

## I PETER

Humble Submission In The home

April 07, 2013

### I. Review: The Example of Christ

A. Two Sundays ago, we looked at Christ as our premier example of remaining humbly submissive and respectful in the face of unjust treatment at the hands of those in authority over us. Now I know we do not need to look back any further than that to grasp the significance of today's teaching on wives and husbands being humbly submissive and respectful toward each other, however, I do want to remind us of several truths that God has been laying out for us since the first chapter of I Peter.

### B. Basic truths and principles:

1. In **I Peter 1:13-16**, Peter sums up the purpose for this letter – a purpose that sets the tone for what follows. And that purpose is that we would be holy in all our behavior just as God is holy. From there, Peter moves on to give us practical examples from everyday life of how we are to implement holiness in all our behavior.
2. In **I Peter 2:13**, he brings to our attention the principle of humble submission and respect for those in authority over us, and then moves on to show us how we are apply that principle in relation to government, the work place, and then the home.
3. In between teaching about being humbly submissive and respectful in the work place and the home, Peter gives us the supreme example of Jesus Christ, who lived out this principle in the face of the most trying and challenging circumstances imaginable.
4. And in giving us Christ as an example, he also tells us who the enemy really is, and he tells us the outcome of living according to this important principle.
  - a. And so I want to remind you that the enemy is not the person inflicting the pain or making your life unnecessarily difficult, it is the devil and the evil he has set in motion in our world. Therefore, in God calling to overcoming evil with good, He is calling us to behave in ways that further defeat the devil in the midst of the devil's efforts to defeat good and overcome God.
  - b. I also want to remind you that living according to this principle of overcoming evil with good rarely results in immediate relief from the suffering being inflicted on you. Most likely, you will suffer for a time, and maybe even a long time.

- c. However, relief is not our goal, just as relief from his suffering was not Christ's goal. Our goal is to join Christ in doing the will of God – which is to do good in the face of evil in order to give others an added opportunity to see God as worthy of their trust, obedience, allegiance, and love.
- C. The last thing I want to remind you of before moving to today's study is that though there are no exceptions to treating others with respect, including our enemies, there are exceptions to humble submission. However, God has not called us to focus on the exceptions to His rules, but rather to live an exceptional life within the boundaries of His rules. And if we do that, we will see clearly where the exceptions apply and how to apply them.
- D. Pray

## II. Be Holy In All Your Behavior With A Holiness Like God's Holiness

- A. **I Peter 3:1-7 . . . In the same way**, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, [2] as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. [3] Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; [4] but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. [5] For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; [6] just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. [7] You husbands **in the same way**, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

## III. Humble Submission In The Home – Wives toward Husbands

- A. **I Peter 3:1-2 . . . In the same way**, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, [2] as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.
  - 1. Interestingly, Peter devotes six verses to the wife's behavior and one to the husband's. In **Ephesians**, Paul devotes three verses to the wife and eight to the husband. In **Colossians**, the wife and the husband each get one verse on how to live as a Christian spouse.

- a. In all this, the wife is exhorted to submit, but never told she must love her husband. Yet the husband is told to love his wife, and the standard of that love is to be Christ's love for the church.
  - b. What intrigues me most about this is that many church going husbands focus on how the wives are to submit, while many wives focus on how their husbands are to love them.
  - c. My plea to you, today, is to listen carefully to what God has to say to your spouse – in case there is something there that you can apply to yourself. But focus intently on what God has to say to you, with the goal of living it out as completely as you can.
2. Now Peter's first words to the wives are, "**In the same way.**" These words refer to Christ's example of humble submission and respect toward those in authority over him. But when we put Christ's example into perspective, we must ask, who in this world has any rightful authority over Jesus Christ? Is He not King of kings and Lord of Lords? Of course He is. And yet, He set the example of humble submission and respectful behavior in the face of ill-treatment – and in so doing, He overcame evil with good.
- a. So if you are a Christian wife who believes it is your right to be treated as an equal, or even as a superior, then the example of Christ still stands as the example you are to follow. For if Christ, who was superior to all who were mistreating Him, humbly and respectfully submitted, then surely we who are under authority ought to follow His example. And as the scripture says and God has ordained, wives are under the authority of their husbands.
  - b. Now how is it that Christ felt safe and secure enough to humbly and respectfully submit? He trusted in God to be His security, comfort, help, and ultimate source of justice. And that too is an example for the wives to follow.
  - c. Now let me depart a moment from speaking to the wives. Husbands, the Bible teaches that you are the head of the home, and because of that, you have the role of leader or master.
    - (1) Yet Peter begins his words to you (**vs 7**) with the same four words he speaks to the wives, "**In the same way.**"
    - (2) In other words, though God gives the role of headship to the husband, He expects you to follow the example of Christ in your dealings with your wife. Therefore, even though your wife's position is that of being under your authority, you are not only to be humbly submissive and respectful toward her, you are to live with her as one who serves, and as one who

willingly lays down his life for her, and as one who loves her and works with her as Christ does the church.

- d. And to both the husbands and the wives, I want to clearly say that this exhortation from Peter is not about who is the head of the home or the boss of the spouses or the one who must submit. Rather, this exhortation is about taking our duty as Christian's seriously and living up to the principle laid before us by God regarding humble submission and the respectful treatment of each other.
- 3. Peter goes on to say that in the same way that Christ respectfully and humbly submitted to the religious and civil authorities, wives are to **be submissive to their own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, [2] as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.**
  - a. Again, let us not use these words from Peter to debate who is the boss and who isn't, for that misses the point. These words certainly state the role of the wife to her husband, but the focus is on following Christ's example of living a God pleasing and God honoring life in the home, even when your husband is being disobedient to God's word.
  - b. Now whether Peter is referring to an unbelieving husband or a Christian husband seems irrelevant to me, for even Christian husbands have been known to be disobedient to God's word.
  - c. Therefore wives, your purpose in following Christ's example is larger than immediate relief from ill-treatment or momentary peace. Its purpose is to set up an environment or a situation whereby your unloving husband has added opportunities to come to his senses, repent of his sin, turn or return to godly living, and love you as Christ loves the church.
  - d. The final point to make about these two verses is this: **words are good, but behavior is best.** In fact, words lacking supportive behavior are counter-productive to overcoming evil with good, for it works against God's work of convicting and urging your husband to repent and change.
- B. **I Peter 3:3-4** . . . Your adornment must not be merely external – braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; [4] but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

1. This part of the exhortation is not saying that looking nice or being neat and clean in your attire is wrong. In fact, there is wisdom in looking nice. However, a wife's outward beauty is no substitute for the beauty of a consistently loving attitude and godly behavior.
2. In other words, wives ought not try to gain their husband's love and good treatment by making themselves visually appealing, but rather by focusing on how they behave toward their husband and the attitude they manifest around their husband.

C. **I Peter 3:5-6a** . . . For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; [6] just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.

1. Now ladies, if Christ's example is not enough to call you to godly living in the home, Peter provides the example of godly women from the past, and he makes Sarah his premier historical example.
2. Now I want to admit that in our day, it may bother the wives that Sarah called her husband "lord." Yet in spite of how our culture sees that, Sarah is a good example to emulate, and here is why.
  - a. And by the way, Sarah is quoted as referring to Abraham as her lord in **Genesis 18:12**.
  - b. But far more than that quote, consider that out of submission and respect for her husband, Sarah's home was a tent, and she had to move 4 or more times, and not always for good reasons.
  - c. When famine arose in Canaan, they moved to Egypt, where Abraham asked Sarah to claim she was his sister instead of his wife – because he feared for his life. As a result, Pharaoh took Sarah into his palace as a one of his wives. For this, God punished Pharaoh until he gave Sarah back to Abraham. And as a result of that, Abraham and Sarah had to get out of Egypt.
  - d. Sarah submitted again to being called Abraham's sister while they lived in Gerar under King Abimelech – who subsequently took Sarah into his palace as a wife. Then God visited Abimelech in a dream and warned him about having a married woman as one of his wives. Once again, they had to move.
  - e. And we also see Sarah submitting to Abraham when he took her only son, Isaac, to Mount Moriah, to sacrifice him to the Lord.
3. The point here is that Sarah's husband led her into some difficult, embarrassing, even dangerous, and certainly personally costly situations. And yet she humbly and respectfully submitted while trusting her well-being to God – making her an example to follow.

D. **I Peter 3:6b** . . . And you [wives] have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

1. Just as becoming a Christian and living by faith makes us a child of Abraham (the father of faith), so Christian's wives who submit to their husbands like Sarah become daughters of Sarah.
2. **Proverbs 3:25-26** . . . Do not be afraid of sudden fear nor of the onslaught of the wicked when it comes; [26] for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.

#### IV. Humble Submission In The Home – Husbands toward Wives

A. **I Peter 3:7a** . . . You husbands **in the same way**, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman;

1. **In the same way** – As for the wives, so for us husbands – Christ is to be our example for how we live with or deal with our wives. You see, being the head of the home does not translate into having God's approval for bossing your wife around. In fact, if you are a Christian husband, just the opposite is true.
2. Peter first exhortation of how to follow Christ's example is to live with our wives in an understanding way – as with someone weaker. Now the words "as with someone weaker," what do they mean? Is Peter putting wives down, or is he calling husbands to something abnormal by the world's standards but normal by God's standards?
3. To answer this, let's begin by examining the comparison of God to us and then use that to look at a comparison of us to our wives.
4. Picture our all-knowing, perfectly holy, completely righteous, amazingly gracious and patient God. Then compare that picture to us husbands, who are morally weak, easily tempted to selfishness, foolish at times, and sometimes willing to do what we know is wrong.
  - a. Yet God, who is our Head, treats us in an understanding way. But even more than that, we want, in fact, we are counting on God to treat us with gracious understanding and patience.
  - b. In fact, we want God to love us, and out of His love for us to treat us with grace, mercy, patience, and forgiveness. And we even expect God to be actively involved in helping us overcome our weaknesses and sin, so that we can change and grow and live more and more according to His will. All of which takes time!
5. Which brings us to the comparison of the husband to his wife. It is true that husbands are in a similar position as God, in that we are the head of our home. But, do we have the same quality of character and habit and behavior as God? No.

- a. Therefore, though we husbands have the position of head in the home, we also have the God given duty to treat our wives in the same way we want God to treat us – which is in a way that understands and takes into account our weaknesses.
  - b. And we are to do this with the same kind of humility and respect exhibited by Christ when He was ill-treated by those who ought to have been standing with Him and submitting to Him, rather than fighting against Him.
6. And let me take this one step further. The reality of our condition before God, ought to produce a humility that brings us to our knees, not just before God, but before our wives, so that out of gratitude to God, we treat them with godly grace, mercy, kindness, gentleness, goodness, patience, respect, and forgiveness.
7. And may we husbands be man enough to admit that anything less than this means we are being disobedient to God's word.

B. **I Peter 3:7b** . . . And show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

1. Peter does not stop with "being understanding" toward your wife, he goes a step farther and tells you to treat her as an equal.
2. Imagine that, the head of the home is being told to treat the one who is to submit as an equal. How could that work when you, the husband, are to be the boss or lord or master in your home?
3. If you are having a hard time with this one, let me remind you of your relationship to Jesus Christ. Is He not your Head, your Master and Lord? Yes! Well then, tell me the last time He forced you against your will to do His will. Yes, there are consequences to doing other than His will, but when has He forced you to do it? Get the picture?
4. Now I am not advocating open rebellion in the home, or telling you to stand meekly aside while your wife kills your child or burns down the house or flagrantly lies to the IRS. However, those are the exceptions, not the norm, and before you start bringing up the exceptions, and figuring out how you can exert your position of authority in the exceptions, I urge you, as a Christian husband, to focus on living up to the norm set for us by God, and exemplified by Jesus Christ.

## V. Conclusion

- A. What we have talked about today is one of God's general rules for living together as husband and wife. These seven verses do not answer specific

matters that you could raise. They do not deal with the exceptions. And they do not give answers of how to deal with the very difficult situations you may find yourself in as a wife or husband. But they do give you a clear picture of the foundation that God lays for the relationship that He wants to exist between a husband and wife.

- B. Therefore, I urge all you to seriously consider these words, for they are the foundation of wisdom and the path to godly living in the home. With them, you will gain God's support and help and further wisdom for dealing with the exceptions that come along in the course of married life. Without them, you will end up focusing on the exceptions to the loss of godly behavior, godly attitudes, godly thinking, and maybe saddest of all, the loss of a strength of faith in God that gives you the courage to live according to these words as you deal with the exceptions and extra difficult situations.