

Hope For My Home

July 20, 2010

Scripture: 1 Peter 3:1-7

1 Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

2 While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear.

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Summary: Third in a five-part series from 1 Peter that addresses how to find hope for our lives.

Read 1 Peter 3:1-7

“A good marriage isn’t so much finding the right partner as it is being the right partner.”

- Chuck Swindoll

As a wife, I bring hope to my home when...

1. Submission surpasses selfishness

Submit = to subject oneself for the purpose of obeying or pleasing another In the Bible, submission does not mean that one party being inferior to another,

it just means that God has established a “chain of command”, he has given each party certain responsibilities in the relationship.

1 Corinthians 11:3 (NIV)

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

Jesus is not inferior to God the Father; he just has a different role. The same thing is true in a marriage. The wife is not inferior to the husband. She just has a different role.

Peter begins this section with the words “in the same way”, which points back to the last part of chapter 2 where he describes how Jesus submitted himself to the pain and humiliation of the cross for the sake of others.

Peter isn’t the only one who writes about the need for a wife to submit to her husband. Paul describes the very same principle several times in his letters:

Ephesians 5:21 (NIV)

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Ephesians 5:22-24 (NIV)

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

Colossians 3:18 (NIV)

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Peter and Paul are both actually elevating the status of women in marriage.

In the culture of the 1st century, wives were considered to be merely property rather than equal partners with their husbands in marriage. But in order for there to be hope in a marriage the wife must be willing to put aside her own selfish desires and willingly subject herself to the needs of her husband. As

we'll see in a few minutes, that is not all that different than what her husband is to do also.

2. Behavior beats badgering

Peter writes to women whose husbands were not believers. This was a very common problem in the early church. If a man became a Christian, his wife would almost always follow and become a believer, too. But if the wife became a Christian, it wasn't all that common for the husband to follow her decision.

From my own personal observations, that still seems to be the case today.

That's probably why Peter writes six verses to the women and only one verse to the men in this passage. Or maybe, he just figured the men could only work on one thing at a time.

Peter makes it really clear in this passage that the way to win an unbelieving husband to the Lord is not by nagging or badgering.

Instead, the wife's behavior is to be such that when here husband observes it (the Greek word here means to look very carefully at something) he will have a desire to see what it is that causes his wife to behave in that way.

That's exactly what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV)

14. "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

15. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl.

Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

16. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

3. Character crowns cosmetics

1 Peter 3:3, 4 (Message)

What matters is not your outer appearance – the styling of your hair, the jewelry you wear, the cut of your clothes – but your inner disposition. Cultivate inner beauty, the gentle, gracious kind that God delights in.

The word translated “outward appearance” by Peterson or “outward adornment” in the NIV is the Greek word from which we get our word “cosmetics”.

Peter is not saying that a woman should not pay any attention at all to her appearance.

In fact, I’m sure that most of us as husbands appreciate it when our wives take the time to look attractive.

But Peter says that if you really want to win your husbands to the Lord, if you really want to have hope in your marriages that you have to spend a whole lot more time cultivating your character, your inner beauty.

And what does that character look like?

Peter writes that God delights in a woman who has a gentle, quiet spirit.

I think that a husband also delights in that kind of woman, too.

So women, if you want to bring hope to your homes and to your marriages,

- ♣ focus on being submissive rather than selfish,**
- ♣ speak through your behavior rather than badgering words**
- ♣ focus on developing your character more than your outward beauty.**

As a husband, I bring hope to my home when...

1. Intimacy inhibits isolation

“...as you live with your wives...” = dwell together

Implies more than just living together under the same roof; implies deep intimacy, more than just physical intimacy.

Genesis 2:24 (NIV)

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

One survey several years ago found that the average husband and wife only shared 37 minutes a week in actual communication.

Do you and your spouse feed each other a steady diet of put-downs?

If you do, your marriage could be headed for divorce court.

When psychologists Cliff Nortarius and Howard Markman studied newlyweds over the first decade of marriage, they discovered that couples who stayed together spoken 5 or fewer put-downs in every 100 comments to each other.

But couples who inflicted twice as many verbal wounds -- 10 or more putdowns out of every 100 comments -- later split up.

Watch what you say! Little, nit-picking comments are like a cancer in marriage, slowly draining the life out of a committed relationship.

2. Caring conquers comfort

“...be considerate...” = according to knowledge (understanding gained through experience)

Someone once asked Mrs. Albert Einstein if she understood her husband’s theory of relativity. She replied, “No, but I understand the Doctor.”

As husbands, we need to be students of our wives. We need to know their needs and their desires. And for most of us, that’s not always a very comfortable thing to do.

The husband who was told by the marriage counselor to try and be more considerate of his wife. One day he comes home from work. He’s dressed up in a suit, he has cologne on, and he has a bouquet of flowers and a box of

candy in his hands. He rings the doorbell and he's standing there as she opens the door; he holds out the flowers and the box of candy.

The wife opens the door takes one look at him standing there and starts crying. In between her sobs she says, "Oh, I can't believe it! Little Johnny has been throwing up; ... the dishwasher just broke; ... your parents are coming to visit this weekend and ... to top it all off, you come home drunk!

3. Respect relinquishes rights

"respect" is from the same root word translated "precious" in 1:19, where it describes the blood of Christ. It is a word that describes something of great value. I think Paul gives us some more insight about what it means to honor or respect our wives:

Ephesians 5:25 (NIV)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...

The key to honoring my wife is to be willing to give up my own rights in order to meet the needs of my wife.

Isn't that exactly what Jesus did on the cross?

Notice that Peter describes the woman as the "weaker vessel" in v. 7.

This does not mean that she is weaker mentally, morally or spiritually, but it refers to the fact that they are generally weaker physically.

Maybe it would be helpful for us as men to think of honor or respect as treating our wives like expensive, beautiful, fragile vases.

Frankly, most of us husbands are pretty good at respecting our wives while we're dating and even in the early years of marriage, but after a while we get lazy and selfish.

A couple of kids were in their attic reading old letters their parents had written years ago. The boy said to the girl: "These aren't the names they call each other now."

So what are some practical ways I can honor and respect my wife?

♣ Open the car door for her

♣ Remember her birthday and our anniversary

My husband's uncle thought he had conquered the problem of trying to remember his wife's birthday and their anniversary. He opened an account with a florist, provided him with the dates and instructions to send flowers along with an appropriate note signed, "Your loving husband." His wife was thrilled by this new display of attention, and all went well until one day when he came home, kissed his wife and said offhandedly, "Nice flowers, honey. Where did you get them?"

♣ Watch the way I speak to her and the way I speak about her in front of others.

♣ Back her up in front of the kids

So, men, if you want to bring hope to your home and to your marriage, you need to:

♣ Cultivate intimacy by spending quality time with your wife in real conversation

♣ Become a student of your wife, so that you can understand her deepest needs and desires

♣ Honor and respect your wife with your words and your actions.