaker vessel” (first, there is that difficult phrase).

- This is not “weaker” in terms of intelligence or even capacities for leadership or wisdom.
- Commentators say it means 3 things:²
 1. They are literally **physically weaker**. The word “vessel” is used all throughout the Bible to refer to human body.³ Generally speaking, most husbands can overpower their wives. I’ve seen a few of you girls that could probably give your husband a run for his money, but generally speaking, men are physically more powerful than their wives.
 2. They are **weaker in their position of authority**. He’s just spent 6 verses explaining that wives should be subject to their husband, so positionally women are in a weaker position.

² Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, 152.

³ E.g. Jer. 18; Acts 9; Romans 9; 2 Tim. 2.

3. It could mean weaker in terms of *their emotional sensitivity*. I don't think there's much disagreement about this. Girls are wired differently than guys. (examples: guys are like waffles; girls are like spaghetti. If I'm having a bad day, even a bad day with Veronica, I think, "Let's just have sex and forget about it. Start over. That's not how she works. For guys, sex is like a way to deal with a bad day; for wives, sex is like the topping on a sundae. There has to be a lot of sweetness building up to it.)
 - Control dials
 - So think of this in terms of weaker like a crowbar vs. thermometer; thermos vs. wine glass).
 - Hebrew scholars even say you see this in the words used in the account of how man and woman were created. Men: *Bara*. Women: a word that means crafted.
 - Think of it like the difference between a Jeep and a Ferrari. Jeep: it hits a few potholes, no big deal. Take it offroad. If it gets beat up or dirty, who cares. You kind of like it that way. Don't want to get in a Jeep and have it smell like a Yankee candle. Girls: Ferrari. You don't take it offroading. It's well-crafted. It's got nice lines. You just want to look at it.
 - That's reality. Right? If a girl wears skin-tight pants, that's a problem for most guys (which we'll get to in a moment). If I wore skinny jeans up here, most of you girls would either burst out laughing or throw up.
 - Wearing skinny jeans is wrong for guys and girls for two different reasons: for girls, it's because it's tempting; for guys, it's because it's nauseating.
- So, he says, as the weaker vessel, *honor* her. Honor means "prefer" her. Put her needs first. Guys, use your position of strength; any position of authority you have; to serve her, not yourself.

Put all that together, here's what this means:

- Men: you should never lead independent of your wife
 - You weren't given this role because you make better decisions. For many of you men, you don't make better decisions, and your wife was given to as a gift by God to help keep you from your own stupidity.
 - If you don't consult with your wife, you are a fool. You've got extra money one month and your wife, who is more accountant like than you
 - It is rare that my wife and I don't talk, pray, and are able to come to consensus.
 - BTW, the husband is never told to demand submission from his wife. The wife may be told to submit, but the husband is never to demand. That is hers to give, not his to demand.
- Men: you are to use your position of authority to serve her, not yourselves.
 - So, when we disagree, and we talk things out, and pray, and still can't come to a consensus, I have to decide: is this a place where I feel like I have to think of the best interests of the family?
- Let's do a few examples:
 - Date night, can't decide where to go to eat? She wants Italian; I want steak. Easy. She wins.
 - Colors in our house. I ask her, please don't paint every room pink. But I let her win.
 - We have \$300 extra in our budget one month, and she wants a new dress, and you want golf clubs. Easy. She wins. Honor.
 - When I ask her to submit to me is when I am thinking of the family, which again, I could count on 1 hand the number of times that has happened:
 - Friend homeschooling
 - My wife, 4 kids: Housekeeper
 - Overcommitting
- *I should lead in such a way that her submission to me is a blessing!*

- Here's one: Mission field. I should pray about it with her, and maybe she has valid reasons. I can't demand it, but girl, at the end of the day, you are to be subject to him. You say, "But I disagree." Submission implies disagreement. It's not submission if there's always agreement.
- Get a truck vs. Gas saver
 - Why?
 - Guy: maybe you are being an idiot. Her: security in money and maybe you should recognize he feels like a pansy whipping around town in his little European car and it's selfish of you to insist otherwise...
 - But, say you can't reach agreement. What do you do? I think, girl, you have to make your reasons known, and then trust him with the judgment.
- Some of you are like, "OMG, He'll wreck us."
 - Let him answer to God. **Tony Evans:** Spiritual leadership is God telling the woman to duck so he could punch the man.
 - A lot of men never get out of adolescence. Their overprotective mothers always made decisions for them, and they were never forced to act like men. Now you are mothering them again.
 - Create a vacuum of leadership and force him to grow up. When my wife does this, it puts so much pressure on me. She says, "Well, this is what I think, but you have to make the decisions and answer to God," that forces me to think like a man. *I can't hide in the group where nobody is really responsible. I have to own it; it all sits on my head.*
- **Men, here are two summary statement:** *"Spiritual leadership is not license to do what you want to do, but empowerment to do what you ought to do."*
 - I'll lose 1000 arguments; I'll honor her in 1000 decisions, so that I can speak with authority into the right ones.
- *Submission is not about what women can or can't do; but about what men are called to do and don't.*

Look at 2 more verses, and then I'm going to bring my wife up here to answer some questions:

[3] Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—[4] 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.

- Some fundamentalists have used this to say that this is not a prohibition on braiding of hair and putting on of gold jewelry—because then it would also mean not wearing clothes.
- What it means is this: Ladies, there is a way that the world tells you to be beautiful. External: beauty; clothing.
- That gives you power and significance.
- Peter says there is a beauty that is sweeter and better, and the good thing about this beauty is that doesn't fade, it is imperishable.
 - Some of the most beautiful women I know are older; it just exudes from them.
 - My wife is still physically beautiful, but she's had 4 children. And I look at her sometimes... here's a girl who has given her life and her body to serve our family, and me. That is a Christlike beauty that goes beyond how she looks in tight pants.
- Some of you ladies, as you get older you spend money for nips and tucks and all sorts of things... and I can understand that if that were the only beauty you have; but if there is a Christ-like beauty in you, ever deepening, that goes on forever, you won't need the other so badly!
- This is great. Do you see what Peter has done? He has applied the doctrine of the resurrection to even your physical beauty.

- I've told you before that evangelicals have a hard time really thinking about how the resurrection fits into their Christianity. We get the cross... Jesus died for forgiveness. But the resurrection? We talk about it 1x a year or so at Easter... Kind of proves Jesus told the truth.
- Peter builds this whole letter upon the resurrection. *He wants you to see everything through it!* Even your physical beauty. Because of the resurrection you have an imperishable beauty growing in you that exudes from within and will go on forever so you don't need to build your identity and your hope on a firm body.

Questions for V:

- Do the women at the Summit obey this verse?
 - Ryah's tights
 - Men must affirm
 - JD: don't have to put twigs at are feet
- Can a woman with a strong personality still have a quiet spirit?
 - Yes, and a woman with an introverted personality can have a rebellious spirit
- What does it mean to you to submit, do you feel inferior when you do?
 - Kharis' story

The Effects:⁴ 3 results when you live this way:

Men, when you honor your wives: **1. Your "prayers are not hindered" (vs 7)**

- A pretty drastic statement. Your prayers to God are hindered because you are out of fellowship with your wife.
- The idea is this: When you approach God in prayer, presumably it is because you need something. Prayer is from a position of powerlessness. Well, men, if you've used your position of power in your marriage to serve yourself and not your wife, why would you think God would use His position of power to serve you?
 - This is a general Scriptural principle: There's a story I tell here a lot: Luke 18: debtor
 - The gospel is about God, who was strong, using His position to serve the weak. Those who believe the gospel should become like the gospel, which means we show the change by using our position of power to serve the weak.
 - If you are always using your positions of power to serve yourself, how can you claim to know Christ, who used the ultimate position of power to serve you?

2. You are enabled to "live together" (vs. 7)

- That little phrase caught my attention. "Live together." I explained earlier that so many marriages are just "roommate" situations. 2 separate lives, etc. they don't put this into practice.
- That's not what you hoped for when you got married, and it's not what God wants either. It's because you don't live this way.
- G. K. Chesterton, "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried."
- You can be a Christian and disagree with me on this, but I don't think your marriage will experience God's shalom.

3. Win a cynical world (vs. 1, 4):

- Peter says to the wives, when you submit this way, for Jesus' sake, your husbands will be 'won without a word'
- It's a wordless sermon wherein you show off the beauty of Christ.

⁴ Have these 3 come up one at a time on the same slide.

- This has been a theme for Peter.
 - Last week, I told you how we like to prove Christianity by being right, how we're smarter and everyone else is dumber? A greater beauty, a more attractive beauty, is shown by our gracious, submissive spirit to those who take advantage of us. Same thing here. Your beauty... is greater than external, Christlikeness.
 - The word "gentle" (vs. 4) that is used to describe women is twice used of Christ. God-like beauty.
- Our marriages ought to be among the most convincing apologetics for our cynical world!
- Here's my challenge to both:
 - Wives, ask your husbands what you could do that would preach a sermon about the generosity of the gospel to them?
 - Husbands, do the same
 - That's how you'll change your spouse. Not through nagging. We think it is through overpowering them. Christ changed us by serving us in grace. That's how we change the hearts both of our spouse, and a cynical watching world.
 - Grace and generosity has a power in it that is unbelievable—the power of the cross and resurrection!

Video testimony: Tom and Joan

Bullpen:

- And, Peter says, that's how a cynical world comes to know God.
- "It's hard." Yes, but it was for Christ, too. In so doing, you show the excellencies of Christ. In so doing you point out the excellencies of Christ.
 - Isaiah 53:10 – 'yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him...' That probably won't happen to you. Yes, Jesus had to submit to this 'crushing' but what beauty came out of it.
- It's also how you change your husband!
 - "without nagging"
 - Control dials
- Some of these men would have been harsh and unforgiving.
- Vs. 3: not forbidding jewelry; otherwise (in Greek) it would also forbid clothing (see Grudem)
- Does not imply inequality: co-heirs of grace of Christ
- Chaste means of course you would not disobey God in doing so.
- We think the way to persuade others is by vindicating Christ; Peter explains that we will be most effective when we embody the Spirit of Christ. This is the place where His "grace" is so strong that the world gets a taste of His beauty and glory. It is not the intelligence of our answers but the beauty of His spirit that is the most effective apologetic in our cynical world
- "It brings favor with God": that is the honor Peter is going for! Different kinds of defiance vs. not submitting in defeat to an earthly power: defiance of never submitting; surrendered to them for God's sake.
- Driscoll notables:
 - My wife is not super organized. Or, organized
 - wordless sermon: ask: what could I do to preach to you?

- don't say, "Oh, well, i might be losing my faith"
- gentle: Jesus is described as that.
- Begg: all the challenges to marriage in our culture: serial monogamy; avoiding marriage; homosexual--has God's way really been tried?

Submission:

- The **ground** of submission – The point here is that the wife is supposed to submit not because of her husband but because of her relationship with Christ. It's not when he brings her flowers or does the dishes. It's submission because Christ commands it
- The **difficulty** of submission – (this doesn't really come from the text but we see it in everyday life.) It's just flat difficult to submit because we want to do things our own way. The best example though is Christ.
 - Isaiah 53:10 – 'yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him...' Yes, Jesus had to submit to this 'crushing' but what beauty came out of it!
- The **degree** of submission – In short, we must submit in **everything**!
- Peter gives us a great example of submission to people who really aren't worthy of our submission in the first place. But Peter tells us that we must submit even to ungodly people in many cases. This is another way to 'proclaim the excellencies of Christ.'