



Christ-centered Marriages

1 Peter 3:1-7 (ESV) 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.

Introduction: Peter had explained in chapter two how Christians should conduct themselves in submission to authorities as citizens and servants, even under the threat of suffering of the cause of Christ. Now he moves into how wives and husbands should behave in family life during times of suffering, as well as at other times.

His main concern was not the life within the Christian community, but life where the Christian community intersected with the world around it.

The goal was explicitly clear

1 Peter 2:12 (ESV) Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

In this passage he makes clear that Christian wives and husbands are to demonstrate distinctive, obedient behavior as believers, in order to convince critics of their faith.

To the wives

Peter first addresses the wives, especially the wives who had unbelieving husbands.

As you and I read these instructions within our own cultural setting it doesn't seem unusual that Peter would be addressing the wives, but what was probably surprising to the original readers was that he addressed the wives at all. Women in Ancient Rome did not have equal legal status with men.

Faith in Christ brought a new freedom. Women were now seen as partners in ministry and were being used by God to minister.

This was the new spiritual atmosphere that Peter now writes to the women who have come to faith in Christ whose husbands were not believers.

Peter is very aware that in the pagan world women were expected to follow the religion of their husbands. This made it more complicated for the wife as it would result in tension in her marriage.

How could she stay true to her faith in Christ and yet be submissive to her unbelieving husband?

Peter writes that keeping a Christ-like attitude in all other areas to her unbelieving husband and his values would not only lessen the tension but could serve to lead to his coming to faith in Christ.

1 Peter 3:1-2 (NLT) In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over ² by observing your pure and reverent lives.

His concern is that the newfound freedom the women have experienced in Christ would not be used to rebel against her husband or see herself as superior to him and thus destroy their marriage.

1 Peter 2:16 (ESV) Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

Apparel that truly matters

1 Peter 3:3-4 (ESV) 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.

Notice that Peter speaks about beauty that attracts, but it's not the outward one first, but the inner beauty of the heart. He is not saying that a woman should neglect her outward appearance. His point is that the priority to win your unbelieving husband should be the inner beauty of Christ-likeness.

Proverbs 31:30 (AMP) Charm *and* grace are deceptive, and [superficial] beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD [reverently worshiping, obeying, serving, and trusting Him with awe-filled respect], she shall be praised.

Although these scriptures are addressing women, as believers, we are all instructed to be dressed in Christ-likeness.

Colossians 3:12-14 (ESV) Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³ Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

Husbands

1 Peter 3:7 (ESV) 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.

Notice that Peter says the believing husbands are to live with their wives in the same way, in Christ-likeness.

Remember that in that culture the male was the unquestioned authority figure in the household. A husband would have seen the women as inferior in status and position.

With that in mind, think about what Peter is saying? Christian men should treat their wives not as an inferior partner but as an equal partner of the grace of life.

Men were not to use their role as one of dominance and control but of consideration and care.

To considerate is to be thoughtful. To be thoughtful is to be understanding. To be understanding of someone, requires that you have knowledge of them so that everything you do is with their wellbeing in mind.

What should we as husbands know? (BTW) This works for both husbands and wives

- God's purpose and principals for marriage

- What our wife desires
- What are her dreams, fear, experiences, likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses etc.

In order to acquire this knowledge, we need to spend unhurried time in the word and prayer and devote time to our wives.

A husband who practices these things will show honor to wife and will greatly enrich his marriage.

The failure to treat our wives this way effects our prayers.

Be hindered - to have an obstacle thrown in the way.

“A husband who treats his wife in the wrong way will himself be unfit to pray, will scarcely pray at all. There will be no family altar, no life of prayer. His worship in the congregation will be affected.” - Richard C. Lenski

The world needs to see healthy Christ-centered marriages. It also needs to see men and women who truly exemplify what it means to submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

I Peter 3:8-12 (ESV) Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰ For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹ let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”