

A Key Duty for Christian Wives 1 Peter 3:1-2

Introduction – A powerfully submissive Christian Wife

Dividing 1 Peter 3:1-6: Ray Stedman saw two parts,
1) A Christian wife's *duty* and 2) A Christian wife's *beauty*.

The theme behind 3:1-6 began at 1 Pe 2:11. Directing the Christians living in first century Mediterranean Asia how to maintain a credible Christian witness in a world that views Christians as social aliens.

The household was regarded as the key to social stability.

That was why exhortations about submission to civil authorities were followed by teaching on proper conduct in the home.

When a married woman accepted Christ, it could be a culturally explosive situation.

1. The Christian Wife's Key to Marital Harmony and Spiritual Influence—Submission, 3:1

"in the same manner" – looking back to Peter's call for slaves to submit to their masters and Jesus' submission to unjust suffering, chapter 2:18-25.

Submission is to a *position* more than to a *person*.

For Godly Christian wives, submission is motivated by reverence for authorities established by God and concern for confirming the gospel.

2. Why Some Wives find Submission Difficult, Genesis 3:16, 4:7. *Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you.*

Why "desire" in Gen 3:16 does not mean a natural passionate yearning for a husband's attention, affection, and protection.

A. The statement by God is clearly given in the context of judgment.
Desire for companionship is God's design, not a curse.

B. Adam's reaction "rule over" does not fit with the desire for companionship.

C. The closest contextual use of the same Hebrew word for "desire" is Gen 4:7 where it means desire *to dominate*.

Rather than trying to thwart his will through manipulation or scheming, a submissive wife will seek to discover what her husband wants and do it to please him, as long as it doesn't involve disobedience to God.

3. The goal of a wife's submission: "that they may be won"

"Even if some disobey" assumes the probability that some Christian women have unsaved husbands.
But their "disobeying" tells us they have heard the message.

4. The way to winning an unsaved Husband—"without words".

"Without a word" means *without talking*.

Men who are not ready to submit their lives to Christ are not usually open to evangelizing talk from their wives.

This does not mean she is never to speak, but that she must not nag about spiritual things.

5. The way to winning an unsaved Husband—by a pure and reverent demeanor, verse 2.

A godly wife's conduct will be more influential than anything she may say.

Peter describes conduct that is morally upright, spiritually reverent, and respectful to proper authority.

This kind of conduct would be recognized by most husbands and most communities as acceptable even if it was not supportive of the traditional religions of the time.

Conclusion

- 1) A wife's submission is necessary in order that the man might be a man and the family not suffer from leadership conflict or paralysis.
- 2) Subjection is also necessary for a woman to be a woman.
No woman growing in Christian grace and principles is going to be content taking the role of her husband.
- 3) How far must submission go? The answer is "in the same way".
Back to Jesus' example in 2:21-23. Christ submitted to the Father in accepting the mission the Father had given him.

In practice submission means the wife is to agree to and help her husband succeed in his leadership responsibility particularly when he is striving to follow Christ's lead in his decision making.