

# Beauty Tips: How to Attract a Man to God

## Wives and Husbands Part 1

1 Peter 3:1-3 11-3-2012 & 11-4-2012

Summary: Wives should submit in order to have the kind of beauty that can win a man's heart, not to her, but to Christ. This is done not through external adornment or words, but through four beauty tips. The first is submission. Learn to see the beauty and goodness of submission, follow the example of Sarah the supermodel of submissive, soul-winning beauty; let your submission be driven by an attitude of respect and honor and being truly impressed with your husband, and you will have the unfading beauty that will not only have power to win your husband to Christ, but that is also of great worth in God's sight.

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**1 Peter 3:1 Wives, in the same way be submissive to your 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. 3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. 4 Instead, 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 make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. 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

For many years, the feminist movement tried to convince women not to concern themselves with beauty. They said it's demeaning.

“Why spend all kinds of time and money and energy and effort into making yourself attractive just for the enjoyment of some man? Why should you turn yourself into an object to be ogled and objectified and dehumanized? Just go ahead and be ugly, and try to feel good about yourself anyway.”

But even after decades of preaching that message, their effort was a complete failure. And if you doubt that, just look at how many billions of dollars women spend every year on fashion, makeup, hairstyling, jewelry, cosmetic surgery, fitness memberships, diets, and anything else that will enhance

their attractiveness. The feminists could not overcome God's design. A cheetah is obviously built for speed. An ox is obviously designed for strength. And a woman is clearly designed for beauty.

And so, much to the chagrin of the Gloria Steinem types, most women want very much to be beautiful. And they like to have their beauty noticed and enjoyed. For most women it would make their day if they overheard someone talking behind their back and saying, "She is absolutely gorgeous."

Is that demeaning? If you say that is demeaning to women you would also have to say it is demeaning to God because God takes great pleasure in being enjoyed as beautiful. God goes to great lengths to put His beauty on display for us to enjoy, and when we gaze upon it and take delight in it that glorifies and pleases Him. It is not demeaning – it is honoring.

That is why God made the creation beautiful. We cannot see Him with our physical eyes, so to give us an illustration of His beauty, God created things in the creation that reflect and illustrate His beauty. That is true of the mountains, waterfalls, flowers, sunsets, and the most beautiful thing God ever created – the woman.

If you are unfamiliar with the book of 1 Peter it might come as a surprise to you to discover a whole section in chapter 3 devoted to beauty tips for women. From verses 3-6 Peter gives women instructions on how to be more beautiful. So if it is not already obvious to you just from observation that God designed women for beauty, and that women should strive to be more beautiful, then this passage should erase any doubt. God is beautiful, His beauty is reflected in His creation, and therefore beautiful things in the creation should remain beautiful. It is a bad thing to go up in the mountains and leave a bunch of trash on the ground, we are all glad there is not a big, ugly factory at the bottom of Bridalveil Falls in Yosemite, we don't want air pollution to block our view of the stars. Those things point to the glory of God, and their beauty should be celebrated. And if that is true, then how much more should we celebrate the most beautiful thing God ever created in this world – the female human being? Women should do all they can to be more beautiful because according to verse 4 their beauty is of great worth in God's sight. So ladies, just by walking around being beautiful, you glorify God.

And women are unique among all the other beautiful things God made, because they have the power to make themselves more or less beautiful. Bridalveil Falls cannot help being beautiful. Nor can it make itself more beautiful. But women can do things that either mar their beauty or that increase it. And increasing it is important enough to merit a whole section in God's holy Word for instructions on how to go about it.

## **The Purpose of this Beauty: Soul Winning**

So, ladies, it is important that you follow these beauty tips in this section. Do it because it is of great worth in God's sight. However, that is not the main reason Peter gives us here. It is a secondary reason. The big reason in this passage for wives to increase their beauty is for the purpose of winning a man's heart. But not winning his heart to her. Winning his heart to God.

Notice first few words of verse 1.

### **1 Peter 3:1 Wives, in the same way...**

Same way as what? When the Bible was written, there were no chapter and verse numbers. They were added later just to make it easier to look things up. So when you read your Bible you should strive as much as possible to ignore them. The beginning of verse 1 does not even start a new sentence in the Greek. It is still a continuation of the last section – the whole discussion of how the Church is to interact with the world. And it is all about obedience and submission to authority. Back in 2:13 – free people, submit to the government officials, then in verse 18 slaves, submit to your earthly masters, and now here – wives, in the same way, to your husbands. We submit to governing officials because that increases our ability to win them to Christ. Slaves submit to masters to point them to Christ. And wives, submit to your husbands – why? – **so that if any of them do not obey the Word they may be**

**won over...** This is talking about unsaved husbands. In Peter, a believer is someone who obeys the gospel, and an unbeliever is someone who disobeys the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> The gospel is something that must be obeyed. God commands that we believe, and so failure to believe is disobedience. So when Peter says **if any of them do not obey the word** he is referring to unsaved husbands.

However, I am convinced the principle applies exactly the same way to any husband who is disobeying the Word in any way. Even those of us who are believers, every time we disobey God's Word, we are acting like unbelievers. Whenever a Christian chooses to sin, he is masquerading as a non-Christian. And the way to get him to repent and come back in line with God's Word is the same way to win over a non-Christian husband. So 1 Peter 3 is a supremely valuable portion of God's Word for both men and women. For women, because it tells you how to bring your husband to repentance, and for men because it teaches our wives how to rescue us when we veer into sin. And it is valuable for single people as well because it shows us something that is of great worth in God's sight. And if you love God, that will matter to you.

If you are a woman – what an amazing thing this is to consider! Soul-winning beauty. Have you ever thought about that fact that someone's eternal destiny could hinge on your beauty? What kind of beauty can attract a man to God? Madison Avenue can teach a woman about the kind of beauty and attractiveness that makes her desirable to men. But how do you get beauty and attractiveness that makes God desirable to men? Madison Avenue does not have the first clue how to do that. In fact, Peter even makes a point to say, “*Not* the Madison Avenue way. *Not* the Hollywood way.” Look at verse 3 – not through hair, clothes, or jewelry. This beauty does not involve your body.

## The Wrong Way

### *External Adornment*

Before looking at the ingredients of soul-winning beauty that Peter gives us in this text, let's make sure we understand the two things that Peter says will *not* produce this kind of beauty. Before looking at the right way to do it, Peter gives us two warnings about the wrong way that we are to avoid. And the first wrong way is through external adornment.

### **3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes.**

Sometimes men will see 1 Peter 3 and say, “Oh no – don't tell her not to worry about external adornment! I don't want her to just let herself go and not care about how she looks.”

That is not what Peter is saying. There is nothing spiritual about letting yourself go and doing nothing to look good to your spouse on the outside. In fact, there is a whole book of the Bible that teaches the importance of physical attractiveness within marriage (the Song of Songs). You *should* wear attractive clothes, and you should fix your hair nice, and if jewelry helps – throw that on too.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in 2:8 unbelievers are referred to as those who **disobey the message**. And in 4:17 they are called **those who do not obey the gospel of God**.

<sup>2</sup> Some have taken this passage to mean that braids or jewelry are forbidden for Christian women. The problem with that interpretation is the part about clothes. The word “fine” is not in the Greek. It does not say “fine clothes.” Literally it just says, **Your adornment should not come from the outside; braided hair, the wearing of gold and the putting on of clothes**. So we took this to mean that it is wrong for women to braid their hair or wear jewelry then we would also have to say it is wrong for women to wear clothes. Obviously that is not what Peter is saying.

Others have said, “Well, maybe it's just forbidding too much of those things.” So the idea is you can wear clothes, just not fancy clothes. And you can have some jewelry, just not too much. And you can style your hair, but don't go overboard. You can go ahead and be attractive on the outside, just not too attractive. The problem with that view is it does not say that. Peter says nothing about degrees. Whatever is being forbidden here is totally forbidden. And what is being forbidden is right there in the first line of verse . What is prohibited is having external adornments as the *source* of your beauty. **3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment** It is OK to have outward adornment. Outward adornment is described as a good thing in the Song of Songs. The problem is when you try to make those adornments the source of your beauty.

1 Corinthians 11:15 says that the glory of a woman is her hair and that long hair was given to her as a gift from God. If you are not doing all you can to become more physically attractive to your husband, how can you claim to love him? Peter's purpose is not to ban all of that. His point is that as great as those things are in other areas of your marriage, they do nothing to help with soul-winning beauty. Those things might attract him to you, which is good. They might attract your husband into the bedroom – that's fine. But they will not help attract him to God. If you want to attract him to God...

### **3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment ... 4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self**

Your beauty is to come from the inside. And that internal beauty can be marred and obscured by a failure to attend to the external. But where that internal beauty is absent, no amount of dressing up the outside will make you beautiful.

### **Proverbs 11:22 Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.**

External adornment without inner beauty equals ugliness. It is like putting gold on a pig. If you put gold on a pig it does not make the pig beautiful – it just makes the gold ugly.<sup>3</sup> It is amazing what happens when some of these models and actresses in Hollywood are interviewed on TV. They seem so beautiful at first, but the more they talk, the less attractive they become. That is one reason why some of the most gorgeous women in Hollywood cannot stay married for more than a few weeks. When their husbands see their true ugliness they cannot stand to stay married to them. And there are other women who might appear kind of plain when you first see them, but when you start to get to know them they get prettier and prettier.

### ***Talking***

So, how do you get this amazing, soul-winning beauty? Not through dressing up the body. And in verse 1 Peter gives us another way not to do it – talking.

### **1 ... be submissive to your 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.**

So they will be won not by your words when they *hear* you, but without words when they *see* you. It is going to be what they see rather than what they hear that will have the greatest impact on their souls. The way for a wife to bring an unsaved or disobedient husband to repentance is by attraction, not compulsion. You will not be able to shove him toward Christ, but you may be able to attract him to Christ, and to do so **without talk**.

### ***Still need the Gospel***

Does that mean a wife should never tell her unbelieving husband the gospel? Never talk about the Lord or spiritual things? Of course not. He has to know the gospel or he cannot be saved.

### **1 Peter 1:23 you have been born again ... through the living and enduring word of God.**

There is no salvation apart from knowledge of the gospel. So you have to tell him that at some point.

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<sup>3</sup> God has some harsh things to say about women who have external beauty without inner beauty: **Isaiah 3:16** The Lord says, "The women of Zion are haughty, walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes, tripping along with mincing steps, with ornaments jingling on their ankles. On the outside is all kinds of beautiful decoration, but on the inside is ugly pride. **17** Therefore the Lord will bring sores on the heads of the women of Zion; the Lord will make their scalps bald." **18** In that day the Lord will snatch away their finery: the bangles and headbands and crescent necklaces, **19** the earrings and bracelets and veils, **20** the headdresses and ankle chains and sashes, the perfume bottles and charms, **21** the signet rings and nose rings, **22** the fine robes and the capes and cloaks, the purses **23** and mirrors, and the linen garments and tiaras and shawls. **24** Instead of fragrance there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-dressed hair, baldness; instead of fine clothing, sackcloth; instead of beauty, branding.

Sometimes talking to your husband is the most loving thing you can do. And in those cases, it is sin not to talk to him.

There are times when words are the most loving thing. However, to the shock of certain women, it is also true that there are times when no words is a more loving thing. When a young child is just learning to talk, and the child does not want to put forth any effort so they just point and whine, the mom might say, "Use your words." And a lot of wives want to say that to their husbands sometimes. She is trying to talk to him about his day, he is responding with grunts and shrugs and turns the page of the newspaper, and she wants to say, "Come on, use your words." But she may not realize that there are actually times when she is going on and on and the Holy Spirit is saying to her, "Use your silence. Use your inner beauty. Use your conduct. Win him over *without words*."

As long as your husband is responsive to your words, keep talking. But when it is doing more harm than good, stop talking, and use silence plus inner beauty to win his heart to Christ.

### ***Why don't husbands listen to words?***

And that may be more often than you realize. We husbands are very often terrible listeners. You have probably all heard that statistic that a man speaks an average of 7000 words a day, and a woman speaks an average of 20,000.<sup>4</sup> And part of the problem in marriage is that when a man comes home from work he has already spoken all 7000 of his words, but his wife has not even started on her 20,000. So sometimes we just are not good listeners.

But even in those times when we are good listeners, still, when it comes to being influenced by our wives, for whatever reason, words are very often not the most powerful method. I won't ask for a show of hands, but I am guessing pretty much every wife in this room has experienced this: You say something to your husband 100 times and it has no impact on him at all, and then some other person comes along and tells him the exact same thing that you have been telling him, and he thinks it is the most brilliant thing he has ever heard.

Why does that happen? Part of it might be sin – a lack of respect for our wives. It might be laziness – we husbands do not want to deal with the issue, and we can ignore it when it is just her saying it, but when someone outside the family brings it up that forces us to deal with it. Or it might be something a little more innocent than that. It might be that if just one person is saying it, that is not enough to convince him, but when two different people say it that makes him take it more seriously. So it is not that he is regarding the other person as more credible than his wife, it is just that he is more moved by two people than by just one.

Another possibility is that the wife is ultra-sensitive or ultra-picky or biased about the issue at hand, so he does not put as much weight on what she says on the topic, but when someone else who is more objective agrees, that makes him take notice.

We could speculate all day long about the various reasons, but whatever the reason, the fact is that we husbands are very often not easily influenced or won over by our wives' *words*.

But where your words do not have much power, your beauty has *tremendous* power. They say the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. But really the way to a man's heart is through his eyes. God designed men to respond to beauty.

### **1... they may be won over without words ... 2 when they see ...**

So if you love your husband you are going to pour most of your efforts to win him into the method that Scripture says will work the best. The next time things are going south in your home and you feel you need to step in and do something about it, instead of targeting your husband's ears, target his eyes. Use beauty, rather than words, because he will be influenced more by what he sees than by what he hears.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-419040/Women-talk-times-men-says-study.html>

### ***Husbands, don't ignore her words***

Now men, do not take this as a license to disregard your wife's words. When God says, "Here's a way to win over someone who is disobedient to the Word," that does not mean it is OK to be disobedient to the Word. You do not want to be in that category. If *anyone* points out something from Scripture to you, or points out a sin in your life, whether it is your pastor or your wife or your children or a bum off the street, it does not matter who it is – if someone delivers a message from God's Word to you and you fail to listen or take it to heart you are guilty of a very serious offense against God. So men, listen to your wives. But wives, if he is not listening, ramp up your efforts by using your silent beauty.

### ***Is This Emotionalism?***

Now at this point you might ask, "Winning someone over without words – is that emotionalism? If you do not use words, and they are persuaded by your beauty apart from your words, isn't that emotionalism? Shouldn't all our decisions be rational, and not emotional?" No. There is no such thing as a decision that is rational and not emotional. We are not computers. The way we evaluate data is affected by our emotions and desires. Can emotions cloud your thinking? Yes, but so can the *lack* of emotions. There are times when something is true, but you cannot see it as true because of the lack of certain emotions. If there is someone you really dislike, and a friend is trying to point out something good about that person, and you just cannot see it – because of the way you feel about that person. Your dislike for that person in your emotions makes it impossible for your mind to see what is beautiful and delightful and good about that person. And that is the way unbelievers are with God. They do not love Him, and so their minds are, in many cases, incapable of seeing Him as desirable and good. But when a woman has the kind of beauty that Peter is about to describe – that can actually soften a man's attitude toward God enough that he will become able to see God as beautiful and good.

## **Beauty Tip #1 – Respectful Submission**

OK, so how do you get this kind of beauty? If not through external adornment, and not through words, then how? Peter is going to give women four beauty tips that will enable them to develop this kind of soul-winning beauty. And the first one is right there in verse 1 (the rest of them will have to wait until next time).

### **1 Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands**

The first beauty tip that will give you this kind of powerful, soul-winning beauty is the same virtue we have been seeing ever since chapter 2 verse 13 – submission to authority.

### ***Loving God's Way of Submission***

This is an area where the church *really* stands out in stark contrast with the world. There are books written on how wives are to submit to their husbands, and Christian women buy them! We have a class going on right now at Agape on this subject, and women are coming to the class. Women in the world must see that and think, "You women have lost your minds!" Why would Christian women want to voluntarily buy books and attend classes on submissiveness to their husbands?

The obvious answer is they love God, and the rule of their life is God's Word, and God's Word is very clear that wives are to submit to their husbands. And so it is commendable that Christian women are striving for that. However I would suggest it is not enough to just strive to do it. Whenever God commands something, our goal as Christians is not just to strive to do it, but to strive to *love* doing it. Because every time God gives a command He is revealing His heart. He is revealing His will – what He loves and hates. And when God loves something, I want to love that thing. I want my affections to

be like His. When He says something is ugly, I want to be repulsed by it. And when He says something is beautiful, I want to be drawn to it and love it. So if God says something about submissiveness, I want to feel that same way about it that He does.

Now, when you saw the topic was submission to husbands, I don't know how many suppressed eye-rolls there were in the room. Probably not you, but the lady sitting in front of you - she did not do anything on the outside, but inside she is thinking, "Ok, here we go." If you feel that way, let me ask you this – would you agree that if you saw it the way God sees it, you would see it as a beautiful, desirable, delightful thing? If God says it is good, and you saw it the way He sees it, then it would seem good to you, not burdensome or oppressive.

### ***Areas of non-submission***

And it is crucial that we see good things as good because God does not accept our obedience as true obedience when we have a "what a burden" attitude. As long as it feels burdensome and oppressive to you, you will never have consistent success obeying the command. You will find yourself stumbling again and again; you will come up with all kinds of justifications and rationalizations for little areas of non-submission. I do not know how many times I have counseled women who are flatly going against their husband's wishes, and they justify it by saying, "His wishes are unreasonable."

"Would it be sin for you to do it?"

"Well no, but I just totally disagree with it."

Think about that for a second – do we really think God meant to say, "Just submit to your husband when you fully agree with him"? If that is all God wanted you to do, there would be no need for the command. No one needs to be commanded to do the things they fully agree with. The reason God commanded wives to submit a half dozen times in the New Testament was specifically because of those times when you do not agree with your husband.

Another area where some women fail in submission is in really small issues. They figure, "This is such a little thing – it's no big deal." Other women rationalize about big things – "This issue is SO important, I can't afford to go along with him on this one." Sometimes women rationalize by saying, "Well, he never actually commanded me not to do this." They know the husband does not approve, it is not what he wants and the wife knows it, but because he never actually verbalized it, she goes ahead and defies his wishes. There are all kinds of ways women are tempted to resist their husband's authority. And probably the most common one (in fact, there is no question in my mind that this is the most common one) is when the wife will go along with whatever the husband says, but he knows there will be a price to pay. She makes it clear she really wants option A, but the husband feels like God is leading the family toward option B, but he is afraid to go that way because he knows his wife will be in a bad mood for the next three days if he does. She has not made any threats or anything. She says, "I'll go along with whatever you decide" – but he knows from past experience that life is just going to be miserable for a while if he does not go her way. That is the most common way wives dominate and control their husbands. There are many, many women who are rebellious wives simply because of their moodiness.

All that to say there are lots of subtle ways resistance to the husband's authority can sneak in, and the best way to fight against all that is to come to a point of actually loving God's way of submission. That is what will make you truly beautiful.

### ***Sarah the supermodel***

So what we really need here is a model. If you walk by a magazine rack, you will see dozens of magazines with women on the covers. They call those women models. Models of what? Models of virtue? No. Models of submissiveness? Models of wisdom? No. Models of holiness, godliness, righteousness, purity? No. What are they? They are mannequins. Whatever is there is on the outside, and that is it. Are they pretty on the outside? Sure. They are excellent mannequins. They are models of

one-dimensional beauty. They are models of the kind of beauty that can attract a man to them. But what we need is a model that can show us the kind of beauty that can attract a man to God. And that is exactly what Peter is going to show us. He is going to give us a portfolio of the greatest supermodel in all of Scripture: Sarah.

Sarah was Abraham's wife, and her beauty was legendary. The Jews in Jesus' time wrote about it many times. She was so beautiful that Pharaoh, who could have any woman in Egypt, had to have her. She must have been absolutely *stunning* in her beauty. Which is even more remarkable when you realize that she was 65 years old at the time! At age 65 she was competing with all the young beauties in Egypt. And then, twenty years later (now she is 85), King Abimelech is so taken with her beauty that he has to have her.

So Peter picks out the most gorgeous woman in the Bible as his model. But he does not say a word about her external beauty. Sarah is a supermodel for the kind of soul-winning beauty that Peter is teaching us about here.

### **6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master.**

She was a supermodel of submission. And there are two things Peter wants us to learn from her example. The first has to do with attitude.

#### ***Respect***

And look at what she called Abraham. Literally it says, "**like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.**" Now, right away people want to write that off as cultural. "That was back in Bible times – everyone just went around calling each other 'my lord' all the time." That is not true.<sup>5</sup> There is no other time in the Bible when a woman calls her husband lord. That term is always used as a title of special honor and respect. Sarah uses a term that was normally used to address kings and high dignitaries and officials. It would be kind of like you calling your husband "sir," although probably quite a bit stronger than that. But even that – most women – even Christian women, if they tried to call their husband "sir" it would probably be so out of character that the husband would assume she was being sarcastic. And he would probably be right. Not many women have such admiration and respect of their husbands that they would say "yes sir" in a serious, respectful way when he said to do something.

So it is remarkable that Sarah refers to her husband this way. But what is really amazing is when she did it. The only recorded instance of when Sarah called Abraham lord was in Genesis 18,<sup>6</sup> where Abraham told her to bake some bread and she obeyed. It is about as ordinary and mundane as an act of submission can be. But what Peter picks up on is not just that she obeyed Abraham, but on what was running through her mind while she was cooking. While she was baking the bread she referred to Abraham as her lord...*in her thoughts*. She was just thinking him, and the inspired writer of Scripture lets us know that her way of referring to Abraham in her thoughts was "my lord." That is significant, because it is proof of attitude. Any woman could force the word "sir" out of her mouth if she thought it was required of her, or if she thought it might do her some good. But when the angel of the LORD said that she was going to conceive a baby...

**Genesis 18:12 Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?"**

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<sup>5</sup> That is actually a matter of debate. I read some scholars who said that, but other scholars argue that this was not a common way for a woman to refer to her husband. You do not see it anywhere else in the Bible. And in all of secular literature I was able to find only one other instance of it. What we see everywhere in Scripture is that the word "lord" was a term of unusual respect and honor.

<sup>6</sup> The grammatical structure requires that the obeying and the calling Abraham lord occurred at the same time. When an aorist main verb is modified by a present participle, the time of the action of the participle is simultaneous with the time of the main verb. The main verb in the sentence is the word "obeyed." The word "calling" is a participle that modifies the main verb. So that last phrase is explaining Sarah's obedience in some way. The participle functions as an adverb, so it could be answering the question how? Or when? Or why? etc. I am convinced it is answering the question "When?" I think it is most likely referring to that specific incident, because even in Abraham's day it was not a common thing for a woman to refer to her husband as "lord."



She was not even thinking about anything to do with authority or leadership or some heroic thing Abraham did. She was just thinking about the fact that his body was old and incapable of procreation. Her thoughts were just ordinary, plain, everyday type thoughts - in fact, they were thoughts about his weakness and frailty, but when she thought of her husband she thought of him as "my lord."

What that shows us is that this was her genuine attitude. It was not for show. It was not to manipulate Abraham or butter him up. It was not to prove anything to him. It was not to prove anything to us (when she had these thoughts she did not know anyone would be listening). It was just her natural way of thinking about her husband.

Now, I am sure her attitude did come out in her speech. If you think you have a respectful attitude toward your husband but it does not come out in your speech, you are kidding yourself. What is in the heart comes out of the mouth. So I am not saying that it is unimportant what you say as long as you think the right thing. What I am saying is that it has to be such a genuine part of the fabric of your heart that it comes up *not only* in your speech and actions but even in your most private thoughts.

This introduces us to one of the most fundamental principles in Scripture about the meaning of a wife's submission. For it to be true submission it must be driven by true, genuine *respect*. If a man gives his wife flowers and takes her on dates and all the rest but in his heart he does not love her - he does not enjoy being around her, does not desire her, is not interested in her life - then all his external acts of "love" are not satisfying to her. And it is the same the other way around. When a wife does everything her husband says, and on the outside she is as submissive as can be, but on the inside there is no actual respect or honor - she views him as a buffoon or weakling or dunce or klutz - that is not the kind of submission that makes you so beautiful that you can attract a man to God. It must arise out of true respect. That is why Paul ended the way he did in Ephesians 5. Have you ever noticed the summary verse at the end of Ephesians 5? Paul goes through that whole section on wives - submit to your husband as to the Lord. And husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the Church. And after the whole, detailed explanation of both those, Paul summarizes what he has been saying this way:

**Ephesians 5:33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.**

He never used the word *respect* in the entire passage. He has only used the word *submit*. But when he sums it all up, the best summary is respect, because that is the heart attitude that makes submission true submission. Women crave love; men crave respect. Back in high school, when we were out there on the football field or lifting weights or showing off - we were not trying to get you ladies to love us. We wanted you to be impressed with us. If you do what your husband says but you are not impressed with him, he will feel the same way you feel when he does token acts of love but you can tell he does not really desire your company.

**Proverbs 23:6 Do not eat the food of a stingy man, do not crave his delicacies; 7 for he is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost. "Eat and drink," he says to you, but his heart is not with you.**

Some wives are like that man. They say, "Eat and drink" and they give and give and give, but on the inside, her heart is not with you. And the Proverb says, "Watch out for people like that because they are constantly thinking about what this is costing them." A wife who is submitting but it is not coming from true, internal respect for her husband, every act of submission just puts you in debt to her in her mind. It makes you owe her a favor, and over time it will destroy the relationship. She will get aggravated with you for not paying off all the favors.

### ***Voluntary***

And that is why it is also important for husbands not to use a power play to get their wives to submit. If your wife is not following your leadership, and you pressure her into it, or guilt her into it, or pull rank on her, or coerce her - rather than inspiring her to follow your lead, then what you will get

will be empty, hollow submission that will do nothing but ruin the marriage. Have you ever noticed that children are told to submit to their parents, and wives to their husbands, and parents are told to discipline their children – but husbands are never told to discipline their disobedient wives? Why? Because it is crucial that the wife’s submission be voluntary. That is the second lesson we learn from Sarah. First, that her submission came from genuine respect, and second – it was voluntary. That is not to say it is optional. It is required by God. But it must be offered voluntarily by her because the whole point of marriage is to be a walking picture of the way that God loves His people and the way God’s people love Him. And one of the things that really glorifies God is the fact that His people love Him voluntarily. Every true Christian is a Christian by choice. Some people are Muslims because they were given the choice, “Convert or die.” But Christ does not get His followers that way. If anyone had the right to force obedience, it would be Jesus. But He didn’t. Instead He won every single heart in His kingdom – one at a time. Every Christian is a Christian because he or she chose to be a Christian. That voluntary nature of our love for Him is one of the great honors Christ receives from the Father.

**Psalms 110:1 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. ...3 Your troops will be a freewill offering on your day of battle."**

God the Father says to the Son, “I am going to honor You by giving you a people who will all follow You by their own free will. They will do it, not because I force them, but because they love You – every last one of them.” That is the way the saints submit to their Lord – voluntarily, gladly, eagerly, out of a sense of deep respect and honor. And that is why there is such a thing as a wife – to illustrate that. And so God says to women,

**Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.**

Is your husband worthy of that? No. You do it, not based on your husband’s worthiness, but on Christ’s worthiness. Learn to see the beauty and goodness of this kind of relationship, follow the example of Sarah the supermodel of submissive, soul-winning beauty; let your submission be driven by an attitude of respect and honor and being truly impressed with your husband, and you will have the unfading beauty that will not only have power to win your husband to Christ, but that is also of great worth in God’s sight.

**Benediction: 2 Corinthians 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.**

## 1:25 Questions

1. Wives: Which areas of submission do you find the hardest? What could you do in those areas to look at submission like God looks at it so it is a delight for you?

Husbands: Has your disobedience in any area come to the point where you wife has to revert to the “without words” strategy? If you asked her, “In what areas do I tend to be unreceptive to your words?” what would she say?

Singles: Are you influencable by those you should be listening to? And those you are seeking to influence – are you striving to use the method they would most likely be responsive to?

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2. If the writer of Scripture were reporting the thoughts in your mind when you think about the authorities in your life, or your spouse, would they be as respectful as Sarah's? What step could you take to improve in this area?