

# A Marriage Transformed by Christ

## 1 Peter 3:1-7

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.

Beginning in verse 13 of chapter 2, Peter began to discuss with his readers the practice of mutual submission, which is a mark of the Christian. Having begun with the example of the government and concluding with the example of Christ, Peter now turns to the example of wives and husbands.

You do not have to read very far into these verses to recognize the ways in which they might be offensive to our 21st century American culture. The current mainstream view of the roles of husbands and wives in marriage (even the institution of marriage) is pretty far away from what God's Word teaches. So the question becomes, will we be "conformed to the pattern of the world" (Romans 12:2) or be "transformed by the renewing of our minds" through understanding of and obedience to the Word of God?

Before going through this passage verse by verse, it is important to understand a few things about the passage as a whole. First, these verses are for all Christians, not just married Christians. The list of examples that Peter began in 2:13 is not exhaustive, but representative. The core principal of mutual submission is at the heart of each example. Secondly, this principal of voluntary mutual submission is a calling for all Christians. Peter begins verse 1 and 7 with the word "likewise" (literally, "in the same way"). In doing so it is clear he is referring both to the previous examples and ultimately to the example of Christ. Finally, we must remember that the example of Christ (2:21) is not meant to only be an inspiration for our own obedience. It is also of foundational significance when we remember that though Christ is the same in essence and nature as the Father, He willingly submits to the Father. So submission is not based on ability or character, but on obedience to the roles God has asked us to take.

### I. What Does God Have To Say To Wives? (vv. 1-6)

A Christian wife is called by God to voluntarily submit to her husband in the same way that Christ submits to the Father. She does this for the sake of Christ that she might bear witness to her husband, not with words, but with respectful and pure conduct. God calls women to not make the main focus of their beauty outward, but instead to make the main focus their inward beauty. This beauty is "gentle" (or meek) and of a "quiet spirit." This is not a personality type, but a character trait. Again, the example of Jesus leads the way as He was often defined as meek and humble in spirit.

### II. What Does God Have To Say To Husbands? (v. 7)

A Christian husband has his own submitting to do. Peter begins with the word "likewise" (in the same way), referring to the example of Christ. Husbands are to live with their wives in an understanding way. The literal Greek here is to live "in knowledge" of your wife. With that

knowledge he is to treat her as precious and of great value. Peter concludes all this by pointing to our relationship with Christ. If a Christian husband isn't treating his wife as precious, he will hinder his own communication and relationship with Christ.

### Discussion Questions

1. What are the ways in which this passage might be offensive to our current culture's view of marriage? In what ways might it even bother those in the Church?
2. What are some of the reasons we struggle with the idea of submission? How does Christ's example encourage us in obedience?
3. What are some practical examples of how a wife might live out the commands in these verses?
4. What are some practical examples of how a husband might live out the commands in verse 7?
5. What are some ways that a husband can grow in knowledge of his wife?
6. Why does the Bible connect our relationships with each other to our relationship with Christ?

### Going Deeper

1. What are some of the ways you are tempted to conform to the patterns of this world?
2. How have these verses challenged your view of marriage?
3. What are some practical things you need to do to begin to live out these verses in your life?