



#1 In The Sojourners Series
Wives, Husbands, and Christ
Forest Park Church

April 5th 2024

By Jason Corder

1

Sojourners: A person who resides temporarily in a place.

I Peter 3:1-4

2 *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.*

Some of y'all are thinking, "Why did I invite my friend today? Of all days, this was the day I chose actually to reach out and invite someone to church."

There are three essential things to remember about this text this morning!!

1. First, this text doesn't endorse inequality. It has something to say about the equality of men and women, and it's very convicting.
2. Secondly, if you're not a believer or just visiting Forest Park today, it will give you an opportunity to see how we do things here. We do not step over challenging texts just because they are uncomfortable. We deal with truth head-on.
3. Thirdly, this is a passage about marriage, and I hope that the marriages at the Forest Park Church would be marriages that are flourishing.

- So, if you walked into this place and were honest with yourself and your marriage, you would say your marriage is not what you hoped it would be at this point, perfect, because this passage has the key to a better marriage.
- If you're not married but hope to be one day, this will help prepare you to be in a healthy marriage.
- If you're not married and have no plans to get married, this passage will help you be a better follower of Jesus Christ.

We're going to divide the message today into two sections.

1. The first section is an answer to the question... *What was happening then?*
 - It's a contextual question. I want us to understand why Peter wrote the words he did and what was happening in first-century Asia Minor at the time.
 -
2. The second question I want to answer is... *What's important now?* That's more of a theological and practical question. How does it inform what we believe and what we do?

3

I. What is Submission? (what it isn't as well)

So, let's start by answering the question...What was happening then? If we're not careful, we will tend to see all of Scripture through a 2024 American lens.

- If we're going to see this passage through that lens, then our only conclusion can be that this text is oppressive to women and men and women are unequal in value and dignity,

Gal 3:27-28

4

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave^[a] nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Peter is writing to a group of, primarily, Gentile believers who are experiencing persecution for their faith in Asia Minor.

- What we see happening in the church is that some women are putting their trust in Christ, and they are in pagan marriages.
- They have trusted Christ, but their husbands haven't.
- In Greco-Roman society, it was expected that a wife would have no friends of her own and carry her husband's religion.
- So, the fact that there are women who are putting their trust in Jesus in that society is an act of rebellion against the husband.

"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 when they see your respectful and pure conduct."

Some Christian wives might be asking the question, "Well, should I get out of my marriage because I'm a Christian?"

5

II. Wives and Husbands

Now let's answer the question... *What matters now?*

It's a theological and practical question.

Practical in that I find in this passage, we see the key to a better marriage.

So, if you want a better marriage, here's the one thing you need: *show Jesus in your marriage.*

That's it. If you want a better marriage...this is what this passage encourages us toward...show Jesus in your marriage.

Dallas Willard says discipleship is the process of becoming who Jesus would be if he were you.

- So, if you want a better marriage, then become the husband Jesus would be if he were you.
- Become the wife Jesus' example calls you to be.

Answer this question.

- What is one thing Jesus would do differently in your marriage if he were you?
- What's one thing he would change if he were you?

Fulfill your God-given role.

Peter says, "**Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands...**"

Now, this is where we have to navigate some rough waters.

What does it mean when Peter calls wives to be subject to or to submit to their husbands?

- We naturally carry a negative connotation with the idea of women submitting to men because we think it implies inequality.
- When Peter calls women to submit to their husbands, he says one way you will show Jesus in your marriage is by submitting to your husband.
- To submit to your husband is to recognize, welcome, and respond to his leadership in your marriage.

You might sit there and say, "How does submitting to my husband show Jesus in my marriage?"

6 **1 Corinthians 11:3** is key because Paul says this:

"But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God."

- The head of a wife is her husband,
- The head of Christ is God.

What Paul is speaking to is the role of the Godhead in salvation.

- God the Father was the one who envisioned the plan of salvation.
- God the Son, Jesus, was the one who submitted to the Father's plan and executed the plan of salvation.
- The Holy Spirit is the one who now works God's plan of salvation in our individual lives.

See, Jesus Christ was submitting to God the Father. He was recognizing, welcoming, and responding to God the Father's leadership.

On the night Jesus is betrayed, we find him in the garden of Gethsemane, and what does he pray? He says, "**Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.**"

7 Hebrews 12 tells us,

"...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

So, God, the Father's plan was to crush the Son.

- The Son knew that was the Father's plan.
- What did he do? He welcomed it.
- He responded to it.
- He submitted himself to the Father.
- When he went to the cross and hung on that cross, what were his final words? "It is finished."
- What was finished? Accomplishing the Father's plan of salvation.
- He was put in a tomb. On the third day, he walked out of it victoriously. Why? To make a way, through faith, for us to be reconciled to God.

So, wives, you need to understand when Peter calls you to submit to your husbands, he's calling you to show Jesus in your marriage through submission.

He is not calling you to do anything Jesus Christ hasn't done.

Now, this should be obvious, but it is worth stating.

- Was Jesus Christ the Son inferior to God the Father? Never.
- The doctrine of the Trinity states that there are three co-equal, co-eternal persons...God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- The Father and the Son were always equal, yet they had distinct roles. Jesus' role was to submit to the Father's will.

The same is true in marriage in that husbands and wives are equal in value and dignity, but husbands and wives have been given different roles and responsibilities.

What Peter is saying is, "Wives, your responsibility is to show Jesus through submitting to your husband." The question is... *What does it even look like?*

To be clear, it doesn't call women to submit to men; it calls wives to submit to husbands. Not *all* husbands...*your* husband.

- What does it look like for a wife to practically submit to her husband?
- The only way for me to unpack that helpfully is to explain what it looks like for a husband to fulfill *his* role in marriage, **which is to lead.**

Husbands, if wives are to show Jesus through submitting to your leadership, then your responsibility is to show Jesus in your marriage by leading.

8 Ephesians 5:23

"For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior."

So, what does it mean for a husband to be a leader of a wife?

- It is to bear the weight of accountability before God for cultivating a marriage and household that glorifies God.
- So, to be the leader in your home is to bear the weight of accountability before God for cultivating a marriage and household that glorifies God.

Men, when you hear that you're called to be a leader, don't think of it in terms of being in charge; think of it as being accountable to God for cultivating a marriage and household that glorifies him and prioritizes his will.

- Hearing that you are the leader should not evoke pride; it should most certainly evoke humility because a day will come when you will stand before God and answer for how you cultivated your marriage and your home.
- God cares about how we lead because as we lead, we are to show Christ in our marriages. What does Paul say in Ephesians 5? In verse 25, he says, "**Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...**"
- So, how did Christ love his bride, the people of God? He gave himself up. He died on the cross. He conquered death through his resurrection.

Here's what that means. It means, husbands, make sure you don't major in Ephesians 5:23 and minor in Ephesians 5:25.

- Don't major in "The husband is the head of the wife."
- but minor in "Love your wife as Christ loved the church and laid his life down for her."
- **Our leadership in marriage MUST be marked by selflessness, sacrifice, security, and service.**

I've never heard a wife complain about following a husband who is

- selfless,
- sacrificial,
- safe to be around,
- and service-oriented.

It's only when men assume the leader position but don't show Christ as they lead.

III. Let's get practical

So, what does it look like, practically, for a husband to lead in his marriage, and what does it practically look like for a wife to follow his lead?

Peter gets us. But as he continues, he packs a punch; one verse is all we need.

Verse 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^[a] of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.*

Godly leaders cultivate four things in their marriage.

- *intimacy,*
- *obedience,*
- *safety,*
- *and honor.*

10

A: Godly husbands cultivate *intimacy*.

"...live with your wives in an understanding way..."

- The phrase live with your wives is the idea of fostering intimate, close relationships.
- It's physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual intimacy.
- Husbands, it's our responsibility to take the lead in initiating closeness with our wives.

So,

- husbands, initiate date nights.
- Initiate quality conversations in the evenings with your spouse.
- Initiate times of prayer.
- Initiate physical intimacy.

This is what we are responsible to do.

Is it wrong for a wife to initiate these things as well? Not at all.

- There's no problem with a wife wanting to have a deep conversation in the evening.
- There's nothing wrong with a wife suggesting a date night. Those are all good things.

Husbands bear the weight and the responsibility of ensuring that it is happening. Be intentional.

My responsibility, as the husband, is to live with my wife in an understanding way.

I need to understand:

- what her dreams are,
- what her desires are,
- what her strengths are,
- what her weaknesses are,
- what's frustrating her,
- what's causing her anxiety,
- what causes her to flourish.

My responsibility is to initiate it.

Wives, as your husband initiates, it's going to feel clunky at times and awkward in moments, but to the best of your ability, with a lot of grace, **the best thing you can do is just lean in with him.**

Peter goes on, and what does he say?

"Live with your wife in an understanding way,"

- that phrase *understanding way* means according to knowledge.
- Knowledge of your spouse, yes,
- but primarily of God's will.

Your responsibility, as the leader and the husband, is to create an environment in your household that is according to the knowledge of God's will.

That means, husbands, it is our responsibility to treasure God's Word.

- to seek understanding about God's will for your marriage
- seek an understanding of God's will to parent your kids in a way pleasing to the Lord.
- To seek out an understanding of God's will regarding money.

What this means, men, is that we should prioritize seeking out older couples for wise counsel and reading books, and then starting conversations with our wives to get on the same page about how God's will will be sought in our homes, marriages, parenting, money, and on and on and on.

11

B: Cultivate Obedience To God

Think of it this way: Clarity From the Director:

In a movie, it is the role of the Director to understand the script, so clearly communicate with the principal players and actors division at the writer the script has given.

- So often, do you know where conflict arises? It's when there's a lack of clarity from the director.
- Husbands, if you're going to play the role of director, which I think is given to you by God, you need to make sure your wife knows what script you're working off of.
- Good directors make sure the actors can use their personalities to the fullest to flourish.
- One hundred percent of the time, we will not meet expectations that are not communicated.

Leading in marriage is not about sitting with your wife and saying, "This is where we're going. I need you to know. Here's the script. Act your part."

Marriage is about saying, "You know what? As I've been seeking the Lord, here's the script I think he's calling us toward as we parent and pursue one another in marriage. What do you see? Let's work together to make this story the best one possible."

You both want to seek God in his Word to see what his will is for every aspect of your marriage, but as husbands, it's our responsibility to make sure we're all on the same page.

12

B: Cultivate *safety*.

Did you see that awkward part of the verse where Peter said, "Showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel"?

God has wired men to be physically stronger than women.

That isn't always true. I've been in the gym and looked right and left, and there have been women with just as much weight on the bars as me....

But if you took 10 average men and 10 average women and they were to have a tug-of-war, the 10 average men are usually going to win in physical strength.

- So, what is Peter's point when he says, "Live with your wife in an understanding way, showing honor, knowing that she's the weaker vessel"?
- He's saying, "Do not ever bully your wife into submission."
- If you ever use your strength or your stature to intimidate your wife into submission. God has given you that strength to protect your wife.

Your responsibility is to create a home where your wife feels safe...physically safe, yes, but also emotionally safe.

- Our wives should feel safe coming to you and having conversations about the future, how you discipline your kids, or how the money is being spent.

- We want to create an environment where your wife feels valued and seen, like she has a voice, and that it's safe.

13

D: Cultivate a home with *honor*.

One of the best things we can show our sons or daughters is HONOR in the family!

"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."

"since they are heirs with you of the grace of life..."

Do you remember how I said at the beginning this passage speaks to equality, not inequality?

- It's because Peter refers to wives as co-heirs of the grace of God.
- It means we are brothers and sisters, and the same salvation husbands receive is the same salvation wives receive.
- The same death of Jesus on the cross for sin that counts for husbands counts for wives.
- It's the same sacrifice. It's the same grace. It's the same inheritance.
- We are all headed toward the same destiny.
- When we get to heaven, there's not going to be a husband section and a wife's section, and the husband's section is closer to the front than the wives.
- We will all be together as brothers and sisters, co-equal heirs, enjoying the grace of God.
- So, one of the best things you can do is honor your wife as someone who has sisterly status in the kingdom of God and is destined for the same eternity.

"So that your prayers may not be hindered."

- Don't expect God to act like everything is good when you are selfish, self-centered, arrogant, domineering, and controlling in your marriage.
- Don't expect for God to act like everything is good when you do things your way instead of God's way when you're more in tune with your wants than your spouse's needs."
- Husbands, our job as leaders is to make it easy for our wives to follow.

Wives, there are going to be times when you aren't thrilled with how he's directing the scene,

- But when you look at the overall story, is the plot of your story pointed toward Christ?
- It's okay to not sweat the small stuff because in marriage, we're going to have to extend a lot of grace to one another.
- It's going to be clunky sometimes. Leading is going to be clunky.
- Insecurity is going to creep in for us.

If you want to show Jesus in your marriage, then the first thing is to trust His God-given roles.

1

Conclusion:

Hope in God.

Peter finishes by saying, "Hey, look to Sarah, Abraham's wife. Even when marriage was tough or unpredictable, her hope was in God."

The reality is some of us would say we're in a tough place in our marriage right now, and if I were to pass around a microphone and ask, "Hey, what needs to change in your marriage for it to be healthy?" I wonder how many people would start their sentence,

"Well, if he would just..." "You know what? If she would just..."

Your hope is not in your spouse changing; your hope is in God sustaining and changing *you*. Hope in the Lord. Even on the toughest of days, hope in the Lord.

I hope that this morning, in some way:

Husbands, see your wife clearly for who she is.

- She's an heir with you.
- She's the recipient of the same grace, and she has been called by God to show Jesus through following.
- That's a huge responsibility.
- That's a tough responsibility.
- See her for who she is.
- Breathe life into her, and do everything in your power to help her flourish in the role God has given to her.

Wives, see your husband for who he is,

That he's an heir of the same grace, and he has been given a huge responsibility to lead in marriage,

- so see the responsibility God has given him.
- God will hold him accountable.
- Breathe life into him.
- Support him.
- Encourage him along the way.