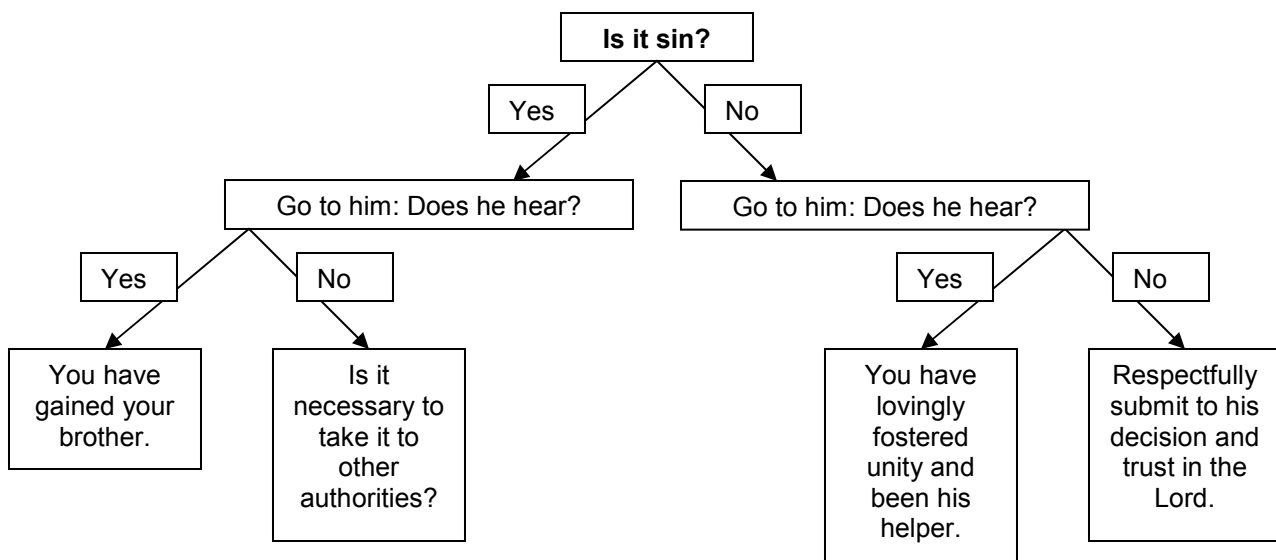


**Introduction:** In previous weeks have considered the wife as helper and her submission within that role to the husband.

- She should see her fundamental role as a helper of her husband who in the family has the highest level of responsibility. In the role, she submits to him understanding he is ultimately accountable for decisions made.
- Out of some discussion with a family last week, another point was highlighted in my mind. Only to submit to HIS expectations, not to hers, Christian writers, pastors, parents, etc.
- The question arises, "What if the husband does something or asks something that the wife disagrees with?" There are a multitude of specific instances, but I would like to work through a passage that addresses the general principle to answer this question: 1Peter 3:1-6
- We see the same general instruction as Paul gives, **Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands**. We saw last week that this means a voluntary recognition of God's ordained structure within the home, and wife putting herself under her husband's authority. This is to be "in everything" that is within his sphere of responsibility that is not sin.
- At this point there is a scenario envisioned in regards to what can happen in such a relationship. It is **That even if some do not obey the word**. This text most likely refers to a husband who is not a Christian. The reason for this interpretation is what is said in 1Pet2:8. (Gk. Apeitheo). This word is used 14x in the NT as a verb and 6x as adjective and every time is used for unbelievers. (Note: The mark of the unbeliever is that they are disobedient to the Word of God, and the mark of the believer is that they are obedient). So here is a "worse case scenario", a Christian wife living with an unbelieving husband. Nevertheless, she is still instructed to be submissive. Because he is not a Christian does not negate his position and responsibility before the Lord, nor her responsibility to be submissive.
- As we follow the rest of what Peter writes, I want to say that I believe that what is said in this passage also has application to a wife with her converted husband. There may be particular areas of his disobedience to the Word.
- He says that there is a power force and influence in how the wife responds to her husband. That **They, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives**. I have often been asked by a wife "So does that mean I can't do anything?" My answer is no, you must do something that is quite influential and powerful when blessed by God. For many women, the natural response will be to try to win her husband with the amount of her words. She is tempted to keep talking, keep speaking with the sincere desire to see him converted and obedient. But this isn't what God directs.
- Rather, her influence is to be a certain kind of conduct. The word translated "conduct" (Gk. Anastrophay) means manner of life or constant pattern. This isn't a single act or a few acts, but rather a whole way of life. This conduct is first "chaste" (Gk. hagnos). It is a woman living in purity and holiness as defined by the Word of God. This is to be done in a spirit of "fear." As we saw last week, this is a disposition of respect for his position and responsibility. The wife realizes that (even an unconverted husband) is responsible before the Lord.
- The goal is seen in that "he may be won." This applies either to the unconverted husband or to the husband that is disobedient in some specific area.
- One of the things this highlights is a wife's need to avoid being accused of being "contentious." This is found in several passages in Proverbs, specifically to a woman (21:9 21:19 25:24 27:15). The word means to quarrel. You can see there the theme of something continual and repeated. This is something that even the sincere Christian woman can become. How so? By repeating something over and over to try to motivate the husband to finally give up and say "OK." This is seen in Prov26:21, where it is likened to wood and fire. To keep adding fuel.
- As a helper, one of the things she does is seek to help. This includes not merely doing things he asks, but also giving counsel. We've seen previously that "the law of wisdom is on her lips."
- So what is she to do? Once she has communicated to him (which I assume she has the right and responsibility respectfully to do), she has fulfilled her responsibility. She is not in an authority position, needing to keep reminding him (as she would a child).
- This can be done with respectful or disrespectful attitude. She should not use sarcasm or cutting remarks. Her responsibility is to use a "gentle tongue" Proverbs 25:15.
- Peter goes on with further instruction. There is a positive and a negative part.
- First, the negative: **Do not let your adornment be merely outward -- arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel**. As she seeks to please God in the marriage, her focus is not to be on her outward appearance. We live in an "image obsessed" culture, and sadly women are tempted to spend more time on their outward appearance than their inward character. Proverbs 31:30 reminds us that outward beauty is fading. This doesn't mean that a woman should be indifferent to the care of her outward person (even for the benefit of her husband), but that that is not to be the focus.
- Second, the positive: **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**. The focus here is on her personal inward character that is reflected in her conduct. This is a beauty that is not corruptible (unlike the previous), but is enduring and can increase with age. This beauty is of a gentle and quiet spirit. This doesn't mean that she is an introvert or never speaks. This is the disposition of her "spirit." The first word means "humble, kind, or meek." It carries the idea of a mild and friendly disposition. It is used 3 other times in the NT (Mt5:5 11:29 21:5) for those who will inherit the earth

and 2 times for Jesus. The second word means "peaceful, tranquil, at rest." This is the opposite of a woman who is always in a tumult, upset, boisterous. This has the special blessing of the Lord, in that it is precious (rare) in the sight of God. God sees that inward disposition, and is pleased. When a woman has this kind of disposition before the Lord, she will manifest it towards her husband.

- There is a historical reference in vv.5-6. The holy women, and especially Sarah, reflected this attitude even with imperfect husbands. In doing so, there is not only the absence of one thing, but the demonstration of another: **Trust in God**.
- Let me give a basic layout of these principles and others to suggest how a wife should think about how to work through a situation. There is a disagreement between her and her husband. Perhaps it is a financial decision, regarding entertainment, something he is doing, or a host of other things. (qualify that this is VERY generic).
- Discern whether this is an issue of sin, or of preference. Sin is a transgression of or lack of conformity to the Word of God.
- If sin, then go to him with the Word and express concern. If he won't repent, then ask if it something necessary to take above him? She is not only under his authority, but also of the church and civil authorities. Where an issue of breaking the law, it may be necessary to tell the civil authorities. When it is an issue of sin, she has the right to speak to his spiritual authority. He does not have the right to say "don't tell anyone." Wise leadership will bring wisdom and discernment into the situation.
- If it is an issue of preference or wisdom, respectfully express your perspective (husbands, you should be seeking your wife's input because she is your God-appointed helper and you are to dwell with in an understanding way). If you do not change his mind, you have done what God calls you to do.
- If he makes a decision you disagree with, submit to him in conjunction with trusting in the Lord. Do this with a gentle and quiet spirit, for this pleases God. Pray for him, and trust God to teach him if he is wrong or if this is a bad decision. If you don't do this, you are adding sin to the situation and it will only bet worse.
- If the matter turns out for the worse (you were right and he was wrong), then you are called to graciously help and support, not to say "I told you so." It is the hope that he will grow through this as God deals with him.
- Be sure in all of this to ask yourself what you are communicating to the children. You want it said of you "She does him good, and not evil, all the days of her life (Prov31:12).



- These principles go not only for the wife, but anyone in a subordinate position (employee, children, church members, etc.).