

Harmony in the Home

1 Peter 3: 1-7

Our text today deals with the relationships within the home. On the surface it may appear that Peter has taken a different perspective, but the overall theme he sought to convey in the latter part of chapter two continues. He dealt much with our submission to Christ, revealed through the lives we live. Although these thoughts deal with relationships between husbands and wives, the call for submission to the Lord remains. By living according to God's design for the home, we live in obedience and submission to Christ.

One must consider the context in which this was written to adequately understand what Peter sought to convey. Bear in mind, the Gospel was spreading rapidly, and many were coming to faith in Christ. Inevitably, this resulted in mixed marriages – where one spouse received salvation and the other did not. The Scriptures warn against a believer knowingly marrying a non-believer, but this deals with how the newly saved spouse should respond within the marriage relationship, even though the other spouse is yet unsaved. Although this divinely inspired instruction was given within this particular context, every spouse would be wise to follow the teachings of Peter within these verses. By living in submission to the will of God within the marriage relationship, we honor the Lord and strengthen the marriage.

The theme of the text is that the wife is to pursue inner beauty of a gentle spirit, living in submission to her husband, thereby bringing a spiritual influence to the home. The husband is to treat his wife with honor and compassion, affirming her value and worth within the home. As we examine the [expectations](#) of husbands and wives, I want to consider: [Harmony in the Home](#).

I. The Responsibilities of the Wife (1-6) – Peter began this discourse by addressing the wives within the marriage relationship. He spoke of:

A. Her Maturity (1-2) – [Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;](#) ^[2] [While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.](#) Those with a feminist's view may take issue with Peter's instruction, but I see no cause for alarm. He in no way degrades the wife within these verses. In fact, Peter reveals her worth within the home, and the great potential she has to be an effective witness for Christ, eventually winning her unbelieving husband to respond to the Lord in salvation. This requires spiritual maturity on the part of the believing wife. She is called to live in subjection to her husband, seeking an environment of harmony within the home. As the unbelieving husband watches the faithfulness of his wife, through her spiritual conversation and fear of God, he realizes she possesses genuine faith, creating a desire for him to know Christ as well.

B. Her Modesty (3) – *Whose adorning let it not be that outward **adorning** of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.* The culture of that day was not much different than the current culture in which we now live. Much like the culture so prevalent in the West today, the Roman culture was very sexualized, with much emphasis placed on outward beauty. A woman's hair was viewed as one of the most seductive aspects of her appearance. Peter warned the godly wives against falling victim to these cultural customs, and urged them to guard their reputation with modesty. He cautioned against placing too much emphasis on plaiting their hair, excessive jewelry, or provocative dress.

- Peter did not imply that the wife was to dress in rags, never fixing her hair, in an attempt to hide her beauty, but that was not to be her focus. We will see in a moment that he urged her to pursue inner beauty above outward beauty. Especially for those with unbelieving husbands, if she dressed and behaved no differently than the world, how would the husband see the transformation that had taken place in her life. She was to present herself in a way that honored the Lord rather than seeking to attract the attention of other men. (This may not be embraced today, but it is certainly needed in western culture.)

C. Her Meekness (4) – *But **let it be** the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, **even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*** Peter urged these godly wives to be known for their meek and quiet spirit, which revealed the Spirit of God residing within. She was to be known for her faithful walk with the Lord rather than her outward appearance.

- This would also reveal the need for patience with her unbelieving husband. She had faith in Christ, but needed wisdom to handle her unbelieving husband gently. She controls the natural urges to be condescending, self-righteous, or judgmental. She deals with him in regard to spiritual matters with grace and patience, rather than boisterous demands. She knows this is the only way to win her unbelieving husband to Christ. Her commitment to the Lord, and desire to see her husband saved, guides her conversation and attitude toward her husband.

D. Her Motivation (1a, 5-6) – *Likewise, ye wives, **be in subjection to your own husbands;*** ^[5] *For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:* ^[6] *Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.* Having had conversation with various women over the years, I know these verses, and the idea of living in subjection to one's husband can be difficult for some. As we examine all that Peter has revealed, we must keep this within its context. Remember, the overarching theme of this portion of Scripture is living in obedience to the Lord, seeking to honor Him with our lives. Peter offered biblical examples where

godly women submitted to the leadership of their husbands. This is the God given order for the home. A faithful wife, following her husband's leadership, brings honor to the Lord. Honestly, I know men who are not worthy to lead their homes, and some of them have godly wives who follow their lead anyway. This is not necessarily done because that particular husband has earned that right in the eyes of his wife, but she follows Him in order to please the Lord. If the husband is the man God desires him to be, this will be much easier for the wife; but even if he isn't, she continues to honor God by her faithful submission.

- In reality, this is about who's in charge within the home, but it isn't what most would think. It isn't as much about the husband leading the home as it is the home operating according to the God given order for the home. If the Lord rules our lives and homes, then we all will possess a desire to live in a way that pleases Him, even if that requires us to lay aside personal preferences and desires.

II. The Responsibilities of the Husband (7) – Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. Now Peter addresses the husbands, and again, this is focused upon a believing spouse seeking to reach an unbelieving spouse. In this case the husband has come to faith in Christ, but the wife has yet to do so. Consider:

A. His Commitment (7a) – Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge...His obligations to the marriage vows did not end when he became a believer, even though his wife had not yet been saved. He is obligated to remain faithful to his wife, seeking to reveal the love of Christ and grace of God through his commitment to her. His faith in Christ is best communicated to the unbelieving wife through continued commitment to the marriage and the home.

B. His Courtesy (7a) – Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel...In order for the husband to effectively reach the unbelieving wife, he would have to love her as Christ loved the church. He must treat her with honor, knowing she is the weaker vessel. This is often difficult for men to convey. Some genuinely love their wives, but find it difficult to show them the honor they are due and communicate their appreciation. A godly husband will understand and appreciate the value of his wife. He will do all he can to please her, making her feel loved, appreciated, and genuinely valued in the marriage relationship. He is not one who continually makes demands, but never offers any love or gratitude in return. Godly husbands are not dictators, but see the value in their wives.

- Many consider the aspect of the wife being a weaker vessel as merely physical. While this is typically the case, again we must consider the context of the culture in which this was written. In Peter's day, women did not enjoy the same liberties and opportunities as men. A godly husband would seek to understand the struggles his wife faced, while attempting to encourage and assist her in those areas. She is to be loved and valued for her contributions to the home and relationship, rather than being judged by societal standards.

C. His Comprehension (7a) – Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life. A godly husband will view his wife from a spiritual and biblical perspective. While it is established in Scripture that the husband is to lead the home, he does not view his wife as inferior or of less value to the spiritual makeup of the home. She is offered the same grace as he is, having an opportunity for a fulfilling Christian walk and relationship with the Lord. His being the husband does not give him higher standing with Christ. She too can enjoy the Lord while making great spiritual contributions within the family and home.

- Beyond the spiritual aspect, a godly husband will recognize the worth and value of his wife, giving honor to her. The word translated *honor* is also translated *precious* in 1 Peter 2:4, 6, 7. A godly husband will view his wife as precious, treating her as one of great value. (Men if we would love and treat our wives as the Bible teaches, she would find it much easier to assume the biblical role she has been given.)

D. His Concern (7b) – that your prayers be not hindered. The husband's appreciation for and treatment of his wife will have a direct impact on his spiritual life. He cannot ignore the needs of his wife, refusing to give her the honor she deserves, while failing to appreciate her value in the home, and have a right relationship with the Lord. If his relationship with his wife is not as it should be, his prayers, and his walk with Christ, will be hindered.

- Simply men, if we fail to treat our wives as the Lord commanded, we cannot expect to walk in a way that pleases Him. We cannot mistreat our wives, ignoring the marriage relationship, and expect God to bless our homes. The way we treat our wives reflects our relationship with the Lord. I want to please the Lord through pleasing my wife.

Conclusion: This has been a simple text to consider. As husbands and wives, are we living according to the teachings of Scripture? Are there areas within your relationship with your spouse or the Lord that need attention? If so, bring those needs to Christ!