

Winning An Unsaved Spouse

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1 Peter / 1 Peter 3:1–7

INTRODUCTION

1. Once again we have the privilege of studying the Word of God
2. Please take your copy of God's Word and turn with me to 1 Peter chapter three
3. Back in chapter two we learned about:
 - a. Submission to civil authority (2:13-17)
 - b. Submission in the workplace (2:18-20)
4. Now we're looking at submission in the family between a husband and wife
5. Listen to what Peter says in [1 Peter 3:1-7](#)

1 Peter 3:1–7 NASB95

¹ 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.

6. For a third time now Peter talks about submission
7. But this time it is between a husband and wife
8. Before we dive into this, let me say from the three mentions of submission that it is a way of life
9. It's not just for wives to submit to their husbands
10. We all are involved in the humble attitude of submission
11. We humbly submit to the government
12. We humbly submit to our employers
13. According to [Ephesians 5:21](#) we humbly submit to one another

Ephesians 5:21 NASB95

²¹ and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

14. Everyone submits
15. But notice the key to that humble submission is in verse 18

Ephesians 5:18 NASB95

¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

16. It all begins with being kept filled with the Spirit
17. Out of that command issues in the results of 5:19-6:9
18. When you're Spirit-filled you will:
 - a. Humbly worship (5:19)
 - b. Humbly give thanks (5:20)
 - c. Humbly submit to one another (5:21)
 - d. Wives will humbly submit to their husbands (5:22-24)
 - e. Husbands will humbly submit to their wives by loving their wives (5:25-33)
 - f. Children will humbly submit by obeying their parents (6:1-3)
 - g. Fathers will humbly submit by not provoking their children to anger but will bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (6:4)
 - h. Employees will humbly submit by obeying their employers (6:5-8)
 - i. Employers will humbly submit by not threatening or showing partiality to their employees (6:9)
19. As you can see we all submit

20. That is basic for relationships and society to function as a whole
21. As believers we humbly submit to our elders ([1 Pet.5:5](#))
22. Elders humbly submit by not lording over the flock ([1 Pet.5:3](#))
23. As we come to chapter three of 1 Peter we see this same concept
24. Notice that Peter begins first with the wife in verse 1 and then the husband in verse 7
25. In both instances he calls for submission
26. But I want you to also notice why
27. We talked about it as we looked at submission to government and to employers
28. We'll mention it again because it is clearly in verse 1

· Notice what he says first to the...

LESSON

I. Wives (vv.1-6)

a. Be submissive (v.1)

1 Peter 3:1 NASB95

¹ 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,

- i. He says, “in the same way” that is translated “likewise” in the AV
- ii. It continues the construction of 2:18 and the subject of submission as we already noted
- iii. The word for “submissive” is the same word as in 2:13 and 18
- iv. This is the Greek word *hupotasso*, which means, “to line up under”
- v. It is not a spineless submission that is meant but, as someone has finely put it, a “voluntary selflessness.”
- vi. It is the submission which is based on the death of pride and the desire to serve.
- vii. It is the submission not of fear but of perfect love.(William Barclay, Ed., The Letters of James and Peter, The Daily Study Bible Series, (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1976), 219.)
- viii. Paul talks about the wife submitting to her husband in [Ephesians 5:22](#) “as to the Lord”
- ix. He mentions it also in [Colossians 3:18](#) and says it “is fitting in the Lord”

x. In [1 Timothy 2](#), he refers to it as the creative order when he says:

1 Timothy 2:13–15 NASB95

¹³ For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve.

¹⁴ *And it was* not Adam *who* was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

¹⁵ But *women* will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

xi. He also mentions it in [1 Corinthians 11:3](#)

1 Corinthians 11:3 NASB95

³ But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

xii. When Peter uses it in verse 1 of chapter 3 he is using it as an opportunity to win your unsaved husband to the Lord

> **But we must first understand...**

xiii. Women were not treated the same then as they are today

1. In every sphere of ancient civilization, women had no rights at all
2. Under Jewish law a woman was a thing; she was owned by her husband in exactly the same way as he owned his sheep and his goats; on no account could she leave him, although he could dismiss her at any moment.
3. For a wife to change her religion while her husband did not was unthinkable. (William Barclay, Ed., *The Letters of James and Peter*, The Daily Study Bible Series, (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1976), 218.)
4. In Greek civilization the duty of the woman was “to remain indoors and to be obedient to her husband.”
5. It was the sign of a good woman that she must see as little, hear as little and ask as little as possible.
6. She had no kind of independent existence and no kind of mind of her own, and her husband could divorce her almost at caprice, so long as he returned her dowry. (William Barclay, Ed., *The Letters of James and Peter*, The Daily Study Bible Series, (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1976), 218.)
7. As long as they lived in their father’s house, they were subject to the Roman law of *patria potestas* (“the father’s power”), which granted fathers ultimate life-and-death authority over their children.
8. Husbands had a similar kind of legal authority over their wives.

9. Society regarded women as mere servants who were to stay at home and obey their husbands.
 10. If a woman decided to obey the gospel, that decision to change religions on her own could result in severe abuse from her unsaved husband. (John F. MacArthur Jr., 1 Peter, MacArthur New Testament Commentary, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 176.)
- xiv. Paul's call to be submissive is not to every man in all situations, it is to their "own husbands"
- xv. In the rest of verse 1 he gives the reason why
1. "so that" (hina) even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives"
 2. The reason is evangelistic
 3. "disobedient to the word" indicates the husbands rejection of the gospel, he is a non-Christian
 4. He may be won "without a word by the behavior of their wives"

Believer's Bible Commentary D. As a Wife in Relation to Her Husband (3:1-6)

George Müller told of a wealthy German whose wife was a devout believer. This man was a heavy drinker, spending late nights in the tavern. She would send the servants to bed, stay up till he returned, receive him kindly, and never scold him or complain. At times she would even have to undress him and put him to bed. One night in the tavern he said to his cronies, "I bet if we go to my house, my wife will be sitting up, waiting for me. She'll come to the door, give us a royal welcome, and even make supper for us, if I ask her."

They were skeptical at first, but decided to go along and see. Sure enough, she came to the door, received them courteously, and willingly agreed to make supper for them without the slightest trace of resentment. After serving them, she went off to her room. As soon as she had left, one of the men began to condemn the husband. "What kind of a man are you to treat such a good woman so miserably?" The accuser got up without finishing his supper and left the house. Another did the same and another till they had all departed without eating the meal.

Within a half hour, the husband became deeply convicted of his wickedness, and especially of his heartless treatment of his wife. He went to his wife's room, asked her to pray for him, repented of his sins, and surrendered to Christ. From that time on, he became a devoted disciple of the Lord Jesus. Won without a word!

George Müller advised:

Don't be discouraged if you have to suffer from unconverted relatives. Perhaps very shortly the Lord may give you the desire of your heart, and answer your prayer for them. But in the meantime, seek to commend the truth, not by reproaching them on

account of their behavior toward you, but by manifesting toward them the meekness, gentleness and kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ.²¹

R.C. Sproul says, “The enduring principle involved in this statement is not strict verbal silence (v. 15), but a submissive demeanor and sensitivity to the concerns of the unbelieving husband (see v. 2) so that the gospel may be presented in the best light.” (R. C. Sproul, Ed., *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version* (2015 Edition), (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015), 2246.)

b. Be faithful (v.2)

Peter says they may be won...”as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior”

i. It’s not what they hear (“a word”)

ii. It’s what they see

1. They become convinced of the gospel when they see your changed life

2. They watch you more than they hear you

a. The word “observe” (epopteuo, aor.act.part.) means to “watch” (Louw-Nida)

3. They see a pure, respectful life

a. The word “chaste” (hagnen) means “pure”

b. The word “respectful” (phobos), means “reverence”

c. The word “behavior” (anastophe) refers to “conduct, way of life” (strepho, turn, turn around)

Paul said in [1 Corinthians 9:19-22](#)

1 Corinthians 9:19–22 NASB95

¹⁹ For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more.

²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law;

²¹ to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law.

²² To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.

He said in [Philippians 1:27](#)

Philippians 1:27 NASB95

²⁷ Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

› **Be submissive, faithful and third...**

C. Be Modest (vv.3-6)

1 Peter 3:3–6 NASB95

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.

› **Notice the text does not prohibit “braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses”**

› **That’s why the translators added the word “merely”**

i. How women dressed in ancient times (v.3)

There is a list of female adornment in the OT that shows women pursuing beauty for beauty’s sake. This reflected the moral decay of the nations and detracted from the glory of God and gives an example of what God desires of all women. Peter says it should be the hidden person of the heart rather than merely external

Isaiah 3:16–24 NASB95

¹⁶ Moreover, the LORD said, “Because the daughters of Zion are proud

And walk with heads held high and seductive eyes,

And go along with mincing steps

And tinkle the bangles on their feet,

¹⁷ Therefore the Lord will afflict the scalp of the daughters of Zion with scabs,

And the LORD will make their foreheads bare.”

¹⁸ In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of *their* anklets, headbands, crescent

ornaments,

¹⁹ dangling earrings, bracelets, veils,

²⁰ headdresses, ankle chains, sashes, perfume boxes, amulets,

²¹ finger rings, nose rings,

²² festal robes, outer tunics, cloaks, money purses,

²³ hand mirrors, undergarments, turbans and veils.

²⁴ Now it will come about that instead of sweet perfume there will be putrefaction;

Instead of a belt, a rope;

Instead of well-set hair, a plucked-out scalp;

Instead of fine clothes, a donning of sackcloth;

And branding instead of beauty.

The Gospel according to Peter: Mark and I & II Peter Word and Phrase Study

External cultural adornment can become a problem if it becomes ultimate and prideful and characterizes an evil heart (cf. Isa. 3:18–24). How one dresses is a window into the heart (cf. v. 4).

The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude Wives, v. 1–6

women should dress in Quaker drab, but that they should be beyond the vanity of display in order to attract attention to themselves.

1. “braiding the hair” (v.3a)

William Barclay says...

The Letters of James and Peter (Revised Edition) The True Adornment

There were as many ways of dressing the hair as there were bees in Hybca. Hair was waved and dyed, sometimes black, more often auburn. Wigs were worn, especially blonde wigs, which are found even in the Christian catacombs; and hair to manufacture them was imported from Germany, and even from as far away as India. Hairbands, pins and combs were made of ivory, and boxwood, and tortoiseshell; and sometimes of gold, studded with gems.

2. “and wearing gold jewelry” (v.3b)

1 Peter (1) Not Mere External Adornment (v. 3)

the towering hairdo was secured with costly combs and with hair nets of gold. But Peter's term is broader, "wearing" (peritheseōs), literally, "putting around." It includes the common practice of placing various golden objects (chains, rings, bracelets, etc.) around the neck, ankles, arms, and fingers, and suspending glittering ornaments from the ears. The reference to the use of such golden objects for adornment implies that there were women of at least moderate wealth in the congregations addressed.

William Barclay again says...

The Letters of James and Peter (Revised Edition) The True Adornment

Diamonds, emeralds, topazes, opals and the sardonyx were favourite stones. Struma Nonius had a ring valued at [L]21,250. Pearls were loved most of all. Julius Caesar bought for Servilia a pearl which cost him [L]65,250. Earrings were made of pearls and Seneca spoke of women with two or three fortunes in their ears. Slippers were encrusted with them; Nero even had a room whose walls were covered with them. Pliny saw Lollia Paulina, wife of Caligula, wearing a dress so covered with pearls and emeralds that it had cost [L]450,000.

3. "or putting on dresses" (v.3c)

D. Edmond Hiebert says the term...

1 Peter (1) Not Mere External Adornment (v. 3)

"Putting on" (enduseōs), a term not used elsewhere in the New Testament, is another noun of action and apparently indicates the practice of appearing in a great variety of dresses

The Letters of James and Peter (Revised Edition) The True Adornment

Purple was the favourite colour for clothes. One pound weight of the best Tyrian purple wool, strained twice through, cost 1,000 denarii, [L]43.50. A tyrian cloak of the best purple cost well over [L]100. In one year silks, pearls, scents and jewellery were imported from India to the value of [L]1,000,000. Similar imports of luxury came from Arabia.

ii. How Christian women should dress (v.4)

Peter says in [1 Peter 3:4](#)

1 Peter 3:4 NASB95

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. It must be "the hidden person of the hearth" (that's where the true beauty lies)

Psalm 45:13 NASB95

¹³ The King's daughter is all glorious within;

Her clothing is interwoven with gold.

Psalm 51:6 NASB95

⁶ Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being,

And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.

Ephesians 4:22–24 NASB95

²² that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

²⁴ and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

2. The “hidden person of the heart” is “a gentle and quiet spirit”

1 Peter (2) Inner Spiritual Character (v. 4)

The inner, hidden person is the regenerated nature; it does not flaunt itself in open display.

1 Peter (2) Inner Spiritual Character (v. 4)

That Spirit-wrought inner disposition is described as “gentle and quiet.” It beautifully manifests itself in the wife’s submission. The former adjective (*praeōs*) describes her bearing as gentle, considerate, and unassuming in its relations to others. She will not be “pushy,” nor “selfishly assertive.” The second adjective, “quiet” (*hēsuchiou*), is more general in scope. It pictures a quiet disposition as contrasted to a noisy, boisterous attitude. It is “a spirit which calmly bears the disturbances created by others and which itself does not create disturbances.”

The MacArthur Study Bible Chapter 3

Here is beauty that never decays, as the outward body does. “Gentle” is actually “meek or humble” and “quiet” describes the character of her action and reaction to her husband and life in general. Such is precious not only to her husband, but also to God.

1 Timothy 2:9–10 NASB95

⁹ Likewise, *I want* women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments,

¹⁰ but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.

Colossians 3:12 NASB95

¹² So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

3. This is “precious in the sight of God”

Psalm 147:10–11 NASB95

¹⁰ He does not delight in the strength of the horse;

He does not take pleasure in the legs of a man.

¹¹ The LORD favors those who fear Him,

Those who wait for His lovingkindness.

D. Imitate the holy women (v.5)**1 Peter 3:5 NASB95**

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;

i. They too were submissive

ii. They too adorned themselves with a “gentle and quiet spirit”

iii. They too “hoped in God”

1 Peter d. The past Examples of Godly Submission (vv. 5–6a)

“Hope in God is true holiness.”³³ They lived their daily lives with the expectancy that God would accomplish what He had promised.

Proverbs 31:10 NASB95

¹⁰ An excellent wife, who can find?

For her worth is far above jewels.

Proverbs 31:30 NASB95

³⁰ Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain,

But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

E. Imitate Sarah (v.6)**1 Peter 3:6 NASB95**

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.

Peter’s “call for such behavior is not unprecedented, and he specifically cites Sarah as an illustration, noting that she obeyed Abraham, going so far as calling him lord (master).

Calling him (*kalousa*) is a present participle, which indicates Sarah’s continual attitude of respect toward her husband Abraham—she treated him as her lord or master.

1 Peter: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary She Is to Be Modest

The Greek word for fear is *ptoēsis*, a strong word meaning “frightening,” or “terrifying.” Instead of succumbing to such terrors (cf. Ps. 27:1; Prov. 1:33; 29:25; 2 Tim. 1:7; 1 John

4:18), those who are faithful to submit because it is good and right can be used by the Lord in the salvation of their husbands.

· Paul moves to the...

II. Husbands (v.7)

1 Peter 3:7 NASB95

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.

This is referring to believing husbands

Peter says, “In the same way” (*homoiōs*)

That firmly links the verse with the preceding material

Though the subject of submission is not mentioned, it is implied by the context and by what follows

D. Edmond Hiebert says, “The spirit which made the wife ‘meek and quiet’ would make the husband kind and attentive.”

Husbands too are to submit but this is not submission to his wife for leadership or headship. That has been reserved for husbands.

Also, remember [Ephesians 5:21](#)

Ephesians 5:21 NASB95

²¹ and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

· We are all submitting to one another

· And the submission that Peter is calling here from believing husbands is...

a. Submission to her needs

i. She needs “understanding” or consideration from her husband

1 Peter: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Consideration

Understanding speaks of being sensitive and considering the wife’s deepest physical and emotional needs.

This involves the husband’s understanding of “the wife’s desires, goals, and frustrations; knowledge of her strengths and weaknesses in the physical, emotional and spiritual realms.” (Hiebert)

ii. She needs physical protection (“weaker” physically) (“woman”)

1. “Weaker” does not mean “weak-minded” (Sproul)

2. It refers to physical strength

3. Part of living with her in an understanding way takes this to mind

b. Show her honor

i. She is a fellow heir of the grace of life

Galatians 3:28 NASB95

²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Companionship

Marriage is a divine providence given to man regardless of his attitude toward the Giver. Intimate companionship in marriage, the richest blessing of this life, was a foreign concept to the Greco-Roman culture of Peter's day. Husbands were generally uninterested in friendship with their wives, expecting them to merely maintain the household and bear children.

Paul said in [Colossians 3:19](#)

Colossians 3:19 NASB95

¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

ii. You do not want your prayers to be hindered

R.C. Sproul says...

1-2 Peter Peter's Word to Husbands

The implication of this text is that if husbands fail to love, honor, and respect their wives, that behavior will hinder their prayers. Likewise, wives, if you resist submitting to your husband, that posture will hinder your prayers. In a sense, it means that God does not want to hear our prayers until we come to Him as humbly submissive people.

CONCLUSION

1. Everyone is to submit
2. We do this in "the fear of Christ" ([Eph.5:21](#))
3. We need to pass this on to the next generation

Titus 2:4-5 NASB95

⁴ so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

⁵ *to be* sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

4. The way to win your unsaved spouse is through submission and a meek and quiet spirit
5. It's not by preaching to them all the time or putting repent on everything
6. Behavior is key

7. It doesn't mean the gospel is never spoken

Romans 10:17 NASB95

¹⁷ So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

8. This kind of behavior can not only lead your spouse to Christ but also your employer and people in authority

9. Paul told the Philippians in [Philippians 4:5](#)

Philippians 4:5 NASB95

⁵ Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near.

10. Everything we do should be to lead others to the gospel

11. If you have never come to Christ, trusting in His finished work on the cross for your sin, you can come to Him right now

Romans 10:13 NASB95

¹³ for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

12. Call on Him to save you from your sin and from His coming judgment as we pray

13. Let's pray

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