1 Peter 3:1-7

Key verse 3:7

*“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”*

Introduction: From chapter two Peter began to address Christian submission; submission to every human authority (2:13), submission of slaves to masters (2:18) and now submission of wives to husbands (3:1), as well as later submission of God’s flock to elders or shepherds (5:5) and shepherds to the Chief Shepherd. The prime example of Christian submission was set by Jesus Chirst himself (2:21-23). Christian submission is the appropriate response to sufferings, even sufferings for doing good. When Christians submit to God and all the authorities established by God, they promote unity within church and extend peace and salvation to the world. In today’s passage, Peter commands wives to submit to their husbands and husbands to be considerate and respectful of their wives in order for them to make a partnership as heirs of eternal life and extend God’s kingdom through their prayers.

1. Read verses 1-2. On what basis should wives to submit to their husbands? (1a, 2:13, 2:18) How can a believing wife win over an unbelieving husband? (1b-2)

*Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,* ***2*** *when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.*

1. Wives should submit to their husband on the basis of Peter’s prior commands. Here, Peter began with the words *“wives, in the same way”*, referring the reader back to the previous passages. Back in 2:13 Peter issued a general command for Christian submission, saying *“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority.”* Peter followed this with a specific command for slaves 2:18, saying, *“Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters in everything*.” Now, he followed that with a specific command for wives, saying, *“Wives … submit yourselves to your own husbands”* (3:1). Submission to every human authority, of slaves to masters and wives to husbands is all for the Lord’s sake. Wives submitting to husbands is for the Lord’s sake, because the Lord placed the husband in a position of authority within the family. When wives submit to their husbands they submit to the Lord, and give glory and honor to God who created the family with an internal order. Genesis says, *“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them”* and *“Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being”* and *“Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man”* (Gen 1:27, 2:7, 22). Before creating the woman, God gave the man His absolute command not to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God’s command must be a spiritual compass to lead his upcoming family with God’s absolute authority. God then provided him with her as a suitable helper. Later in Genesis 3, Adam named her “Eve” that she would become the mother of all the living. We may have several clues from Genesis that God set a clear order in the first human family. Of course, it is not easy for wives to submit to their husbands. It involves humility and may include sufferings, especially when the husband is an unbeliever or acting in an unbelieving manner. But, wives can submit to their husbands for the sake of the Lord through following Jesus’ example (2:21-23).
2. A believing wife can win over an unbelieving husband, not with words, but with behavior; through the purity and reverence of their lives. Actions speak louder than words. If a wife tries to teach their husband through words, it might be perceived as nagging. Instead of winning them over, they might end up causing them to close his heart and become more rebellious. On the other hand, A life of reverence and purity is not easy, but sets a powerful example that is hard to argue with. When an unbelieving husband can find no basis to blame his wife, he can be ready to repent. This is the same as for any unbeliever or pagan as Peter has already stated, “Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us”, “For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people” (2:12, 15).
3. Read verses 3-6. Where should a woman’s beauty come from? (3-4) Why is this of great worth to God? What example did the holy women of the past, like Sarah set? (4-5) How can women be like daughters of Sarah?

***3*** *Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes.* ***4*** *Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.* ***5*** *For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands,* ***6*** *like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.*

1. A woman’s beauty should come from a gentle and quiet spirit. This is the type of beauty that is recognized by God, and pleases God. It does not come from outward adornments but from God. The world judges a woman’s beauty by outward things; such as hair, clothes, jewelry, makeup, skin, body shape, etc. But God sees what is on the inside--the spiritual beauty of a spiritual woman. A spiritual woman is truly beautiful from the inside out. Their beauty may be ignored by the world, but God sees it. A spiritual man can also see it and an unspiritual man should repent and see it too. The author of Proverbs(31) wrote, “A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. 11 Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. 12 She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. She is clothed with strength and dignity...30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.”
2. The beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit is of great worth because it is the unfading beauty of a transformed soul. It is the lasting beauty of an inner person remade in the image of Jesus Christ. God the Creator is the originator and source of lasting beauty. Apart from Him, all beauty is fading at best, and can easily become an idol. When Adam and Eve had a perfect relationship with God and with one another, they could freely enjoy all the beautiful things God had made. But when they sinned and lost that relationship, they became ugly from the inside and all the beautiful looking things lost their true value. Worldly people still place value on all the outwardly beautiful things, and do not value the inner beauty that comes from God. They do not value the gentle and quiet spirit or of a submissive woman. But it is the beauty from God that God sees inside that matters, because only that beauty is lasting.
3. The holy women of the past, like Sarah adorned themselves by submitting to their own husbands. Sarah submitted to Abraham by obeying him and calling him Lord. Here, Peter inserted the words “... put their hope in God …” These holy women put their hope in God, not in their husbands. Their obedience to their husbands was because of their struggle to obey God. In the case of Sarah, she could have easily looked at her husband’s weaknesses. In Genesis, Abraham lied that Sarah was not his wife (Gen 12:10-20, 20:2-7). He lied about it even after they had been married for many, many years. He lied, not just once but twice. He even told Sarah to lie about it and she had to obey him. Moreover, Abraham’s reason for lying was out of fear to save his own skin. As a result of his lie, he caused his wife Sarah a lot of trouble and pain. Sarah was even taken away, so that Abraham almost caused his wife to sin by sleeping with another man. In this way, Abraham’s lie could have potentially destroyed their marriage if not for God’s intervention. But, even though all of this, Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him Lord, because her hope was in God, not in her husband.
4. Wives can be daughters of Sarah if they do what is right and do not give into fear. Here to do what is right is equated with obedience, while the reason given for disobedience is fear. Wives can do what is right by submitting to and obeying their husbands, for the sake of God and because their hope is in God. The fear that leads to disobedience is to think that human beings (or husbands) are in control, rather than God being in control. This fear is understandable, because a husband is likely to abuse his position and power and cause his wife a lot of pain and suffering at times. It is because of this that some women even do not want to get married. This fear is understandable and natural, but it doesn’t mean that wives have to *give in* to this fear. Daughters of Abraham are called to overcome this fear. In Romans, Abraham is called the father of faith (Rom 4:16). But here, Sarah is revealed as the mother of faith. For wives to submit to and obey their husbands, they should have faith like Sarah.
5. Read verse 7. How should husbands treat their wives? (7) Why should they treat them as such?

**7** Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

1. Husbands should be considerate of their wives and treat them with respect. This command could also be based on prior commands. Previously, Peter stated “Show proper respect to everyone …” (1 Peter 2:17). Wives are due proper respect from their husbands. For husbands to properly respect their wives, they need to first respect themselves. In the passage from chapter two, Peter basically started out with the words “... abstain from sinful desires …” and then finished with “... show proper respect to everyone …” (1 Peter 2:11-17). In order to respect his wife, the first thing a husband should do is to abstain from sinful desires. Then, as he respects himself before God, he can also respect his wife. When a husband respects his wife, he will be considerate of her; considerate of her physical and spiritual needs, considerate of her thoughts and feelings, considerate of her viewpoint, opinions and suggestions. Just because a wife should submit to her husband, doesn’t mean that a husband doesn’t have to listen to his wife. A good husband listens to his wife and considers her input carefully before God. He wants to please God, but also please his wife in accordance with God’s will.
2. Husbands should be considerate of their wives and treat them with respect, because they are the weaker partner, they are heirs with them of the gracious gift of life and so that nothing will hinder their prayers.
   1. First, husbands should be considerate of their wives and treat them with respect, because they are the weaker partner. In using the words “weaker partner”, Peter emphasized that this is a partnership. It is not a dictatorship, but a partnership. Wives may be weaker in terms of position of authority within the household, but they are no less important and are equality valued in the sight of God. It doesn’t mean that husbands are stronger spiritually or have a special gift of leadership over their wives. It is merely a matter of their positions assigned by God for the purpose of glorifying God. Simply put, husbands are called to love and serve their wives as Christ loved the church, and wives are called to submit to their husband as the church submits to Christ (Eph 5:24-25). In this way, their partnership reveals to the world.
   2. Second, husbands should be considerate of their wives and treat them with respect, because they are heirs with them of the gracious gift of life. Husbands and wivers are called to make a beautiful partnership for serving the Lord. As such, husbands must recognize the importance and value of their wives Their wives are mutual heirs of the gift of life and of the kingdom of God. Therefore, they are equal in the sight of God and share the same mission. Husbands should never take advantage of their position of authority. They should never treat their wives as slaves, but treat them as fellow heirs. They are called to form a beautiful co-working ralationship. They are heirs together, so they must work together as equals.
   3. Husbands should be considerate of their wives and treat them with respect, so that nothing will hinder their prayers. When husbands value their wives as heirs together of God’s kingdom and don’t take advantage of their weakness in terms of position of authority, then the two can pray together with one mind and heart. Amen!

**One word: Heirs together of the gracious gift of life.**