

1Pet 3.1-6—Wives Submitting to Husbands

Two Duties

- I. *Likewise, wives be subject*, v.1.
 - A. *Likewise*. Peter's directing us back to v.13, where he made clear that all submission to God-given authority is to be done, *for the Lord's sake*, cf. Rom 13.5.
 - B. Knowing this is her duty before God in marriage, no woman should marry that man to whom she can't lovingly submit.
 - C. What does it mean *to be subject* to a husband?
 1. In all lawful things, a wife is to regard and treat her husband as the leader in the relationship, not because of any inherent superiority in the husband, but because of the *roles* established by God for men and women, both at creation (1Cor 11.3-9) and in the marriage relationship (Gen 2.18; Eph 5.22-24).
 - D. As the God of creation and the God of marriage, God has distinctly declared that the leadership in a marriage is vested in the husband. It was this way in the estate of innocence (Gen 2.18) and it's still this way after the fall (Gen 3.16; Eph 5.22-24).
 - E. In the home, unless the husband waives his right on a matter, he is to decide; and to his decision the wife should yield, and she should yield with grace and cheerfulness, 1Pet 3.1-6.
 - F. What if her husband is weak, or even foolish?
 1. She must still submit. Our duty to God is never dependent upon the duty of others. Whatever those over us do or don't do, we're to do our duty to them all the same.
 2. But as a wise and God-fearing wife, let her use her wisdom and grace to study how to *support* his authority *mindful* of his weakness.
 3. And let her remember that what makes her duty hard is not the arrangement, but her own sinful desires (cf. 1Pet 2.11).
 - G. The subjection of a wife is extensive, but it's not unlimited and it's unique because she is an equal, a helper, a co-heir of Life, v.7.
 - H. It's to be *respectful and pure* (v.2) marked by those Christian graces and virtues that show her to be a disciple of Christ, a temple for His Holy Spirit, and a living testimony of the grace of God at work in her life.
- II. *Don't let your adorning be with external attire over your body, but with the spirit of godliness in your conduct*, vv.3-4.

- A. God graciously strikes at a woman's desire to rule (v.1; Gen 3.16) and love of vanity (vv.3-4; Isa 3.16).
- B. Peter's condemning the excessive care and attention that can easily be given to outward appearance. He's not giving women a dress code so much as reminding them of what true beauty is, and therefore what it is that they should spend so much time "dressing up and beautifying".
- C. In the mind of this fallen, licentious, sexualized world, a woman's beauty is her outward looks. But in *God's* mind, beauty is not in the outward adorning of a body soon to rot in a grave, but the adorning of one's conduct with the imperishable beauty of the godliness of a quiet and gentle spirit.
- D. A woman of God—a godly wife—has been redeemed from slavery to vanity and the idolatry of outward beauty and seeks that beauty which pleases God—and which a godly man will love.

Three Motives

- I. Supposing the difficult providence of a woman married to an unbeliever Peter says, if the Lord pleases, the godly submission and godly conduct of a wife can be a powerful means of converting an unbelieving husband, v.1.
 - A. It's not a promise, but it is a hope and prayer, because it is a possibility which God holds out to such wives.
 - B. Also, even in the case of a Christian husband, nothing works so well to soften his sharp demeanor and melt his stubborn heart than a wife who comes alongside and covers the multitude of his sins with her loving, Christlike, gentle and quiet spirit.
- II. The internal beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit is not only imperishable, but precious in God's sight, v.4. And what more can any godly wife want, than to be seen and praised of God, Mt 11.29.
- III. She'll be walking in the footsteps of the holy women of old, vv.5-6.

Conclusion

- I. *Wives*: pray for the grace of humility to be the kind of wife God's called you to be and pray for greater freedom from the sin of vanity.
- II. *Husbands*: resolve and work before God to be the kind of husband that makes her submission and respect the easiest thing in the world, and encourage her in her true beauty: the adorning of her life with godliness, Pr 31.30.