

# The Book of I Peter – Part Eleven

March 13, 2011

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1). We're talking about husbands and wives this week. This isn't going to be a thorough look at the picture of marriage by any means, though I will be sharing some of my own insights regarding the pragmatic side of marriage and what I think adherence to the Word of God within that relationship looks like (at least from a wife's point of view).

Nor is this message about whether it's better to be married or to be single. I won't be addressing whether if you're single you should be married, or if you're divorced you should (or even can) get remarried. This message isn't about how women are to behave or act, or how men are to behave or act... it's specifically about *the roles of husband and wife*. It's directed to those already in a marriage relationship concerning how they are to behave within that marriage.

Let's start by setting a very brief context of where Peter's going in his letter by stating where he's been:

a) Peter is writing a letter of encouragement to "pilgrims of the Dispersion," i.e. faithful Christians scattered about various regions undergoing severe persecution for their faith. They are enduring emotional, mental, and especially physical suffering because of their belief in Christ. Peter is reminding them that this life is fleeting and temporary, and they have a living hope that they will be able to realize (their inheritance) if they would just continue to endure their present sufferings. He adamantly exhorts them to continue to "do good," no matter what the situation is that they face, and to behave in a godly and upright manner, abstaining from all fleshly behavior that wars against their soul by causing them to be disobedient, thereby disqualifying them from receiving the salvation of their soul when Jesus returns. There is nothing bigger or more important than this that Peter could say.

b) And so last week we looked specifically at how Peter exhorts those within the slave and master relationship to behave. Peter doesn't focus on the rightness or wrongness of the situation of slave ownership (nor did Paul, as we studied in his letter to Philemon); he simply encourages each individual within the relationship to behave in a pleasing manner to the Lord, disregarding the unfairness and the unrighteousness of whatever situation they find themselves in. He doesn't try to change the situation (a man-made creation/institution), he simply states how each person should conduct themselves as they sojourn through this brief life. If you'll remember, this was the also the gist of Hebrews chapter 11 that we studied last week as well.

c) The context within the passage we read last week was the idea of “suffering,” and Peter makes sure to point out that Christ suffered a horrific death *for us*, and amidst it all He entrusted Himself to His Creator who judges all things righteously... thereby leaving for us an example that we are to follow.

d) I’m not sure whether we can truly grasp the enormity of that exhortation, because no one here, I’m guessing, can even begin to put themselves in Christ’s shoes (so to speak). First of all, we’re not sinless. Secondly, we’re not sent here to save all of humanity by one act of sacrifice. Thirdly, we’re not God. So how are we supposed to relate to and (most importantly) emulate what Christ did by His act of suffering for righteousness’ sake? Peter clearly says in verse 20 -21, “**For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps...**”

e) We are called to patiently *suffer*. It’s the theme throughout the Scriptures -

Philippians 1:27

Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel...29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake...

Romans 8:17

...and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

Hebrews 2:10

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

f) It is clear that we’re not called to suffer for our own faults and mistakes (because those are just consequences); we’re called to do good and to behave Godly in the midst of a perverse and godless world. And when we do that, we will necessarily have to endure suffering – both *internal* suffering and perhaps even external suffering. Internal suffering, because when we choose to follow the Spirit and behave righteously our flesh “dies” and it causes us to suffer as we die to our flesh, and external suffering, because the world and all that is in the world *hates us*, because we are not of this world –

John 17:14

"I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."

John 16:33 KJV

"In the world ye shall have tribulation [Greek "thlipsis" - anguish, persecution, affliction], but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

1John 3:13

Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

2). And so amidst all of this talk about behaving in an excellent manner and enduring the inevitable *suffering* that will come because of it, Peter then chooses to talk about the husband and wife relationship. And he mentions it on the heels of, and in a manner of comparison to, his previous exhortation to submit to all of man's institutions and submit to your master if you happen to be a servant. To me, the placement of this seems particularly significant.

1Peter 3:1

Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. 3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-- 4 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. 5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

a) In Peter's explanation of how each of us are to behave within each of our earthly roles within the hierarchy of man's relationships, you'll notice that his primary focus is on how each individual is to act *especially* when the relationship is used in an unrighteous way. For example, Peter tells each Christian to submit to the governmental structure they live in, particularly in light of the fact that they were presently being persecuted by that very government.

b) He then tells the servant to submit to his master, with all respect, with a primary focus on what to do when that master treats him harshly (obviously abusing the relationship). He says to patiently endure it.

c) And he then goes on to explain how a wife is to behave, especially if her husband is disobedient. She is to submit herself to him, her own husband. (Note that it doesn't say that women are to submit to men; it says that a wife is to submit to her own husband.) The wife is to put herself under – literally, “submit to” – her husband. Ephesians expounds on this further -

#### Ephesians 5:22

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to [“submits to”] Christ, so let the wives be to [literally, “submit to”] their own husbands in everything.

d) Here's where we all typically get twisted up, so I want to remind everyone (me included) to not get twisted up. All I've done so far is read the Scriptures, and the Scriptures say what they say – wives submit to your husbands. Other Scriptures say this very thing as well –

#### Titus 2:3-5

Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to [literally “put yourself under” “submit”] their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

#### Colossians 3:18

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. 20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart. 22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

Isn't Colossians exactly the same as what we read in I Peter? Since Scripture is extremely clear that wives are to put themselves under their own husbands, can't we just accept that that is exactly what a wife is to do?

e) The problem occurs when we read into the scriptures (and out of the scriptures) our own biases and filters, which then gets us all twisted up because of the unfairness we've

witnessed in the world *and* in the worldly churches regarding the treatment of women *and* wives based on the wrong use of these scriptures.

f) The important question here in understanding what Peter is saying is to try to understand *what it means* for a wife to “put herself under” her husband. And more specifically – what it looks like *on a practical level* for a wife to “put herself under” her husband. And I need to be totally honest here – I probably shouldn’t be up here right now speaking on this because there is a very good probability that I am quite often in total disobedience to the Word of God regarding this. But, here I am.

g) Like I said, I don’t think I can give you today, in this format, an adequate scriptural picture of what it looks like for a woman to submit to her husband. I can’t do it justice because I feel that in order to come from the right starting point that I would need to establish what marriage is –*not only* the ideal earthly picture of marriage, but especially the perfect spiritual picture of marriage as well. And haven’t we gone over this for years? And what could I possibly do here today in 30 minutes that would bring any further epiphanies to what we have already contemplated and studied? Let me just remind you of what we’ve already studied:

- Our earthly marriages are a picture of our marriage to Christ
- The role of the wife is a picture of the Church’s submission to Christ
- And when the individual within the body of Christ fully submits to Christ in everything, that person will be part of His Bride in that future Day
- The husband’s role is likened to Christ, who washes and cleans the Church in order to purify her, so that she can be presented back to Him fully sanctified.
- Husbands, that’s a tall order to emulate.
- In our earthly marriages we are considered to be ONE flesh, ONE entity.
- And in our marriage relationship, each individual is to help the other individual reach the goal of their calling. The wife is to help the husband be obedient, and the husband is to lead his wife on the pathway of obedience.

Clearly, I don’t have enough time in 1 message to do the full review. But we **MUST** keep all of this constantly in mind as we talk about how each person within the marriage relationship should act.

h) So, what seemed significant to me as I thought about how I would handle this particular part of I Peter is the fact that all this week I have come face to face with real life marriage issues. In fact, I had planned and scheduled a specific time to actually write on Peter’s message to wives and husbands... but I couldn’t write on it because the Lord had me in two separate situations where I had to deal with real life marriage issues (3 if you count my own). And I realized as I went through it that the Lord was, perhaps, giving me some experience and new insights that He wanted me to share.

j) And not insignificantly, throughout the last couple of months Ralph and I have been enduring some serious “tribulation” in our marriage relationship as we attempt to work out exactly what it means for the wife to submit and the husband to lead.

3). So allow me to share with you what the Lord has shown me.

a) The whole of Scripture is about God’s work in mankind relative to bringing him/her back into a position of rulership. The whole scope of God’s redemptive work is possible because of His work in the person of His Son, Jesus. Jesus Christ is the One born King, and all who truly follow Him will be rewarded with a position with Him when He takes His position as King... All of Scripture points toward the Kingdom Age.

b) Our life, our journey, is all about the working out of our own salvation -

**Philippians 2:12**

**Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;**

c) Yet we cannot work out our own salvation by ourselves. We must do it in conjunction with the Spirit’s work in our life, made possible by the grace of God through the life and death and resurrection of His Son, our Savior and High Priest and soon to be King -

**Titus 2:11**

**For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.**

d) So it’s up to us to choose salvation and life, or not choose salvation and life. It is up to us to be obedient to God, or not be obedient to God. *God totally lets us choose.* I can’t emphasize this enough.

e) And so I choose Him... every day I have to choose Him. And every day I wonder, “What does it look like to follow you today, God?” What does it look like to pick up my cross and follow you? I know what the big scope of it is - I am supposed to suffer and die to myself, yet live for Him in the fullness of who He made me to be... which requires me to embrace my personality and my quirks and all the things that make me

*me*, but at the same time to open my eyes to the sins in my life and the behaviors in my life that are keeping me from reaching the goal.

f) As I recall all of the saints of Hebrews chapter 11 – the ones we talked about last week that were commended for their faith that was manifested individually in so many different ways, I read this passage which immediately follows the list of faithfully obedient folks –

Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

<sup>4</sup> You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; <sup>5</sup> and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; <sup>6</sup> FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

<sup>7</sup> It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup> But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. <sup>9</sup> Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? <sup>10</sup> For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. <sup>11</sup> All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

g) So we have to lay aside our encumbrances and our sins and we need to run to Jesus... and we can't grow weary or lose heart. We have to endure the discipline that God doles out to His sons in order to train them up. If we receive His discipline (which is for our own good), and are *trained by it*, we will share in His holiness and His glory (wow!). And it says right here that it seems sorrowful *for the moment*, but afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

h) I want to be like those people in Hebrews chapter 11. I really really do.

i) So I have to 'suck it up' and realize that situations *for the moment* will be unfair and they will be unrighteous and I will encounter tribulation [anguish, persecution, affliction] simply because I am in this world. And tribulation and suffering and child-training will come... and it will most likely come through the relationships that God has placed in my life, and when it does come through those relationships I am supposed to receive it with joy because I should know that God is training me up for something WAY better than anything I can see or experience now.

4). So I'm a wife, which means I am in a marriage relationship and I have to share a life with another human being. This other person actually has a personality, too, and he has sins and encumbrances that he is trying to lay down as well. He has free will, as do I. We both have to make daily decisions, not only about our own selves but about our shared life, which includes the children (who have personalities and free will as well) that we raise in partnership with one another. We made this choice to enter into this relationship, so it is now our choice whether to honor God's commands on how to operate within that relationship.

a) What happens when you disagree with yourself about a decision? Who wins the argument you are having with yourself? You win, because it's only you in the equation.

b) What happens when you disagree with God about a decision? Pretty straightforward, actually, right? God should "win" the argument, hands down. Do it His way, not your way, because you *know* that He's right. This requires relinquishing the exercise of your will, doesn't it? Isn't that submission?

c) What happens when you disagree with your *spouse* about a decision or course of action? Whose decision do you go with? What if both of you decide that other one is wrong and no one yields? What happens with your shared life... how does it function if the two parts of the whole are on different pages?

#### Ephesians 5:22

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to ["submits to"] Christ, so let the wives be to [literally, "submit to"] their own husbands in everything.

d) Don't get me wrong. A woman is free to do what she wants and a man is free to do what he wants and each individual's life can take whatever course they want, because in a practical sense they are still two individuals. But in a marriage relationship, there is not only the 1 and the 1... there's the ½ and the ½ that make up a whole. And when you are dealing with being a ½ of a whole, *someone has to take the lead or the entity can't*

*move.* And taking the lead means making decisions for those who follow, knowing that they trust you to lead them in the right direction.

e) So wives, *we* are the ones that fall back. We need to willingly let the husband exercise his role as the leader of the relationship. And when he fails – when, not if – let him. And you may have heard me say this many times, but I’ll repeat again what I know to be true in a practical sense: Wives, you need to move first. The first move is the wife’s move, because a husband cannot lead properly if the wife is leading herself – *there is no one for him to lead!* This most often requires the wife to make the decision to “fall back,” in full view of a husband who is in complete disagreement with her. This quite possibly could be the hardest command to follow (I’m just sayin’...).

f) It’s a different story when a wife makes a decision to put herself under her husband when the relationship is calm and wonderful and peaceful, than when a wife must make the almost impossible decision in the midst of the chaos of an emotionally charged interchange to back off (*even when she’s right*) and let the husband take the lead. Can we do that? Can we make the decision right now that when that time comes we will grit our teeth and pinch ourselves just to make ourselves get off our position (obviously after it’s been stated and not before, because silence isn’t an option here) and let the moment pass so as not to let anyone hurt each other further? How does God work when the two halves in the marriage entity are both exercising their own will? *There is no one for God to lead.*

Hebrews 12:11

**All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful...**

g) Remember, I am just sharing my observations and experience, and I think some level of spiritual understanding that the Lord has given me. Granted, I get to operate within a kingdom seeking marriage, knowing full well that my husband is in pursuit of the kingdom. I admit that it makes this cerebral argument a whole lot easier... *but in practice, I am still unable to give him the reins of the relationship and fully trust that God is working mightily in and through our relationship to train each one of us up.* Why not let it go? Why act stubbornly? Because I want to be right. And I’m pretty smart and I know a lot of things. And I am a natural born leader. So I should lead, right? Uh, no -

1Peter 3:1

**Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.**

h) What does it show about us when we put our wants and needs above our spouse’s? And I’m speaking to both husbands and wives, because if a husband is truly in a

position of humility before the Lord and trusting Him, He will lay down his own life (his wants and his desires which emanate from a prideful place) for his wife, as he loves her sacrificially. But many times in that day-to-day practice, he must assert what he knows and believes to be godly and right for the marriage, *for the whole*, and she must be willing to fall back and let him lead. If she doesn't, if she acts like I do saying "I know I'm right," she sounds like she's full of the pride of life-

1John 2:15-17

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

i) To give one last example of what I've experienced submission to look like for a wife, I can recall many times that I have been asked my opinion on a matter so as to give Ralph guidance on how to lead me, and the marriage. And I rebel against that, since I would much rather he just leave me alone and lead me. Rebellion again - 1 person acting for the 1 person's benefit and not the 1 entity...the 1/2 not submitting to the 1/2.

j) Remember that we're supposed to be humbly submitting to the Lord in everything that comes our way... all situations, fair and unfair alike. The Lord is wanting to lead you, and when you take the reins and take the lead... guess what? You're leading and He isn't.

k) I've said enough.

5). Back to Peter's letter as he moves on in his exhortation to wives to behave excellently -

1Peter 3:3

Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-- 4 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.

a). Peter mentions the wife's outward appearance, connecting it and contrasting it with her inward appearance. Peter isn't saying that wives can't visit the hairdresser or wear jewelry or nice clothes, but the context clearly speaks about where those things are placed on the priority list. If a wife takes it to an extreme and it becomes her main focus, then she has a problem.

b). Apparently the background for this comment is that in the first century, women (who had money) would have their hair arranged in the most intricate designs so that they would lay awake all night in fear, in case their hair became ruined. This is the thought behind, 'arranging the hair'.

b). The same would be true for 'wearing gold'. This is not a prohibition against wearing anything gold, but of doing so as one's main focus to the exclusion of adorning one's inner person.

c). The idea behind the word "wearing" ( Greek word 'perithesis') is that of 'putting all around, i.e. decorating oneself with.'

d). To do anything to such a degree as to desire outward attention and focus, rather than working on the inward attention and focus, is wrong. I think of the Pharisees who went to such lengths to look good on the outside, to the detriment and neglect of the work that should have been done to the inside. And a woman can certainly find many things to occupy herself when her primary focus is on her outward appearance. Paul says something similar -

**1 Timothy 2:9**

...in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, <sup>10</sup> but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

**1 Peter 3:4**

...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.

g). And so the wife's adornment is not to be extravagantly outward, but rather 'with propriety and moderation' and must take into account 'the hidden person of the heart'.

h) 'The hidden person of the heart' concerns that which is concealed within, that which cannot be seen by the eyes of Man, but is precious in the sight of God.

i). There's nothing wrong with looking and dressing and focusing on being attractive and pleasing to the eyes (hopefully with a primary focus on being pleasing *to our husband's eyes*), but it isn't where our treasure should lie. Wives need to be godly women on the inside. And truly, femininity can be, and *should be* expressed through one's character. As we can learn from the "Proverbs wife," a wife such as this will be extremely attractive to her own husband and readily recognizable amongst those of her acquaintance.

Proverbs 31:10

Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. 11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.....25 Strength and honor are her clothing; she shall rejoice in time to come. 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness. 27 She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: 29 "Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all." 30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.

5). Moving on in I Peter, we see Peter give an example of this inward, incorruptible beauty...what he calls, 'holy women'-

1Peter 3:5

For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

a). These are women who, in former times, led separated lives, who looked to God and rested their hope fully upon Him, who in consequence of this adorned themselves with the hidden person of the heart - with a gentle and quiet spirit - by submitting themselves to their own husbands just as Sarah had made obedience to Abraham the consistent tenor of her life, calling him 'lord', not only as a mark of the respect she had for his headship, but also as an indication of her settled and assured heart attitude in their relationship. And those who 'do good' in this present time, those who do that which the holy women in former times and Sarah did, will be children of Abraham, providing they 'are not afraid with any terror'.

b). This final phrase in verse 6 seems to be difficult to understand, particularly as the word translated 'terror' only appears once in the New Testament - right here in I Peter. The word from which it comes is only used twice, and so if we look at these maybe they will provide a key for us-

Luke 21:9

"But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately."

And -

Luke 24:37

But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

e). In both occasions here in Luke's gospel we see the word used in conjunction with a lack of understanding. It could be terrifying to hear of wars and commotions, but with the knowledge that 'these things must come to pass first' and that 'the end will not come immediately' this takes away the need to be terrified – this is all within God's plans and purposes. Similarly, the disciples were terrified when they saw the Lord after His resurrection as they had not at this point understood that this must happen. If they had known what the scriptures had taught, there would not have been a need to be terrified.

f). With these two in mind then, perhaps the wife is to be aware that circumstances will arise in the relationship with her husband, especially those who are disobedient to the word, that could cause her to be 'terrified' if she were not settled and assured in her faith. Perhaps 1 Peter Chapter 4 would be applicable here –

1Peter 4:12

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

6). Then we go on in I Peter –

1Peter 3:7

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

a) The husband is to 'dwell' with his wife with 'understanding' – literally translated the word 'understanding' would be, 'according to knowing'. The idea here is that the husband would have knowledge of his wife. He is to be a lifelong student of his wife so as to know her strengths and her weaknesses. To know when to be tender and gentle and when to take a strong lead. He will know from how she looks what she is feeling and will know how to respond appropriately-

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

f). And just as Christ knows and understands and loves each one of us, the husband is to take this part of his role just as seriously. Keep in mind how extremely precious we are to Christ, and then husbands, realize that you are to feel that same way about your wife, and you carry the burden of *making sure that she knows the true value she holds in your eyes*. In each of the epistles we are constantly being reminded of what Christ did (and still does) to show His love for us; husbands, you need to create that same picture in your marriage, complete with tangible examples of sacrifice. You have no idea how powerful a picture this is in motivating your wife to be obedient in her God-given role -

“...giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel,”

g) The husband is to give his wife honor, and please notice this is a verb of action, *to give*. Honor = Greek - ‘time’ = a value, i.e. money paid, or (concretely and collectively) valuables; by analogy, esteem (especially of the highest degree), or the dignity itself:-- honour, precious, price, some.

i). There has been so much said about this phrase, ‘the weaker vessel’ which covers everything from the wife being physically weaker than her husband, to being the one more likely to be deceived because of the experience of Eve. The one that seems to resonate for me, and I feel gives most credence to the historical context of this comment, is the idea that the “weaker vessels” were the items of use that were more delicate (clay pots being made of a thinner material to create a more elegant item – think in terms of valuable china) and therefore needed to be handled with more care than the everyday items. They were *precious* and *valuable* and *easily broken*. A poignant picture for you husbands, I think.

k). There is no mistaking that when a wife submits to her husband she is essentially giving her life into the hands of another human being. The husband is to lead and the wife is to follow and in this sense, the wife becomes dependent on her husband’s faithful obedience -

Colossians 3:19

Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

l). I believe that it is absolutely imperative for the husband to embrace his role and responsibility if his wife is to become the woman that God has said she can be and if their marriage is to be a picture, even if imperfect, of Christ and His bride. A continual refusal on the husband’s part to be obedient to the scriptures in this will result in negative consequences for him at the Judgment Seat.

n). Husbands need to realize that the pain they experience in their marriage may well be self inflicted because they refuse to relate to their wives according to the scriptures. And vice-versa, wives.

o). Both the husband and the wife are 'heirs together of the grace of life' – they are both equal when it comes to the grace that will be brought to them at the Judgment Seat in order to become a joint-heir with Christ in the coming Kingdom.

p). However, although it remains true that the husband and the wife are responsible for their own faithful obedience before the Lord, it would also be true that one could be a hindrance to the other –

Matthew 26:41

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

q). And according to our Peter scripture there is a consequence for the husband not giving honor to his wife – "that your prayers may not be hindered."

r). Hindered = Greek – 'ekkopto' = to frustrate:--cut down (off, out), hew down.

s). If the husband does not give honor to his wife as to the weaker vessel, then his prayers will be cut down. That's what the Word of God says. There is a chilling echo here of what we see in Isaiah with regards to Israel –

Isaiah 1:15

When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.

t). This is not a matter to be taken lightly.

7). And so having particularly addressed servants, wives and husbands, the Holy Spirit through Peter then sees fit to give an instruction for all –

1Peter 3:8

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For "He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12

For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."

a). And it is to this more general instruction that we will return next week.