

1. What did the text mean to the biblical audience? Structure diagram 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**.

Truths From Cross References:

Be subject: obey, be obedient

What has already been spoken about submission – 1 Peter 2:13-17; 1 Peter 2:18-25; 1 Peter 3:1-6; 1 Peter 3:8-12 The counsel in verses 1-6 was specifically for believing wives married to unbelieving husbands.

Submission is a wider Christian virtue for all of us to pursue, and it has its unique expressions in various relationships.

Ephesians 5:22-24

Submission is the divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband's leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts. It's the inclination to follow a husband's authority and an preference to yield to his leadership. It is an attitude that says, "I delight for you to take the initiative in our family. I am glad when you take responsibility for things and lead with love. I don't flourish in the relationship when you are passive and I have to make sure the family works."

Peter says six times more to wives than husbands. It is a matter of inspiration, not inequality. In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul devotes three verses to wives, nine verses to husbands. Regardless, the gravity of a text is to be measured by its content and context, not verse count numbers.

Your own husband: There is a uniquely fitting submission to your own husband that is not fitting in relation to other men. You are not called to submit to all men the way you do to your husband.

Won without a word:

By respectful and pure conduct – Titus 2:3-5

Not external adorning: What he means is: Don't focus your main attention and effort on how you look on the outside; focus it on the beauty that is inside. Exert more effort and be more concerned with inner beauty than outer beauty.

Yes adorning be the hidden person of the heart: When a woman puts her hope in God and not her husband and not in her looks, and when she overcomes fear by the promises of God, this will have an effect on her heart: it will give her an inner calm and peacefulness - "the imperishable (Immortal, everlasting) beauty of a *gentle and quiet spirit*, which in God's sight is very precious."

Holy women who hoped in God: A Christian woman does not put her hope in her husband, or in getting a husband. She does not put her hope in her looks. She puts her hope in the promises of God.

She is described in Proverbs 31:25

He is talking about women with unshakable biblical roots in the sovereign goodness of God.

Sarah obeyed Abraham: Sarah's respectful submission, calling Abraham "lord" even amid doubt—showing inner honor toward her husband, though her laughter reflected unbelief in God's promise

Do not fear anything that is frightening: This picture of Christian womanhood is evident first by hope in God and then what grows out of that hope is fearlessness. She does not fear the future; she laughs at the future.

What submission is not:

-Submission does not mean agreeing with everything your husband says. You can see that in verse one: she is a Christian and he is not.

-Submission does not mean leaving your brain or your will at the wedding altar. It is not the inability or the unwillingness to think for yourself. She is a woman who heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. She thought about it. She assessed the truth claims of Jesus. She held in her heart the beauty and worth of Christ and His work, and she chose Him. Her husband heard it also.

-Submission does not mean avoiding every effort to change a husband. The whole point of this text is to tell a wife how to “win” her husband.

-Submission does not mean putting the will of the husband before the will of Christ. The text clearly teaches that the wife is a follower of Jesus before and above being a follower of her husband.

-Submission does not mean that a wife gets her personal, spiritual strength primarily through her husband. A good husband should indeed strengthen and build up and sustain his wife. He should be a source of strength. But what this text shows is that when a husband’s spiritual leadership is lacking, a Christian wife is not absent of strength.

-Submission does not mean that a wife is to act out of fear.

-Submission does not follow a husband into sin.

1. What examples would you point to in our society to illustrate our obsession with outward appearance?
2. What is the challenge of being a wife? (3:1)
3. What qualities can a believing wife use to witness to an unbelieving husband? (3:1-2)
4. What kinds of beauty can a woman have? (3:3-4)
5. How can a godly woman make herself beautiful? (3:5)
6. Why is it easier to be beautiful on the outside rather than on the inside?
7. How can someone develop inner beauty as Peter described?

Understanding way: A husband should be a lifelong learner of his wife. The command includes any knowledge – general or specific – that teaches you how to love your wife better. You must study your wife for yourself. Spend time.

Listen carefully.

Pay attention.

Show concern.

Get involved.

Practice chivalry.

Encourage her.

Showing honor:

Proverbs 31:28-29

Weaker vessel: Peter does not specify in what way women are weaker than men. We can rule out several wrong conclusions.

Women are not weaker intellectually. We live in a country where women are more educated than men.

Women are not weaker emotionally. Women may express their feelings more than men. But that is not a sign of weakness.

Women are not weaker spiritually. The following clause of this verse makes it clear that husbands and wives are heirs together of the grace of life in Christ.

The most natural and necessary way to read this statement is that women are generally weaker than men physically. With exceptions, men are physically stronger than women. "Vessel" is used metaphorically in scripture for humanity or the body. "Weaker" is comparative. Men and women both are frail and finite but the woman is the "weaker vessel."

Heirs with you of the grace of life:

Peter appeals to husbands to love their wives based on our common salvation.

We are heirs of the grace of life. We are also heirs of the gift of life.

- You are saved by grace.
- You are sanctified by grace.
- You are strengthened by grace.
- You are servants by grace.
- You are secure by grace.

Ecclesiastes 9:9

Proverbs 18:22

Prayers may not be hindered:

Loving husbands pray for their wives.

Loving husbands pray with their wives.

God hearing and heeding our prayers is directly related to the way we love and serve and care for our wives.

You cannot ignore your wife and expect God to hear you.

Charles Bigg said, "The sighs of the injured wife come between the husband's prayers and God's hearing." How you treat your wife can hinder the practice of prayer.

- You will find it hard to pray to God for your wife.
- You will find it hard to pray to God with your wife.

- What is the role of the husband as seen in 3:7?
- Knowing that the wife is weaker physically, what should the husband do?
- In what aspects do you need to increase your understanding for your partner?
- What does this verse show us about the respective values of the husband and wife?
- What does this verse say the results of a husband dishonoring his wife would be?
- What does this show us about the importance of a healthy husband/wife relationship?
- What are five practical ways in which husbands can demonstrate both their willingness & abilities as "learners" of their wives?