

TITLE: "Winning a Wayward Husband" (Part 1)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 3:1

THEME: *Winning a wayward husband*

NUMBER: 09071PE3.1(64)

DATE: September 9, 2007

Read Passage

This passage may be a record of sorts as far as how much time I had to devote to it. I was studying at my office in Tim Horton's last night until midnight. All told, I have nearly 30 hours this week into this text. And I anticipate that next week will have equal demands as I work my way through verse 6.

Certainly a relevant subject

T/O history Christianity has, for the most part, been a religion of the disadvantaged, not the elite. Just t/way that God has chosen to work.

Like Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 ==>

26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,28 and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are,29 that no man should boast before God.

God chose common Galileans; He chose slaves; He chose the poor (as James reminds us) to be rich in faith.

. . . not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble . . .

That's true today -

You will find few believers among t/Hollywood Jet-Set // rich and powerful // university elite // social movers and shakers.

True today; true t/o history; true in our passage. It's also been true that, t/o history, women have had a special place in t/heart and plan of God.

Great honor in being a woman and a wife

God has a peculiar love for women & a place of special honor for them (maybe part of that is because in the marriage relationship women emulate t/humility servant's heart of JC in such a special way).

Women were:

- * Last to linger at the cross; first to come to the tomb.
- * It was to a woman that Jesus first appeared after His ress.
- * In OT it was a woman, Miriam, that saved the life of Moses when he was a baby.
- * It was a woman, Queen Esther, whom God used to save the people of Israel from extinction.
- * It was a woman, Mary, through whom the Lord & Savior of univ. was born.

It's been especially true that during times of spiritual apathy, women, not men, have been most prominent. One of t/marks of true revival is t/salvation of men & their prominence in t/CH.

Historians contend that t/o CH history, t/number of women who have come to saving faith as has consistently outnumbered that of men. That may have been true in Peter's day, which brings certain issues related to marriage.

Marriage is a beautiful thing

It exemplifies the relationship between X and the CH. It is a union whereby one man and one woman become one flesh. That's why t/beauty of marriage is fulfilled when a Christian man and a Christian woman come together in purity to live as one to the glory of their Creator.

We know that picture is marred by unequally yoked spouses

I cannot imagine what it would be like to have a wife who is not a Christian. Unfathomable to me.

Yet we know that such marriages are common.

Sometimes it's because a believing man or woman, in disobed., chooses to marry someone that's not saved.

Often it's because God calls one spouse to salvation subsequent to the marriage. That happens all the time. Commonly t/one whom He calls (first) is the wife.

So what does a woman, married to an unbelieving husband do?

Does she leave him/divorce? resign herself to a life of independence? // reject her husband's position of leadership in t/home? // Preach to him, constantly nagging at him to repent and believe?

What does she do?

This is a question Peter addresses here in the first 6 vv. of Ch. 3.

I. Winning a Wayward Husband to the Word Without a Word (vv. 1-6)

Here's beauty in simplicity - two main points ==>

A. Be Subject to Him (1a)

B. Be An Example to Him (1b-6)

Nothing about preaching, begging, badgering him to come to church.

How do you win a wayward husband to the word without a word?

A. Be Subject to Him (1a)

Be submissive to his leadership & place of authority in the home.

In the same way, (Ὁμοίως) you wives . . .

1. In the same way as what?

Bringing us back to the context; specifically t/context of submission in 2:18. {read 2:18}

a. That's the context

So Peter says, "In t/same way" – not as it relates to being servants, but ISW as it relates to being subject.

(1) NOT a parallel between slaves/masters & wives/husbands

This is a connection to t/topic of submission.

In the same way, you wives be subject to your own husbands . . .

2. Important Point - This statement alone applies to all wives

Isn't just wives whose husbands are lost (we'll look at that later). Not that wives who have husbands who are believers don't have to be subject to them. No, applies to wives w/believing husbands as well. This is evident in the fact that Peter appeals to Sarah in verse 6 (Abraham) and to

believing husbands in v. 7. There were believing husbands in t/congreg.

a. Peter is specifically addressing wives with unsaved husbands

These women whom Peter addresses had come to faith but had husbands who had not, at least not as yet. Temptation would be for these women to think, *"Yeah, I understand submission. But that's only to a Christian husband. I don't have to subject myself to an unbeliever, do I?"*

Peter says, "Yes. That doesn't change."

3. Be subject to him

a. We have a participle functioning as an imperative (command) from ὑποτάσσω

(as in a rank of soldiers). Used in Luke 2:52 of Jesus' subjecting himself to his parents; in Rom. 13:1 (being subject to govern. auth.); Eph. 1:22 (all things being subject to X).

(1) Word that's used several times in 1 Peter ==>

1PE 2:13 **Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution...**

1PE2:18 **Servants, be submissive to your masters**

1PE 3:5 (of "holy women of old" who were submissive to their own husbands).

1PE 3:22 (Of Christ) **who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.**

1PE 5:5 **You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders . . .**

A compound word ὑΠΟ (under) + τασσω (to arrange or place in order).

b. Don't miss the adjective

In the same way, you wives be subject to your own husbands . . .

(1) ἰδίος - Greek word for "idiot"?!

"one's own husband, not one's idiot husband!"

Important! Every time that subjection is enjoined upon women to their husbands, the Greek, “idios,” “one’s own peculiarly,” is used.

Ephesians 5:22 **Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.**
Colossians 3:18 **Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.**

(a) Very personal

This is not the subjection of a slave; there is a sense of intimacy: "Not any husband; not any man; YOUR husband." It's possessive: "The husband who is yours".

i. There's a sense of mutual ownership in marriage

There's a sense in which the wife owns her husband & the husband owns his wife. Paul describes that in relation to sexual intimacy in 1 Cor. 7:2-4 **But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband {does}; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife {does.}**

That's t/kind of intimacy that God has in mind when God says,

Wives, be subject to YOUR husbands...

You respect him; you love him; you don't usurp his God-ordained position of auth. but you encour. him in that authority. Yes, even if he's an unbeliever.

I had once who came to me frustrated with her marriage. I think I had mentioned something in a sermon about the biblical role of submission and she came to ask me about it. I went over it with her & she basically said, "I won't do that." She later called me to tell me that she was going to find another church where that wasn't taught. I told her that she would not likely find one that has any biblical integrity and she replied, "I've already found one. I asked them about it and they said that they believe men and women are equal." I about fell out of my chair!

4. Submission does not mean inferiority or inequality

We tend to think about "equality" in terms of 2 people(s) having everything the same (same status; privileges; abilities; rights). The Bible differentiates between 2 kinds of equality.

a. Essential equality and Functional equality

Very imp. that you understand this. Not only because it relates to marriage, but also relates to God's created order & even fellowship w/i t/Trinity. Have to understand diff. between Essential & Functional equality.

(1) Essential equality refers to inherent or real equality

It relates to t/worth of someone or something. Essentially, men & women are equals in worth. Men not more spiritual; men not more in "image of God." Men do not have more worth before God. Not that when God made women he made someone essentially less equal than men. Men & women are essentially or ontologically equal.

(2) Functional Equality (as the name implies) means being equal in function or purpose

Just a basic fact. We couldn't function as a society w/o a recognition of this.

If you're driving down t/road and a police car pulls behind you and t/lights come on, you don't say, "Who does he think he is? I'm not pulling over. He's not superior to me. We're equals." No, you recognize t/authority that you don't have in this particular instance and you pull over.

Being a president or a king does not make one a superior person ontologically speaking. But it does give one a certain rank or position that t/rest do not have.

Not recognizing this basic truth has led to t/most egregious acts in history. Such as racism & t/persecution of t/Jews under Nazi Germany.

All men are created equal. M & W are complete equals essentially, BUT they are not = functionally in that God has diff. purposes for M & W.

There is a God-ordained distinction between t/roles that M&W are to have in society; in t/home; & in t/CH. I believe that t/dissolving of that God-ordained distinction is a key element in t/failure of our society; homes; & CHs today.

(a) Part and parcel of a pagan culture is the erasure of these distinctives (we see that in ever-increasing measure today)

Today we have W. boxers & wrestlers. Women are put on t/front lines of t/battlefield in t/name of equality. Women who exhibit t/equal of even t/most crude behaviors in men.

We have W. who want to be M. & who, sad to say, sometimes try to look like men (always a strange sight).

General belief today is that it's degrading to have a life devoted to t/home & t/raising of children. It's somehow demeaning to be feminine & chaste

God says, "No!" I've designed you to be equal, but different! Essentially equal, but functionally not equal in that God has different roles for M&W.

i. We can draw a parallel to the Trinity

Essentially, t/Father is not superior to the Son and the Son is not superior to the Holy Spirit. All 3 members of the Trinity are co-equal essentially.

BUT, NOTE THIS - When it comes to FUNCTIONAL equality the 3 members of the Trinity are not equal. "What do you mean by that?" There is headship even within the Godhead.

Why Paul could write in 1 Cor. 11 that==>

...Christ is the head of every man and the man is the head of a woman and God is the head of Christ. There is a headship, a hierarchy, even in t/Trinity!

Considering all of this, John MacArthur comments ==>

In what way, then, is God the Father the head of Christ? Never in essence (or nature), but only in function. Within the function of the Godhead it was deemed necessary that Christ should submit Himself to the Father. The same Jesus who said, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth' (Matt. 28:19) also said, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me' (John 4:34). In their nature, or essence, the members of the Trinity are equal, but by God's design their functions demanded that the Son submit to the Father in a selfless humiliation. Does that make us think less of the Son? Of course not; it makes us think more highly of Him! It is part of His wondrous beauty.

Now here's the point: the same kind of structure is necessary in marriage. The partners' spiritual natures are the same, their positions before God are equal, but in order for the family to function in harmony, the woman, with no loss of dignity, takes the place of submission to the headship of her husband. Her tenderness and gentleness, given by God, are to come alongside to support the strength of the man. The issue is not superiority or inferiority. Mutual submission in marriage blends without confusion or contradiction with the concepts of headship and authority. As she submits to follow, as he submits to lead her. Both authority and submission are still preserved, which is essential for proper function in marriage."

[MacArthur, The Family, 18-19]

Wives: You are being most Xlike when you subject yourself to your husband! Why? Because you are imitating humble servant, JC! That isn't demeaning; it's exalting. That isn't slavery, it's emancipation!

5. Christianity elevated the status of women

In Jewish culture (add: Not by God's Design): W. were cons. inferior to M & gen. did not have a part in public life. Under Jewish trad., W. were cons. "property," had no legal rights & could not be called as witnesses in law courts. In t/temple, they stayed in t/women's court, which was t/most remote, & in t/synagogues, they sat w/the children & slaves. Much less study of T Law was required of W. of M. & they were considered intell. inferior & unable to learn. UNDERSTAND THAT & you understand how counter-culture Paul was--esp. when he declared in 1 Tim. 2 "let a woman receive instruction."

At age 12, W ceased to be consid. children & were permitted to marry at 12 ½ . A wife could not divorce her husband, BUT husbands freely divorced their wives as many of t/Jews took great liberality w/Deut. 24:1 (uncleanness) ==> Rabbi Hillel taught that a wife was unclean if she spoiled his dinner or put too much salt on it! [burning the bagals!].

Rabbi Akiba insisted that if a man found a woman that was more beautiful than his wife, his wife became unclean in his eyes & he could write her a cert. of divorce. [MacArthur, The Family, 21]

W. kept out of sight when visitors were present, served all t/males of t/family before eating, did hard labor such as hauling water & working in t/fields, as well as household chores such as cooking, cleaning, making clothes, caring for t/children. As far as travel is concerned: W. walked while M. rode! (cf. the common picture of Joseph pulling a donkey with a pregnant Mary riding it - this is backwards!). [cf. Ralph Gower, The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times, 58]

As for Greek culture: It wasn't any better. As N.T. Commentator William Barclay observes==>

"In Greek society a respectable woman lived a life of entire seclusion. She never appeared on the streets alone, not even to go marketing. She lived in the women's apartments and did not join the menfolk even for meals. From her there was demanded complete servitude and chastity; but her husband could go out as much as he chose and could enter into as many relationships outside marriage as he liked without accruing any stigma. Under Jewish and Greek laws and custom all the privileges belonged to the husband and all the duties to the wife." [Colossians, 161]

As for marriage: Gk society consid. romantic love to be a form of possession or madness & not suitable grounds for marriage. Marriages were usu. arranged with an eye toward dowries w/father providing money, clothing, jewelry, or slaves for his daughter. Males 30 years old commonly married girls of 15.

Husbands usu. had mistresses which his wife gen. endured w/patience knowing t/charms of her husband's newly found girlfriend would eventually wear off & she would become another household slave.

Adultery led to divorce only when committed by the wife. For the Greek man, divorce was simple, being granted on demand for any reason (or no reason at all). [Will Durant, The Life of Greece, 302ff.]

Point is: Xnty elevated t/status of W. & wives from depths of cultural dissonance to lofty place where God designed them to be ==> 1 wife subject to 1 loving husband for life. Partners & co-heirs to eternal life.

6. "Yeah, but aren't the statements about wives submitting to their husbands culturally conditioned?"

That's for a time when women were considered inferior. But we know better now, don't we?

Biblical NT scholar Achtemeier writes ==>

"Dominant among the elite was the notion that the woman was by nature inferior to the man. Because she lacked the capacity for reason that the male had, she was ruled rather by her emotions, and was as a result given to poor judgement, immorality, intemperance, wickedness, avarice; she was untrustworthy, contentious, and as a result, it was her place to obey."

[as quoted by Schreiner, page 150]

a. That was the dominant culture to which Peter wrote

And, so, many today would say this is culturally conditioned and the biblical distinctions in the Bible are not applicable today. Women can be pastors, teach w/authority in the church, they do not have any role of submission to their husbands.

b. Again, this has nothing to do with inferiority

Interesting that nowhere does Peter or any biblical writer teach that women are inferior to men. Nor is it taught that they are intellectually inferior, unable to learn, more prone to sin. Men and women are equal.

Gal. 3:28 (neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female all one in CJ).

What does Peter say v. 7 {read}

(she is so much an equal that if her believing husband mistreats her, his prayers will be hindered!).

The NT WAS "counter-culture" as it related to women. Jesus' treatment of women was revolutionary!

As Thomas Schreiner writes:

"The question, therefore, is not whether women are equal with men, for the NT is clear on this matter. The issue is whether such equality is compatible with the call for wives to submit to their husbands." [page 150]

c. There are ways to determine if something is culturally conditioned and in what sense

Even for those things that are cultural in nature, there is an abiding principle that is trans-cultural. IOW - cultural expressions may change, the truth behind them does not.

We may not "greet one another with a holy kiss." But we do have sanctified handshakes and hugs.

We may not wash one another's feet, but we do perform acts of humility and service.

Women may not wear head-coverings, but they are to subject themselves to male leadership in t/CH & in t/home.

d. Key in this regard is the fact that the abiding principle of submission is grounded in theology not in culture

(1) Turn to Ephesians 5 {read vv. 22-25}

(2) Look at 1 Timothy 2:9-13

Submission as a biblical truth transcends culture. It isn't done away by culture. In some cases there will be different ways in which submission is expressed from culture to culture, but the abiding principle remains.

e. Interesting to note how balanced the reformers were in this regard

Go back 500 years and you're in a different culture, especially as far as women were concerned. Yet Calvin argued that there were times when mutual submission of husbands & wives was appropriate. He even argued that at times it is right for parents to submit to their children. But this was in balance with the concept of headship, that parents are in authority over their children and that the husband has authority over his wife. [cf. Schreiner, footnote on page 151]

Again, here's the relevant question as it relates to 1 Peter==>

7. What if my husband is disobedient?

What if rejects t/faith? Or is even antagonistic against it?

a. Question arises as to winning them

The family is our first and foremost mission field. Epicenter is the home. Especially for wives here the question is, do they drill their husbands with sermons, nag at them, put gospel tracts in his tackle box.

First and foremost comes the issue of character.

"Wives are to win wayward husbands to the Word without a word."

That begins w/being in subjection to them.

7. What this means and what it doesn't mean

a. It doesn't mean that women are to subject themselves to all men in general, but to their husbands in particular

Wives, be subject to YOUR husbands...

The command does not require women to be subordinate to men in general but to their husbands as a function of order within the home.

You could be a woman who works outside of t/home & who is in authority over men. Yet, when that woman comes home, she lovingly places herself under the headship of her husband.

It does mean that a wife is to accept her place in the family under the leadership of her husband whom God has sov. placed as head in the home.

b. It doesn't mean that husbands have carte-blanche authority

Remember what we said back in chapter 2?

We may lawfully disobey any authority when that authority commands us to do something God forbids, or forbids us to do something God commands.

(1) Sometimes this is obvious

Your husband asks you to do something immoral or illegal. You don't do it. Or if he says, "I have decided to become a Buddhist and I want you to

come with me to worship." Don't do it. 1 Cor. 10:14 (flee from idolatry)

(a) Daniel Chapter 3 ==>

14 Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? 15 "Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe, and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, {very well.} But if you will not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?" 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17 "If it be {so,} our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 "But {even} if {He does} not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

(b) This is a good connection to the context of 1 Peter

In t/1st century, husbands had much more to lose in converting to a disdained religion such as Xnty. Pagan husbands would have required that their wives worship pagan gods with them so that they would not be accused by Rome of atheism.

Plutarch said, " A wife should not acquire her own friends, but should make her husband's friends her own. The gods are the first and most significant friends. For this reason, it is proper for a wife to recognize only those gods whom her husband worships . . ." [quote by Schreiner, 153]

There was much to lose. Wouldn't have been easy for a women then to buck t/trend and reject t/paganism of t/day.

What if he forbids you to go to church. He says, *"I don't want you doing that religious stuff. You stay home on Sundays from now on. And I don't want you to have anything to do with Christians."* What do you do? He's asking you to do something that God forbids: to forsake the company of the redeemed.

You may have to exercise wisdom and discretion. This doesn't mean you flaunt your liberty and say, *"Forget you, Charlie! I'm going to church and I'll be there all day. And, then I'm going to Monday Bible study; and Tuesday Prayer meeting; and Wednesday Outreach; and Thursday Quilting; and the Friday Gals Gossip Group."* If going to a midweek service rocks the boat at home, stay home. Pray for your husband's heart and pray that God will move in him to give you more freedom.

Your husband may even be religious. What if he's a Mormon or a J.W. or is a participant in some other cult. Do you participate w/him? No!

b. Husbands do not have carte-blanche authority

God is t/highest authority. We must do what he commands & not do what he forbids.

Goes w/o saying, a husband's authority ceases when it comes to dangerous or abusing situations. Or danger to one's children. Subjection, not stupidity.

c. It doesn't mean that an unsaved husband is the spiritual leader or influence in the family He can't be!

Wives w/unregenerate husbands, de facto, have to function as t/spiritual leader in t/home. In 1 Cor. 7 Paul talks about how an unbelieving husband or child is sanctified thru t/influence of a believing wife.

d. It doesn't mean you become a partaker of foolishness

It doesn't mean you become a partner to bizarre or strange practices.

What if your husband demands that every evening, at 8:00 O'Clock, you stand on the coffee table and hop up and down on one foot ten times?

Or if every time you're away from home or out of his sight you have to call in to him every 90 minutes?

Or you can't drive the car any faster than 30 MPH (on the freeway not in the driveway!)?

Maybe he's obsessive/compulsive and paranoid and he demands that you take part in his folly? So every night you have to flip the light switch on and off while you sing the tune to Gilligan's Island before you can go to bed! And he demands that you do something like this & if you don't he reminds you that you are to be submissive! What do you do? I'll tell you what you don't do. You don't become a partner in foolishness.

God is not a partner to foolishness. Why questions such as "Can God make a rock so big he cannot lift it" are foolish. They are logically absurd. Proverbs 13:20 - the companion of fools suffers harm
Eccl. 5:1 - don't participate in the sacrifice of fools . . .

e. Add, You cannot do that which violates your conscience

Command is to maintain a good, clear conscience.

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A. Be Subject to Him (1a)

B. Be An Example to Him (1b-6)