

# Living Here, Longing for Home: Sacred Influence

## 1 Peter 3:1-7

### Read 1 Peter 3:1-7 together:

*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 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.*

When reading and interpreting the bible, context is everything. In order to properly understand chapter 3 of 1 Peter, we must look back to see what Peter is referring to when he starts this chapter with, “Likewise”. We must first ask, “Like what?” Peter is referring back to what he stated in chapter 2 (see verses 9-25).

Peter has urged Christians, “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession.” Therefore, we are to see ourselves as sojourners and exiles and live differently than those of the world! First of all, Peter urges Christians to be subject to “every human institution.” Next, Peter urges slaves to be subject to their masters.

? Can it be difficult to “be subject to” human government, knowing the fallen state of so many leaders?

In chapter 3 Peter turns his attention to the subject of the home. How should we as God’s chosen, royal priests live differently than the world?

### Wives submit

Do you realize that this passage created a huge upheaval in Peter’s time? First of all, Peter addresses women (wives) directly in this passage. The proper means of addressing any married woman was through her husband. Also, as Peter addresses wives who have become followers of Christ without their husbands...that was almost unheard of! Yet Peter addresses these women directly and encourages them.

? What encouragement does Peter offer women with unbelieving (or disobedient) husbands?

? Remembering that the vast majority of marriages were arranged with no consideration of romance, how would the loving submission of wives to their husbands be salt in the world?

Now here is a passage that is violently in opposition to the world of our day! The word “wife” has been banned from use in our Congress! The acceptable word is “spouse”. The idea of submitting to anyone, especially for a woman to submit to a man, is blasphemous in our society. But obedience in this area of life brings grace and newness to homes where mutual honor, worth, and kindness have often wasted away under the confusion of about biblical definition of male and female.

### **Prayers for Christian women**

In light of the creative order of male and female, and the admonition here is 1 Peter, what should we be praying for the women of our church? What character traits should we be helping younger women acquire?

#### **Pray that her strength will be evident in her character (vs. 1,2)**

This passage is not about marriage in general. It has a distinctly evangelistic aim.

? What long-term goal should be in mind when women submit to their unbelieving husbands?

? How would you describe “submission”? How is strength shown by a woman who chooses to submit to her husband?

This is NOT absolute obedience, not an unthinking mousiness that Peter is advocating. Just as government and masters are not absolute, neither is the husband. If what you are asked to do is illegal, immoral, endangering, or destructive - speak up, resist, and protect!

By submitting, a woman places her strengths for maximum impact on winning her husband to Christ. The husband can be won to Christ by the strength of her obviously changed life.

#### **Pray that her beauty comes from within**

Interestingly, Peter counsels to be subject by making your invisible heart visible. Peter counsels that it is not what you put on but what pours out of you that makes you beautiful.

? What are some practical ways to live this out?

? How can we teach young women this valuable truth? Can you name ways that we may unknowingly be teaching women the world’s definition of beauty rather than God’s?

Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

Proverb 31:30

#### **Pray that her identity is grounded in God**

Sarah followed a flawed man. She questioned him; she suffered indignation from his disobedience, and she also was disobedient. They were an imperfect couple!

? Read Hebrews 11:11. As you consider Sarah and her faith, describe the ramifications of her faith.

? Describe the effects of Sarah’s faith on the redemptive story. How long-lasting are its effects?

#### **Pray that her husband is a man of understanding**

“Likewise, husbands...” Peter turns his attention to husbands now. Given the context, these husbands would be the believing husbands within the church.

- ? As believing husbands, to whom or what are they to submit?
- ? What do you think Peter means when he tells husbands to live with their wives in “an understanding way”?

Like Abraham, men are at best, flawed vessels. They don’t know everything. A husband’s primary human tutor is his wife! She has been given to her husband by God to be his completer and helper.

### **Questions for Christian men**

As Peter instructs men to live with their wives, there are three questions we should each ask:

#### **Am I learning?**

Peter exhorts us to live with our wife “in an understanding way.” This says that we must observe, acknowledge and learn.

- ? What have you learned about your wife recently?
- ? How can you (or do you) ensure that you are a “continual learner?”

#### **Am I leading?**

There is much written about leadership today. A popular term in business today is that of the “servant leader”.

- ? Is the idea of a servant leader biblical? If yes, how can you model that in your life?
- ? How can you keep aware of how your wife is doing? How do you know the difference between when she is surfing in your wake or drowning in your wake?

#### **Am I loving?**

We men need to understand how valuable our wife is to God. Jesus Christ is calling her to be a vital part of the church body and is preparing her to be a co-inheritor and an heir with you!

- ? What do you think Peter means when he says that living with our wives in understanding will keep our prayers from being hindered?

It is unhealthy to ignore our responsibilities or to devalue what God has bought with Christ’s blood. Nothing in life will be left unchanged by grace and the wisdom of Christ. May God use our marriages to reflect His wisdom and grace!