

I would like to couch everything I am going to say this morning in these two simple sentences.

Faith is not a contract. Faith is surrender.

We don't negotiate with God... *"God I promise to obey... if You meet my conditions..."* *"Lord, I will serve You, but first there are a few things that I must understand..."* *"God I am willing to take on that ministry at the church which I have been asked to do... but first... You have to assure me that I will not be criticized or abused in any way by others..."*
"Lord, I will follow You... but I don't want to look foolish in front of others..."
"God, You know how I need my own space. I will need to be given latitude. I will work for You, if You let me do it my way. I don't submit easily to anyone..."

Faith is not a contract. Faith is surrender.

A few weeks ago... in our study of 1 Peter... we entered into the topic of submission. We are in the third chapter of 1 Peter... but this topic began in three weeks ago... as our passage made clear that we are to submit to government authority... even one as bad as Nero's government which was lighting up Christians as human torches. ... Then last week we covered a passage that exhorted slaves... and employees... to be submissive to their bosses or masters... even if they are cruel. Christ was held up as our example. Perfect... sinless... and undeserving of torture and death... He submitted... without any threats that he gave back. He was reviled... but He did not revile in return.

To our natural way of thinking such submission makes absolutely no sense whatsoever! But Peter unmistakably said in last week's passage – that as men and women of faith... this is exactly what we have been called to do. We are to submit... even when we are not treated the way we deserve. Expect to suffer... when you have done no wrong! To the world... this looks like nonsense. ... But let me say again:

Faith is not a contract. Faith is surrender.

When I was in college a block-buster movie came out that we all just had to see... It was called "The Poseidon Adventure." A lot of that movie was filmed on the Queen Mary... which is docked in Long Beach California. Not long after seeing that movie, I attended a Campus Crusade for Christ conference for several days onboard that ship... and we sat and listened to several speakers in the great ballroom... the scene of many clips in that disaster movie.

Often... the way we are to surrender to God... reminds me of a very emotional part out of that movie. ... In the movie *The Poseidon Adventure*, the ocean liner S.S. Poseidon is on the open sea when it hits a huge storm. A wall of water crashes through the ballroom... where we had our conference. But in the movie... men in tuxes and women in evening gowns were all screaming and running in every direction. Lights went out... sparks flew... smoke poured into rooms and... amid all the confusion... the ship flipped completely upside down.

Because of the air trapped inside the ocean liner... it floated in that condition – completely topsy-turvy... upside down. But in all the

confusion... the passengers did not realize this condition. ... They scrambled to get out... most of them by climbing the steps... thinking to go to the top deck. Everything was dark and no one had perspective. The problem was... of course... that the top deck was now 100 feet under water. ... So trying to get to the top of the ship... they drown.

The only survivors were the few who did what doesn't make sense. ...They did the opposite of what everyone else was doing. They descended ... they lowered themselves... which really elevated them so they could reach the hull. ... By going down... they actually went up... to the ocean's surface. Rescuers heard them banging and cut them free.

The instruction that we see in Peter about submitting to others... is as if God has turned the ship over... and the only way for us to find freedom... is to choose what doesn't make sense... It is to do the exact opposite of what the majority will do... submit to others for the Lord's sake.

So... Peter continues his teaching on submission. He has already dealt with submission to government... submission to the boss at work... and in today's passage... we come to a third category. ... But let's be honest... not all submission is good in itself. ... Sometimes... as with Jesus on the cross... submission is the only way to disarm evil. (DID YOU CATCH THAT...?) Sometimes... as with Jesus on the cross... submission is the only way to disarm evil. ... And this is the intent anytime we are asked to submit... under conditions that may bring us to personal suffering.

Please keep all of this in mind as we get ready now to turn to our passage. As I was preparing this message... it dawned on me that... in a way... I

was trying build myself a barricade... by everything I have said... before we have even looked at today's passage ... You see... I am identifying with a cartoon that once appeared in Leadership Magazine... in which a preacher had prepared the pulpit area like a fortress. He was peering through the crack of a machine gun nest. The caption read, "Today my text is (1 Peter 3:1), 'Wives submit to your husbands.'"

So... now that I have somewhat built myself a barricade... let's turn now to that very passage.

1 Peter 3:1-7

In the first six verses of this passage... Peter is writing to wives who are threatened because of the power wielded by their unbelieving husbands. Verse 1 begins... "Likewise wives..." or "in the same way." This refers us back the passage we dealt with last week... where slaves were instructed to submit to harsh treatment — unjust harsh treatment (1 Peter 2:18-25). So... in our passage today... he instructs submission for wives... who may have been facing selfish dominance by husbands. ... Now... obviously... this type of submission is not good in itself. But Peter has in mind... that it makes a way for Christ to bring about change. ... Just as with Jesus on the cross... submission is often the only way to disarm evil. Now he addresses Christian wives.

Our generation is one where so-called 'political correctness' and its various expressions is a hot potato. Society is obsessed with sexual equality and the culture setters have determined that we should live with feminism as the powerful force that it is. ... Scripture is considered "outmoded" and out

of touch with life today. It is considered dangerous to our society... because it suggests that men and women do have different roles.... But in mentioning these roles... Peter addressed Christian wives... who had unsaved husbands... telling them how to win their mates to Christ. ... This is an important passage for saved women who want to see their unsaved husbands come to Christ. Her behavior will either be a help or a hindrance.

It is important for us to understand something of the background to Roman family life. ... Under Roman law... the husband and father had absolute authority... over every member of his family. ... If a man became a Christian... then his household would follow him into the church. (This is what we see in Acts 16:29-33. When the Philippian Jailer came to belief... he and his entire household believed). ... When the man becomes a Christian... at least in name... they would be a Christian family.

Now... in contrast... if a wife believed... but her husband did not adopt her faith... then in many respects she would be isolated. ...And the difficulty of this situation is Peter's concern here.

The custom of the time expected that a wife would be submissive to her husband... which means in part that she would normally adopt his religion. This placed converted wives in a difficult position. The Christian wife should... therefore... seek to please her husband in other respects as much as possible. The basic command to submission sounds strange to modern Western readers, and so it must be understood in its first-century and early Christian context. Submission to the husband was the custom ... it was totally expected... at that time. ... The women to whom Peter originally wrote would have had double reason to submit to their husbands.

Roman culture and the law demanded it... and also they knew the account of the creation in Genesis 2:20... which says God created women to be a helper for the man.

HOWEVER... and this is a big “however.” ... The Christian gospel emphasized that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

Paul has gone all over the Roman Empire... expressing the equality of husband and wife... We also see in 1 Corinthians 11:11-12 that he also stressed that husbands and wives are mutually dependent. ... Christianity had radical teaching, Folks. It brought truth about the freedoms women have... at a time and in a culture that did not recognize these freedoms.

Consequently, a new evaluation of the roles of husband and wife was bound to arise... and it did. Paul had to address it with the Corinthian Church... and perhaps Peter was aware of it among those he was writing to. ... With the new freedom that Christians enjoyed in Christ... there also inevitably arose the temptation to carry things to excess, trespassing the bounds of Roman social correctness... that was in place at that time. Christians had need for restraint... so their testimony for Christ would not be hurt.

Twice in our passage... Peter reminded Christian wives that they were to be submissive to their husbands (verse 1 and verse 5). *“You are indeed with new found freedom in Christ... but you also have a God-given role... especially that you might win over your unsaved husbands...”*

God has also commanded it because... in His wisdom... He knows that this is the best arrangement for a happy, fulfilling marriage.

Subjection does not mean that the wife is inferior to the husband. In fact, in 1 Peter 3:7, Peter made it clear that the husband and wife are "heirs together."

Submission has to do with order and authority... not evaluation. For example... the slaves in the average Roman household were superior in many ways to their masters... remember many were doctors and lawyers and accountants... but they still had to be under authority. ... The buck private in the army may be a better person than the five-star general... but he is still a buck private. ... Even Christ Himself became a servant to His creation... as He submitted to His Father's will. ... There is nothing degrading about submitting to authority or accepting God's order.

It is not an issue of worth... but of order. ... Our God is a God of order and efficiency — not chaos. ... For there to be order... there must be submission. ... Someone has to lead and someone has to follow. ... Just as government and business require order... so does the home. ... God in His grace... provides the solution for the efficient and peaceful working of every home. He has given the responsibility for leadership in the home to the husband.

A person who submits is not weak but strong. Our self-centered and self-serving society has missed this truth. Just imagine a government that doesn't have its citizens' submission. That really isn't too hard... is it...? All we have to do is look at the Arab Spring... Libya... Egypt... or Syria... in recent weeks. Imagine a business without the employees submitting to

their bosses. How long would it remain in business...? ... Even so... neither can the home operate well... to be a place of peace and harmony... without one submitting to the other... God knew this... and God gave a prescription for the efficient and peaceful working of every home. He doesn't hate women. He loves husband and wife... and the home they create together... and He has made provision in order for it to work.

1 Peter 3:1-2

The context of Peter's instruction here... seems to suggest that the husband has already heard the Gospel... We should assume the husband has heard the gospel message clearly... perhaps raised questions that have been answered... but is not persuaded. ... He has heard... and doesn't want to hear any more. Proclamation and explanation come first... but they have limited value by themselves. ... A life changed by the love of Christ is powerful. Therefore... without a word... by your behavior... do good to your husband who does not yet believe.

Repetitive speech (cajoling, pouting, insinuating, and nagging) is not witness. Peter directs believers in these circumstances not to look for one more way to have a conversation about Christ... but to let beauty of a changed life make its case. ... That is... a "pure and reverent" life. A Christian wife reveres and obeys the Lord... not her husband. As his wife grows more respectful of Jesus... more shaped by Jesus' priorities... the husband will be faced with powerful testimony to the truth of the Gospel.

Her evangelizing is to be in her walk... instead of her talk.

An unsaved husband will not be converted by preaching or nagging in the home. The phrase "without the word" does not mean "without the Word of God," because salvation comes through the Word (according to John 5:24). It means "without a lot of speaking." ... Christian wives who "preach at" their husbands only drive them farther from the Lord.

There are a lot of saved women all across the country... who have their entire Church praying for her husband's salvation... but with her actions at home she is driving him away from Christ. ... There are a lot of unsaved husbands using their wives as excuses not to follow Christ.

1 Peter 3:3

Few texts have been so maligned and misunderstood and misapplied. This verse is about winning an unsaved husband over to Christ. ... 'Peter is trying to prevent women from making the mistake of thinking that if they emphasize their outer beauty... it would please their physical-sight-oriented... unsaved husbands... making them want to please them in return... and then they could perhaps get their men to trust the Lord Jesus as Savior. *"I will try to please you... so you will try to please me..."* ... But Peter weighs in on this... and says *"No... there is... actually... a much better priority..."* Men are visual creatures... And a wife can use appearance to sway her husband's behavior... but Peter says *"Don't over-emphasize this to the exclusion of something much more profitable... in winning over your husbands to the Lord."*

This passage cannot be used to teach that a woman should never dress up or wear jewelry. ... Peter is not arguing against wearing jewelry as many have misinterpreted this passage to mean... by removing this verse from its

context... In fact... keeping it in its context... we are about to see Peter use the holy women... and specifically Sara... as an illustration of submission and adornment.

When we go back to the days of Abraham and Sara we quickly discover that the women had no problem wearing jewelry. ... In chapter 24 of Genesis... we have the account of Abraham sending his servant to find a wife for Isaac. ... Notice the servant presented Rebekah with a golden earring of half a shekel weight... and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold. (Genesis 24:22) ... A little later he brought forth jewels of silver... and jewels of gold... and apparel... and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. (Genesis 24:53) ... This passage cannot be used to impose legalistic restrictions against a woman adorning herself.

A Christian woman should look pretty and take care of herself. I like what an old Southern preacher and theologian, Bob Jones, said, "*If the barn needs painting, then paint it!*" ... If a lady needs some makeup, then go ahead and wear it. ... But don't rely on your outer beauty... to win people for Christ. ... You have something much better to use.

A General Social Survey back in 2010, surprised many with the revelation that American women are not as happy as they were in 1972, as measured by the same survey. One commentator observed that, despite the successes of feminism, women today are more enslaved to the opinion of others about their appearance than they were forty years ago. Little girls are sexualized, teens starve themselves, adult women undergo painful surgeries, and aging is considered a disease. None of these choices will

lead to wholeness. Attention to one's outward appearance, as the source of meaning or influence, is foolish and is especially foolish for servants of God.

1 Peter 3:4

Anyone can decorate the outside, but if the inside is ugly what good is it...?

A Christian wife with an unsaved husband might think that she must imitate the world if she is going to win her mate; but just the opposite is true.

Glamour is artificial and external; true beauty is real and internal. Glamour is something a person can put on and take off, but true beauty is always present. Glamour is corruptible; it decays and fades. True beauty from the heart grows more wonderful as the years pass. A Christian woman who cultivates the beauty of the inner person will not have to depend on cheap externals. God is concerned about values, not prices.

I was not only attracted to my wife's outward beauty when I met her. I was also attracted to the inner beauty that I saw in Patti. She is one of the finest Christian women I have ever met and she is still absolutely gorgeous inside and out.

This is one of the important passages in the New Testament for women. Peter... here... puts his finger on the unique contribution which women can make to humanity. ... It is the glory of beauty.

Visit a bachelor's home... or apartment... and... in many of them... you find dirty dishes in the sink... dirty clothes lying around the floor.... and greasy car parts on the kitchen table. ... Patti and I often laugh... that when she

first met me... all of the glasses in my kitchen cabinet were empty Skippy peanut butter jars. ... But even if the apartment is in order... it has a pragmatic sense to it all. Everything is functional... These dirty socks were dropped here for a practical reason... because I is still wearing them for the next five days. Things are there... because they are of use. ... But let that bachelor get married... and a woman move into the same home... and you will find immediate changes. ... Now... there are flowers in a vase... curtains at the window... everything is cleaned up... the furniture is rearranged more tastefully. ... This is what is called, "the woman's touch." It is woman's unique ability to contribute beauty to life.

Every woman wants to be beautiful... the billion dollar cosmetic industry is testimony to that. And women are very sensitive on this subject. They know instinctively that they have a role that involves bringing beauty to the world.

Every woman needs to know that there is one kind of beauty... she can bring... that is imperishable and is precious to God. Her real power does not lie in seductiveness... or in being liberated by a modern feminism... that demands sameness of roles. ... It lies in her inner beauty. The great contribution that women can make to mankind is beauty of spirit. ... Looking at this world of ours... with its sham and emptiness... its glittering facades and hollow lives... do you know anything that is in more short supply than beauty of spirit? ... What a challenge to women in every age. So vital a matter is this... God has uniquely made this a woman's role.

1 Peter 3:5-6

Peter closed this section by pointing to Sara as an example of a godly, submissive wife. Read Genesis 18 for the background.

Sara is one of the most remarkable women of all time. ... She certainly deserves far more fame than she has had. ... She is much more remarkable than some of the great woman of history... Helen of Troy... for instance... or Cleopatra... or Marilyn Monroe. Certainly she should at least share the spotlight with other women of the Bible... like Ruth... and Esther.

Sara was strikingly beautiful. ... One of the most amazing things ever recorded about women was written about this woman. ... At the age of sixty-five she was taken by Pharaoh of Egypt for his harem... when Abraham her husband had foolishly jeopardized her safety... by a lie that she was his sister. ... And the amazing thing is... this whole thing was repeated again by Abraham... under Abimelech, the King of the Philistines... when Sara was (GET THIS...) ninety years old! ... Abimelech wanted this beautiful 90 year old woman to be his wife! She had what we just read... an “imperishable beauty”!

What an amazingly beautiful woman she must have been. ... But her fame in the New Testament does not rest on her physical beauty but on her beauty of spirit. ... By a gentle and quiet spirit... ... When she died at the age of 127... Abraham was simply inconsolable. He wept and mourned for Sarah for days.

Now... there is nothing in all of Scripture that suggests... that it was Abraham's idea... that she call him "lord." ... If any of you husbands go home and try to force your wife to call you “master” or “lord”... I can tell you now what the results will be! This was Sarah's idea. It was what she felt to be an expression of her willingness to be in subjection to her husband.

The story of Sarah and Abraham is not that she just called him “lord.” ... Sarah submitted to Abraham... even as he followed God to an unknown land... and even when Abraham’s foolishness (in pretending that she was not his wife) put her at great risk. Abraham was called to trust God’s remarkable promises on a journey of faith. Sarah followed her husband... her life was shaped by his calling. And she did so without fear. Sarah trusted God to mold Abraham.

Confidence in God was the antidote to her fears. A woman with a “gentle and quiet spirit” ... is not fear-driven or anxious. Women are not to be submissive out of fear of their husbands... Women are not to be gentle and quiet from an anxiousness or fear. To be clear... there was nothing demure... coy... shy... or bashful about Sarah. She was strong with her faith in God.

1 Peter 3:6 c

Lets remember that a wife's submission never exceeds Biblical boundaries. There have been some husbands so foolish as to expect their wives to do as they are told whether it is in line with the word of God or not. Only a fool would require that his wife disobey God and sin for him. The wife is to never do anything that is sinful. Her submission is to be as unto the Lord. (Ephesians 5:22).

1 Peter 3:7

Why did Peter have so much more to say to the wives than to the husbands? Simply because Christian wives in particular had to face very different pressures to their non Christian counterparts. ... AND... Christian women were more likely to have non-Christian partners than

Christian men were to have non-Christian wives. ... Peter spent more time addressing a more volatile issue. These wives were more liable to hostility.

But please notice that Peter's instruction to the men... begins the same as his instruction to wives: "Likewise." ... If a husband got saved and his wife remained an unbeliever... he was LIKEWISE to evangelize her by his behavior. ... And this behavior was to stem from an intelligent understanding. A Christian husband needs to know his wife's moods, feelings, needs, fears, and hopes. He needs to "listen with his heart" and share meaningful communication with her.

When you dwell with your wife like you are to you get to know her. ... You are to study her. ... Get to know her desires and her goals. ... Get to know her frustrations. ... Learn her weaknesses and her strengths. ... Know what she is like emotionally, and spiritually. ... None of this is academic knowledge... but rather a deep understanding of your wife's heart. It is knowing what makes her tick.

Then... Peter says we are to honor her... as the weaker vessel. The wife is "weaker"... as the flower is weaker than the stem. ... The weakness does not make her inferior... but means she is more delicate... generally more emotional... more tender and kind-hearted. So she needs to be handled with care.

"Giving honor" means that the husband respects his wife's feelings, thinking, and desires. ... So even if he does not agree with her thinking... he must respect it... He must not belittle her. ...

Warren Wiersbe suggests that 'the husband must be the "thermostat" in the home, setting the emotional and spiritual temperature. ... But the wife often is the "thermometer"... letting him know what the temperature is! '

“Since they are heirs with you of the grace of life...” ... Peter just called them equal. This was radical thinking for the times in which Peter was speaking. Ninety-nine percent of the men of that day would not have agreed with Peter, yet he spoke by Divine Inspiration. In Peter's culture the idea of a woman being spiritually equal to men was not accepted. Being heirs together of God's grace never entered into their thinking. Secular history points this out. Greek and Roman women did not worship with men. In the orthodox Jewish synagogues, women had no place at all. They were not allowed to even be present.

Peter does away with such nonsense and requires the Christian husband to fully accept the spiritual equality of his wife as one who is an heir of grace of life with him... so that their prayers would not be hindered.

"That your prayers may not hindered." Let me quote J Vernon McGee once again... “Peter says that if you are not getting along as husband and wife... it will ruin your family altar... and there is no use praying together. If you are fighting like cats and dogs... well... God just doesn't hear cats and dogs. But when you are in agreement... you can pray together and your prayers will not be hindered.

Now... as I close this tremendous passage this morning... I say again what I said at the beginning: Faith is not a contract. Faith is surrender.

