

**Slide 1**

# **The Difference That Christ Makes In Our Marriages**

## **1 PETER 3:1-7**

### **Introduction**

1. You and I live in a society that values individual rights.
2. As a matter of fact, we are often encouraged to stand up for our rights and even fight back when we believe we have been wronged.
3. Time and again we are urged to pursue self-fulfillment. It is considered a virtue.
4. Those who live in an unfulfilled or difficult marriage are exhorted to leave, get out, do whatever they have to do to find personal happiness.
5. In this letter which we have been studying for the last few weeks, the apostle Peter challenges us to be living examples of the life to which God has called us.
6. We are to be known for our honorable behavior and our good deeds (2:12).
7. We are to submit ourselves to every human authority which God has placed over us, always doing what is right (2:15).
8. Our servant heart is to be seen even in the workplace, especially when we are working under employers and supervisors whom Peter describes as “unjust,” “harsh” and “cruel” (2:18).
9. In Colossians 3:23, the apostle Paul said that in whatever we do, you and I are to “do our work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.”
10. In our text this morning, Peter turns to our marriages and how we as husbands and wives are to respond to our spouses.
11. Twice, he uses the phrase, “in the same way” (3:1, 7) pointing back to our submission to human authorities which God has placed over us and especially

to the example of Christ's submission to His Father's will (2:21-24).

12. Many in our culture would look at the verses which make up our text this morning and say that what Peter is requiring of us is antiquated and out of step with modern culture.
13. It is oppressive, chauvinistic, and does not even deserve to be considered.
14. However, if we are willing to examine these verses with an open mind I think we will find sound advice to make our marriages stronger and more Christlike.

## Slide 2

### I. A Word To Wives

#### A. THE FIRST CENTURY FAMILY DYNAMIC

1. In the world in which Peter's readers lived, a woman had few rights.
2. A married woman was expected to accept her husband's religion.
3. She dared not make any decision of consequence independent of her husband.
4. If she became a Christian without his approval, she was viewed as being insubordinate.
5. He could do plenty to make her life miserable.
6. In these first few verses, Peter gives instruction on how Christian women could live with their unbelieving husbands in a way that would make the Christian faith attractive.

## Slide 3

#### B. A SERMON WITHOUT WORDS

"In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior." (1 Peter 3:1-2, NASB95)

1. Notice what Peter does not say.

- a. He does not advise a wife to leave her husband under these circumstances — she is the Lord’s best hope for reaching her husband with the gospel.
- b. He does not encourage her to argue and nag — that would have the opposite effect of what our Lord would like to see happen.

“It is better to live in a corner of the roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman” (Proverbs 21:9; 25:24, NASB95)

#### Slide 4

2. The apostle Paul had something similar to say in his first letter to the believers in Corinth (1 Corinthians 7:13-16).

<sup>13</sup>“And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. <sup>14</sup>For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.” (1 Corinthians 7:13-14, NASB95)

<sup>15</sup>Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace. <sup>16</sup>For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?” (1 Corinthians 7:15–16, NASB95)

- a. Wives, Paul says that both your husband and your children are “sanctified” and “holy” through your presence.
- b. They are prospects for conversion through your influence.

#### Slide 5

3. We have heard what Peter does not say. What is it that he says?
  - a. Be submissive to your husbands (v. 1)
    - 1) Submitting to your husband in a loving and selfless way, may open his heart to the very faith which you profess.

- 2) It may also serve to break down any barriers of prejudice or hostility that he has put up.

**5a**

- b. Be pure (chaste) in your behavior (v. 2a)
  - 1) You are morally pure.
  - 2) Your husband won't have any reason to distrust you.
  - 3) You don't use deception or dishonesty to get your own way.

**5b**

- c. Show respect for your husband (v. 2b)
  - 1) Avoid any unnecessary offense.
  - 2) Don't point out his shortcomings when it comes to the faith you uphold.
4. A godly life speaks louder for Christ than any argument you may make with your words.

**Slide 6****C. THE BEAUTY OF A SPIRITUALLY ADORNED LIFE**

“Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.” (1 Peter 3:3–4, NASB95)

1. Ladies, Peter isn't saying that you should neglect your outward appearance, but that your emphasis should be on your inner person.
2. He isn't saying “don't braid your hair,” “don't wear any gold jewelry” and “don't put on any dresses”!
3. What he is saying is that the emphasis in your life should be upon those qualities of character which are imperishable.
4. Your physical beauty will eventually fade as you age, but “a gentle and quiet spirit” is eternal.

5. Inner beauty is attractive, even to an unbelieving husband — it only serves to enhance your outward appearance.
6. God's desire is that you as a Christian wife should live with your unbelieving husband so that he is attracted to Christ by your beautiful behavior.

**Slide 7**

7. This is the way that Peter said the women "used to adorn themselves" "in former times" (vv. 5-6).

"For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear." (1 Peter 3:5-6, NASB95)

- a. The one time we find Sarah calling Abraham, "lord," is when she was eavesdropping on the conversation between Abraham and the angels prior to the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah (Genesis 18:12).

"Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"" (Genesis 18:12, NASB95)

- b. To her, Abraham was not "the old man," but her master, her lord.
- c. There is no indication that Sarah was a party to any other conversation which took place between Abraham and God, but she calmly and quietly submitted to him and followed him wherever God directed.
- d. For this reason, she is an example of godly submission to each of us.

**Slide 8**

## II. A Word To Husbands

"You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered." (1 Peter 3:7, NASB95)

**A. "LIVE WITH YOUR WIVES IN AN UNDERSTANDING WAY"**

1. Men, we and our wives are "partners" in an arrangement created for the glory of God.
2. We are to live with our wives in a way which brings about the glory which God deserves.
3. Peter says that we are to live with our wives "in an understanding way, as with someone weaker."
4. He doesn't mean that she is weaker to us spiritually or intellectually, but physically.
5. To live with her in an understanding way is to know her needs, to recognize her nature and feelings.

**Slide 9**

6. Paul had something to say about this in his letter to the believers in Ephesus:

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her," (Ephesians 5:25, NASB95)

"So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body." (Ephesians 5:28-30, NASB95)

7. Let your wife know that she is precious to you.
8. Never forget that you have an obligation to protect and care for her.
9. Just as our Lord never acted in an unloving way toward His bride (i.e., the church), so we must guard our conduct toward our wives.

**Slide 10****B. "SHOW HER HONOR AS A FELLOW HEIR OF THE GRACE OF LIFE"**

1. To honor someone is to attribute value to them.

2. To dishonor someone is to view them as having little value, lesser value or no value.
3. Remember the excellent wife of which we read in Proverbs 31 ?

**Slide 11**

4. Her husband praised her in person and before the elders of the land (Proverbs 31:29, 23, 31).

“Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all.” (Proverbs 31:29, NASB95)

“Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.” (Proverbs 31:23, NASB95)

“Give her the product of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.” (Proverbs 31:31, NASB95)

5. Share the illustration “8 Cow Wife” by Patricia McGerr
5. There are two reasons which Peter gives as to why we men should honor our wives:
  - a. She is “a fellow heir of the grace of life” (v. 7)
    - 1) You and your wife have both been “born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).
    - 2) You both long for that “inheritance” which is “reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4).
    - 3) You want to do everything as her husband to help her reach her goal.
  - b. We will keep our prayers from being hindered — “so that your prayers will not be hindered” (v. 7).
    - 1) If we neglect the loving and considerate attention to our wives’ needs that God expects us to show, He will not hear our prayers.
    - 2) Men, you do not want God to close the door on your prayers

because you are failing to honor your wife.

## **Conclusion**

1. All around us today there is tremendous pressure being put upon marriage as God has designed it.
2. We desperately need more relationships like the one which Peter has described for us in our text today.
3. Children need to see these kinds of marriages being lived out before them on a daily basis.
4. Such marriages will also strengthen the church.
5. Are you living within your marriage as Peter exhorts you to live?
6. If not, please ask God to forgive you and ask your spouse to help you be the person God wants you to be.