

As we continue our study in 1 Peter we have seen some marvelous truths. We could spend a couple of weeks just reviewing what Peter has said concerning who he is writing to – the pilgrims of the dispersion, that is, those who had to flee their homes because of their faith in Christ.

He tells them – and we must not forget this, and us – that they can have joy despite their circumstances. He tells them that in spite of their sufferings they can have this joy because they have a place reserved in heaven for them – a place guaranteed for them by God Himself.

He summarizes all that God has done for them in his summary of who they are in 1 Peter 2:9-10 (READ). Again, this is an incredible description of who we are – we have been chosen by God Himself, we are a royal priesthood, in that we have direct and immediate access to God through the Lord Jesus Christ. We are a holy nation, we are separated from the world and the ways of the world, and we are a special people ... a peculiar people.

As a result of who we are he then begins a series of exhortation as to how we should act and react to the world around us, remembering always that we are just passing through on our way to heaven. He has told us how to live before the world, how to submit ourselves to the those in authority over us, and last week we saw how we should react to our suffering as Christians, in following the example of our Savior.

Today we get to one of the more controversial passages of scriptures concerning a wife's relationship to her husband. I begin by saying that the Bible has a lot to say about husbands and wives, most of which has been misinterpreted by 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Christians AND non-Christians.

Turn with me to 1 Peter 3:1-6 (READ). That first verse usually raises the eyebrows of women, to say the least. But we need to remember a few things. First, we cannot pick and choose what we want to believe and follow from God's Word. It really is all or nothing.

Second, we need to remember that God only wants the best for us – the very best. When He tells that we should be doing something or not doing something it is only because He knows what is best for us and wants the best for us.

Third, we need to recognize and understand the whole context of what is recorded for us in the Scriptures. Most of the time the misinterpretation comes about because people take things out of context and do what is called proof-texting – that is, they quote a verse or part of a verse and say that this proves what they want to prove.

Remember, one of the principles of Biblical interpretation is to compare Scripture with Scripture, The Scriptures are their own best interpreters – so in order to get to what their Scriptures are really teaching we cannot take them out of context.

So let's begin to look at what we have before us in 1 Peter 3. The first part of verse one is consistent with what the Scriptures teach in a wife's relationship to her husband – that she is to be submissive to her husband.

One thing that must be understood immediately is that this an active submission, not a passive submission. Again, as we compare Scripture with Scripture we read these words in Ephesians 5:22-24: "*Wives, submit to*

*your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.”*

There are those that might say, wait a minute – wives are to submit to their husbands? And the answer is yes, but notice the caveat – *as to the Lord*. As we are all to submit to the Lord, wives are to submit to their husbands.

We know that as Christians the Lord has done great things for us – He has given us salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the privilege of prayer, a place reserved in heaven for us, and all the blessings of our salvation. Therefore, in response to this we are to submit to Him and His Word. Wives are likewise to do the same. As we are all to submit to Christ as the head of the church, wives are to submit to their husbands as head of the home.

But notice clearly that while God asks the wife to do what is very hard, He asks the husband to do what is even harder. As we go on in Ephesians 5:25-28 we read: *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.”*

Again, notice clearly, and I cannot emphasize this strongly enough, that while God asks the wife to do something very hard and to submit to her husband, He asks the husband something even harder – that the husband be willing to die for his wife – *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her*.

While God asks the wife to submit to their husbands, He also says that the husband follow the example of Christ, and be willing to die for her. So again, take the whole of Scripture in context – God asks of the wife something hard – to submit to her husband, but He asks of the husband to be willing to die for his wife. You don’t usually hear this part from the feminists!

But it does not end there – as we read: *So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself*. I find it very interesting the nowhere – nowhere – not in one place is the wife commanded to love her husband. However, the husband is commanded to love his wife. The husband is commanded to love his wife as he loves himself – and he must be willing to give his life for her, as Christ gave his life for the church – that is, US!

Christ gave his life for us – and so, the husband is to be willing to give his life for his wife....

Then, however, as we get to our passage, we find a number of things. First, we see that Peter is speaking to those wives who are married to unbelieving husbands. And notice clearly that the reason Peter tells the wives to submit is so that they can be a witness to their unbelieving husbands.

This witness is to come from within, not externally. The witness is to come from their chaste conduct and not from the way that they dress. In other words, a wife is not to preach to her husband, but by her life and submission to him be a witness to the work of Christ in her life. Again look at what Peter says: *“they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.*

*Do not let your adornment be merely outward; arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel; rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”*

Now, it must be clearly stated that when both Peter and Paul tells women to submit to their wives, they are not implying that they are inferior, or of less value than men. In the verse that we will look at next week, Peter tells us that both men and women are joint heirs of the grace of life. 1 Peter 3:7 says: *“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”*

In Galatians 3:28 we read: *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

In Christ, we are all one, but in the home there can be only one head. This submission is based on the order of creation. In 1 Timothy 2:11-15, we read words that are generally ignored today: *“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.”*

Again, notice that it is based on the order of creation. This, by the way, is why we do not believe that there should be women clergy. Not that women are in any way inferior, but because in God’s economy, this is what He has ordained.

So, as we think of what God says in His Word, let us not let society or the world define how we interpret the Scriptures. Remember always that God only wants the best for us. And as we follow Him and His word we will have true joy and contentment.