

Women's Bible Study

1 Peter 3:7

September 7, 2022

What thoughts enter your mind when you hear the word submission?

What examples of submission are practiced regularly?

We will pick up our study in 1Peter 3 from before our summer break. Recall in 1Peter 2, we read the command to submit to those in authority (v.13). We then moved from a general application of submission to more specific applications. Servants are commanded to submit to their masters (v.18). Our example of submission is Christ to His Father's will (v.21-24). In 1Peter 3 we were given another specific example of submission – wives to their husbands (v.1). In all instances, submission in a believer's life stems from obedience to the word and is a reflection of the heart.

1Peter 3:7 now addresses the specific role of husbands to their wives. Fulfilling any role or command in Scripture is a picture of submission to God as our Head. His is the ultimate authority and we glorify His name when we willingly follow His word.

1Peter 3:7 You husbands likewise, live with [your wives] in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

- A husband is to live with his wife in an understanding way.
- A woman is a weaker vessel.
- A husband is to honor his wife as a fellow heir.
- The result is unhindered prayer.

'Likewise' tells us to look back. The same principle of submission and obedience to the word from the heart is applied to the husband. His submission is to Christ; He is to follow the commands God put forth to a husband. You could say, 'In the same way', or 'In the same manner'. 1Peter 3:7 says husbands are to live with their wives *in an understanding way*, or *according to knowledge* in the *KJV*.

Think! What must one do to live in an understanding way, or according to knowledge?

To live according to knowledge, implies that something is known. I am unable to understand and apply information I am unaware of. So, we must seek knowledge with a desire to understand. This knowledge then is more than information stored, it is information applied. In order for us to begin to try and fulfill the commands God has set forth for us in specific relationships, we need to be able to answer some questions. Since marriage is addressed, this is where we will focus our thoughts. What does God's word say about the marriage relationship? What does God's word say about the roles of

husband and wife? What is God's design for husband and wife? It would seem reasonable that the answers to these questions would be the basis to living in an understanding way with one another.

Consider the importance of authority or leadership in any role to a believer – ***this responsibility requires a careful regard for the encouragement and care of those you are leading.*** God made a woman as a helper to man – it is wise for him to encourage his wife who is specifically designed to help and support him.

Genesis 2:18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

Ge 2:23-24 And the man said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Think for a moment of encouraging those in leadership. Many of you have worked in the education system. You may have experienced students who follow leadership and direction eagerly, and students who disregard authority. **How does this affect the classroom? Is it encouraging or discouraging to those in charge?**

In 1Peter 3:7, we read the words, '**as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman**'. In our world and culture today, these words totally do not fly! You could not be more politically incorrect! To be called a weaker vessel because you are a woman is considered demeaning and oppressive. I fear you would have woman's rights advocates pounding on your door if you verbally promoted this! However, this *is* what God's word says, so it *is* important. It *is* truth (whether we like it or not or agree with it or not) and must be addressed. But let's make sure we understand the definition of a **weaker vessel**. We can jump to conclusions and easily take offense without truly understanding what is meant by a weaker vessel.

What comes to your mind when you think of something being weak?

Weaker, from *asthenes*, means strengthless – literally, figuratively, and morally. It carries the idea of being feeble, impotent, sick, without strength, and weak (-er, -ness, thing).

Obviously, the definition above seems to be a gut punch. This is quite opposite of the words from the 1996 song, "*I Am Woman*", sung by *Helen Reddy*. You probably recognize some of the lyrics – "*I am woman, hear me roar, in numbers too big to ignore ... I am strong, I am invincible*". This song actually became relevant in the feminist fight for equality.

I looked up the word weaker in WordWeb and twelve definitions were listed. Among them:

- Wanting in physical strength; "a weak pillar"

- Wanting in moral strength, courage, or will; having the attributes of man as opposed to e.g. divine beings; “I’m only a weak human”
- Deficient or lacking in some skill

And my favorite:

- Lacking bodily or muscular strength or vitality; as in “a weak old woman”

Personally, I’m not offended by this, perhaps because I am able to relate!

If you google the question ‘Are women physically weaker than men?’, you will find that an overwhelming percentage of answers say yes. In general, women are physically weaker, they are anatomically different. It is no secret that our world is broken – it is imperative that we seek to share truth at every opportunity. It has become vogue for women to decide they are men and men to decide they are woman. Society, in their own demise, has coined a practice called gender reassignment; we ignore God’s perfect plan of creation and have instituted our own. Part of the process of a woman becoming a man, at least physically, is to pump her full of testosterone. Testosterone is the “key male sex hormone that regulates fertility, **muscle mass**, fat distribution, and red blood cell production”, according to *MedicalNewsToday*. All this to say, we know there is a difference between sexes, and we know that men are generally larger and stronger. This is not a ‘put down’, it is a fact. On average, women are smaller – they are shorter and weigh less. Consider why there are separate national sports leagues for men and women, and why they compete in most Olympic games separately, having teams of men and teams of women.

Does being a weaker vessel mean woman are incapable?

Not at all! Both male and female are vessels for God’s glory. Think! Do you consider less of a child because they are physically weaker than an adult? Of course not, it is expected because they are a child. How about someone with a disability who cannot perform the same tasks as others? It is acceptable that we are weaker than others in some areas. Any strength we do have either physical, moral, or emotional, comes from God. Whatever is accomplished by us is because of God.

2Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;

2Corinthians 12:9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

God did create male and female differences – biologically we are different, our hormones are different, and we have been given different roles in the area of reproduction. Men and women, in general, are also different in the way they think, how information is processed and related.

Think again about a vessel and its purpose. From the Greek word *skeuos*, it is an implement, equipment, or apparatus – “specially, a wife as contributing to the usefulness of the husband”. This supports the truth that each gender has been created for specific roles. Neither is more important; however they function differently with unique abilities. Consider how sports teams are organized. Each player has a specific position and purpose. If they all work together, they are successful. Some positions are seemingly unimportant, yet without their cooperation and contribution, the team would not do as well.

God is the one who set up the team of husband and wife. Look back to [Ephesians 5:22-33](#). Therefore, He knows how we work best together for His glory.

Consider this example. I want to plant something in my garden, I need to dig a hole, and I have a hose and a trowel available to use. [What would I use?](#)

Obviously, I would use the trowel to dig a hole. Does it make the hose any less important? Of course not, in fact without the water delivered from the hose, my garden would die. Both are necessary to accomplish the goal; they are used differently but work together and are equally important to the success of my garden.

Our last few studies in 1Peter 3 have specifically addressed roles in marriage. [What if you are single? How does this text apply?](#) Being single does not mean a person is incomplete or missing out on something. In fact, remaining single has its own strengths and opportunities. Each of us are to set our eyes on Jesus to accomplish His will in our life. Some He has destined to marry; some He has destined to singleness. Both relationships, if founded in Christ, will glorify Him. Contentment whether we are married or single, for whatever reason, will cause us to trust God for His direction.

[1Corinthians 7:8](#) But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I.

Whatever relationship we are in, servant, master, single, or married, we are to walk according to God’s commands seeking to please Him through our obedience.

[1Corinthians 7:17](#) Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And thus I direct in all the churches.

In 1Peter 3:7, we read another role of husband to wife is to [grant her honor](#). Honor, *time (tee-may)*, gives something value; it means a high degree of esteem. This word is also used to describe something as precious, as in having high worth or being treasured. Each of us is to regard others as God’s creation, having value because of Him.

[1Peter 2:17](#) Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

Husbands are reminded that their role is to protect, care for, and lead their wives. ***We have different roles but the same reality in Christ*** – [fellow heirs of the grace of life](#) – God’s riches, His forgiveness through Christ, His promise of a future with Him.

Race, gender, age, abilities, and so forth, may separate our roles or importance in an earthly sense. However, in Christ, we are heirs of the same riches of eternal life.

Romans 8:16-17 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him] in order that we may also be glorified with [Him.]

Ephesians 3:6 [to be specific], that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,

Titus 3:7 that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to [the] hope of eternal life.

The husbands' instruction is to live in an understanding way, and to grant honor to his wife as someone who shares in the same standing in Christ – **so that his prayers may not be hindered**. The intent is that through obedience of the heart, the husband is right with God. As he seeks to live in an understanding way with his wife, honoring her as a fellow heir of Christ, he will be blessed. Obedience, understanding, care, and honor, are universal to all relationships in the body of Christ. Christ died for all; each life bowed before Him is precious.

Psalm 66:18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear;

John 9:31 "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.

Psalm 145:18 The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.

In a marriage relationship, there is the blessing of co-laboring as husband and wife towards the same end. Right leadership of a husband requires the heart of a servant. Sin, in any form or thought, will hinder, or excise, prayer.

Ephesians 4:29- 32 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such [a word] as is good for edification according to the need [of the moment,] that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

1Peter 3:7 is an exhortation specifically to husbands, yet we can apply these principals in a general sense regardless of our specific role in life.

- We can live in an understanding way with those in our lives. This might require showing more grace and forgiveness, developing a heart of compassion and care, accepting the strengths and weaknesses of others, seeking at all times to be an encouragement to others in their relationship with Christ.

- If we are married, we can help our husband fulfill his role by willingly following his lead. We can show gratitude through our words and actions for his efforts to care for us. We can accept with joy that God has appointed our husband as head of our family. Ladies, if you are married the single most important thing you can do for your husband is to faithfully pray for his relationship to grow in the Lord. Then trust that God is working in both of your lives. If you are single, you can encourage your friends who are married to submit to their husband.
- We all have authority to submit to in relationships, and each individual answers to the ultimate authority of Christ. You can purposefully choose an attitude of submission towards those in leadership over you. You can promote peace by concentrating on being a woman who honors God in all things.