

The Glory of Marriage

The Apostle Peter writes in 1 Peter 3:1, “...wives, be subject to your own husbands.” This is a topic that most people in Western culture would say is irrelevant and out of touch.

But this verse is only contentious because the more we drift from Biblical morality and authority, the more foreign and out of date the Bible seems to be.

God designed marriage for healthy families and society.

Another similar passage relating to marriage is found in Ephesians 5, where Paul writes that the real purpose of marriage is to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church (see Ephesians 5:32).

The Pattern of Marriage

In the Bible, headship or rulership is not defined by authoritarian style leadership, but rather by Christlike sacrifice (see Ephesians 5:25).

In the Garden of Eden, men and women were given dominion over the animals, but they were never given dominion over each other. Headship in a marriage does not refer to power, but rather responsibility – responsibility to lead and be accountable for the spiritual direction of the family.

Wives are called to submit to their husband’s leadership, but husbands are called to daily give their lives for their wives, preferring them over themselves.

“Headship is not dictatorship, but the loving exercise of divine authority under the lordship of Jesus Christ” – Warren Wiersbe.

It is important to point out that for a wife to submit to the authority of her husband does not mean that she must submit to abuse. Abuse of any kind has no place in marriage or society. The Bible does not encourage us to ignore or cover over abuse.

But healthy submission to godly leadership is God’s design for a healthy marriage. It does not mean that the wife is inferior to the husband (see 1 Peter 3:7). Husbands and wives are called to be partners, not competitors.

The Unbelieving Spouse

In verse 1, Peter encourages women who are married to unbelievers to conduct their lives in a manner that would win their husbands to Christ.

In the Roman empire, women had a very low position, but the church was growing, and many women were beginning to understand their value in the kingdom of God.

Many of these women were married to unbelievers, and they were trying to figure out how to live with their unbelieving husband. The Bible clearly states that a believer should not marry an unbeliever (see 2 Corinthians 6:14). As a follower of Jesus, he is the most important relationship in your life. To marry an unbeliever will lead to pain and heartache.

However, if you are married to an unbeliever, Peter writes that you have an opportunity to win over your spouse to Christ, not by preaching or arguing, but by your lifestyle. The character of the believing wife will win her husband over, and the qualities of her character must be the fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23).

This applies to all our witnessing for Christ. People are not brought to the point of conversion because of our good arguments; rather, as we proclaim the Gospel and live a lifestyle that displays the fruit of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit draws the unbeliever to salvation.

The Beauty of the Heart

In verses 3 to 5, Peter writes about the way women were relying on external adorning, such as jewelry and fine clothing, to look beautiful. Peter warns the Christian wives to not be too focused on external decorations, but rather on internal character (see 1 Peter 3:4).

The Bible says internal beauty is imperishable. Some of the most beautiful people in the world are the elderly who poignantly exhibit the beauty and the character of Christ. That is precious in God's sight.

In verse 5, Peter writes that this inner adorning is part of submitting to one's husband. Things that align with God's original design are beautiful.

The Fearlessness of Submission

The submission Peter calls wives to is willing submission, not unhealthy subjection out of fear of punishment or abuse. A woman who is subjected to an unhealthy relationship, who walks in fear, loses some of her inner beauty and joy.

In a healthy God-honoring marriage, the wife should not need to walk in fear of abuse in the marriage or fear of external threats to the home. God calls men to protect and lead their families in such a way that their wives do not fear such threats.

The Godly Husband

In verse 7, Peter addresses believing husbands and gives them three instructions;

1: Live with your wives in an understanding way

This is more than simply sharing the same address; it is being present at home, spending quality time as a couple, "*in an understanding way*".

There was a recent survey that revealed that the average American couple spends 37 minutes a week in actual communication. No wonder so many marriages are in trouble.

You can never understand someone unless you make the effort to spend time with them and even disagree with them at times. Marriages will not grow without wrestling through what makes us different.

2: Show honor to the weaker vessel

Chivalry is not outdated. Women are usually weaker physically, but not in any way inferior mentally, morally, and spiritually.

Giving honor is showing respect, preferring your wife. This does not mean you have to always agree, but you must listen to and respect her opinion.

3: Unhindered prayers

Peter assumes that men are praying. Men, your primary responsibility in the home is to lead and to shepherd your home in the ways of the Lord.

If you are not praying together as a family, it is your responsibility. If you are not leading your family to pray, you are neglecting your duty. This is critical and probably the primary reason why Christian marriages are struggling.

The Mystery of Marriage

Marriage is designed to proclaim the Gospel. It is a mystery. God ordained marriage, and He desires for us to proclaim the beauty of the Gospel through our marriage.