

## **Family Study: the Believer's Behavior** for the College and Career Class at Gulf Coast Baptist Church 8/27/23 by Steve Thomas

### **Introduction**

The Apostle Peter takes up the topic of submission in his first epistle. He has been preparing first century believers for potential suffering and is instructing them on how they should respond. They should have good behavior and good works, so that God might be glorified. In 1 Peter 2 he instructs the believer to submit to civil authority. This is significant as he continues in chapter 3 because the authority at that time was not beneficent to the believer. It seems like Peter also anticipates a possible contrary relationship with the husband and wife.

### **Which war against the soul...**

Peter reminds the believer who the real enemy is, the sin nature. In verse 12 of chapter 2 Peter warns the believer to battle against his own enemy, the flesh. Peter tells the believer that his mindset should be that of "servants of God". Paul directs the believer to serve civil authority, then speaks to masters and servants, and then to wives and husbands. But he first points the believer to his spiritual enemy, the flesh. The relationship cannot be what it needs to be while the believer is in bondage to his own enemy.

### **Likewise,**

Just as the believer is to submit to civil authority, and servants are to be subject to their masters, wives are to willingly place themselves into subjection to their own husbands. This is significant because some cultures place all women under subjection to all men. The participle for subjection is a present passive participle.

Going back to chapter 2 (which the likewise directs us to do), we see a couple of significant items. The believer's submission is for the Lord's sake (2:13). The believer is manifesting grace (2:19), and the believer is doing it for the revealing glory and grace (2:20). The word for glory is not *doxa*, but *kleos* (renown or reputation). The behavior of the believer is only possible through grace, to add to the reputation of God.

The example in chapter 2 is Christ. Who did nothing to deserve the treatment he received, but committed himself to the Father, who judges righteously (2:23).

### **Her adorning is her position**

Chapter 3 gets specific for the wife. She is to allow herself to be placed in submission to her own husband. The marriage ceremony is two people asking God to bind them together. God places the husband as the head and the wife in subjection to him. The implication in verse 1 is that the husband needs to be won or "gained" by the behavior of the wife. Peter directs the attention of the reader to the hidden "man of the heart". The valuable meek and quiet spirit which God values. God delights in His own attributes, and the position of the believer in Christ

makes possible the character of Christ to be lived out. Paul's language of putting off, renewing the mind, and putting on Christ is used here by Peter. The mindset precedes the good behavior in verses 5-6.

### **Chaste with fear**

The wife should not be in terror of her husband, but the husband is observing a conversation (deportment) that has innocent behavior that is giving honor to the husband. The wife trusts God so much (2:23, 3:5) that she places herself in a position of reverence to her husband, trusting God to ultimately determine the outcome of the situation. With her behavior towards her husband, she submits to the Father. The good behavior demonstrates that they are not "put in fear by any terror" (3:6).

The mindset of putting on Christ like a garment enables the wife to submit to possible unrighteous leadership of the husband. It is grace and acceptable to the Father (chapter 2) for the wife to suffer righteously in this relationship. This is similar to the believer submitting to a civil authority or a slave submitting to a master. There is a trust that God will ultimately fix the situation for the wellbeing of the believer. When the believer forsakes this trust, and refuses to submit, they are not putting on Christ. They are not demonstrating good behavior that will give a positive reputation of God to the surrounding individuals.

### **Ephesians 5:22-24**

Paul echoes this mindset with the chain of command teaching of Christ the head of the Church, and the husband the head of the wife. Paul tells the wife to submit to her husband as to the Lord. Paul and Peter both direct attention of the believer to the actions of the Son of God. The wife is not degrading herself by submitting to the husband, but demonstrating grace.

The caveat should be inserted here that whenever the civil authority tells the believer to do something that God has forbidden the believer to do, the believer obeys God rather than men. Likewise when the civil authority asks the believer not to do something that God instructs, the same situation applies. These principles would be effective in the husband/wife, master/servant, and parent/child relationships. But outside of these situations, God instructs the wife, servant, and child to submit to the leader.

### **Conclusion**

Both Peter and Paul give an excellent mindset for the wife to follow, and direct the wife to where her strength to submit comes from. If the wife uses her own strength, battles will follow, battles that come from the sin nature. But her good behavior will win these battles with the power of the meek and quiet spirit that comes from the character of Christ.