

Women's Bible Study

May 4th, 2022

1Peter 3:1-2

We'll concentrate on three important words – submission, conversation, and behavior. These words describe some of the characteristics of those who seek to follow Jesus. Keep this question in mind – **What do others see in us?**

Specifically in this case the focus is on wives, however the testimony of our love for Christ through our words and actions is universal to all God's children. So whether you are single, divorced, married, or widowed, these principles should be applied.

1Peter 3:1-2 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any [of them] are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

1Peter Chapter 1 listed the numerous blessings of being called by Christ to follow Him. In Him we have a certain future; we are able to have joy not based on circumstances but rather on God's promises.

1Peter Chapter 2 introduced specific sins we are to avoid and the need for our pursuit of growth in our walk. Jesus is our solid foundation and those who follow Him are blessed. Excellent behavior and submission to authority will cause a believer to look different from the world around them. This may be difficult, yet it is desirable because God is honored by our example of His righteousness. We have God's protection as our Shepherd; our purpose is to glorify Him in all things.

Now in 1Peter Chapter 3, the instruction of submitting to those in leadership over us continues with specific examples.

In the NAS, the first words we read are, 'In the same way'. The KJV says, 'Likewise'. These words refer to what has already been described in the previous chapter. The concept of submission is applied to those in governing authority (2:13), to masters (2:18), and now, in wives to their own husbands. We could also include children to parents, employers to employees, and perhaps there are other relationships you can think of where submitting to authority would apply.

The importance is not so much the submission; it is **the purpose of submission**. Being submissive to God's commands gives glory to His deity. God knows all things therefore we can trust and obey His plan. Submission itself, as a practice, is a powerful tool in avoiding chaos. You have heard the idiom, "too many chiefs and not enough Indians". This saying may be politically incorrect in our culture today, but it describes a picture for us of everyone wanting to be in charge and not enough people willing to do the work. Instruction gives direction, it produces order, and it encourages accomplishment of a task.

What was Jesus' example of submission?

Matthew 26:39 And He went a little beyond [them,] and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet *not as I will*, but as Thou wilt."

John 6:38 "For I have come down from heaven, *not to do My own will*, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, *He humbled Himself by becoming obedient* to the point of death, even death on a cross.

This charge to submission is not from force. It is a choice to place oneself under another, to become subordinate to another and obey. Forcing someone to obey is just controlling someone. Much the same as forcing someone to love – it cannot be done. The action of following commands or saying 'I love you' mean nothing if not from the heart. When we view ourselves as being subject to authority, we willingly surrender power to someone else. This is an act of humility – desiring to please someone else's directive above your own. It acknowledges that perhaps others have a better understanding or more complete information. Read Jesus' words, '*not as I will*'. Jesus did not quit when it got difficult, He did not give up on the will of His Father, He did not decide He had a better plan, and He did not abandon His purpose or position. Instead He relied on God's perfect plan for mankind's redemption. He called on God's grace and strength to complete His mission. He chose to trust in God's plan and paid the ultimate price in giving His life. There is no account of His saying it was too hard, or others were to mean, or that He simply could not continue because He did not like what was happening. His sight was on the authority of His Father in heaven. His example is one of greatest humility. Jesus' example is that God knows perfectly how His plan of redemption will come to fruition and to honor Him, we must obey and willingly be used by Him for His glory.

In Chapter 2 of this book, we read that in the case of governing authorities and masters of all kinds we are to submit. Similarly, wives are to submit themselves to their husbands. This act of willful obedience recognizes the important role of a husband to lead as the rightful head of the family.

Ephesians 5:21-24 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives, [be subject] to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself [being] the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives [ought to be] to their husbands in everything.

1Corinthians 11:3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

Colossians 3:18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

1Peter 3:1 speaks mainly to wives with an unbelieving husband, however the principle to submit remains the same in application to those whose husbands believe. You may be thinking that because you are widowed or single, the understanding of this truth is not applicable or lacks importance for you. I would disagree. How do you encourage your married friends and family? Are you respectful of their relationships? It

also might be tempting to spend more time with your friend who is a believer than your husband who is not. What would God have you do?

Think of this simple word picture of walking a dog. How difficult is it to leash a dog and walk it if it is pulling and grunting and fighting every step of the way? When our French bulldog Lily, was a puppy, we would try to take her on walks – notice the word try – and always a few blocks into our walk she would simply lay down, sometimes in the middle of crossing a street, and refuse to take another step. The choice at that point was to leave her, drag her, or carry her the rest of the way. Although this is a silly example it does convey the difficulty to those in charge when we refuse to submit.

Do we encourage leadership by supporting those in charge or do we make it difficult, always pushing our own directives as more important?

Willful submission encourages those in authority. In addition, this behavior also has the potential of gaining approval. Our verse says *'be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any [of them] are disobedient to the word, **they may be won without a word** by the behavior of their wives'*.

"The apostle next gave directions concerning the duties of wives and husbands, as a matter of great importance to the credit and success of the gospel. In general, wives were commanded to be "subject to their own husbands;" and even they who were married to Gentiles or other unbelievers, whether they had been converted since their marriage, or had sinfully brought themselves into so trying a situation, ought to obey this commandment in all things lawful ... This must be attended to in a conscientious manner; not only in order to lighten their own trial and to "adorn the gospel," but with an especial aim at the conversion of their husbands; which was not so much to be expected from a disputatious attempt to teach them the gospel, as from the silent persuasive eloquence of a becoming deportment. Thus the wives might hope to win upon those who did not obey the word, but treated it with contempt and neglect; as the constant, obliging, amiable conduct, and prudent discourse of such near relatives, would tend to soften their prejudices and conciliate their affections; and so induce them to pay more attention to the preaching of the gospel", Thomas Scott.

1Corinthians 7:16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

1Corinthians 9:19 For though I am free from all [men,] **I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more.**

Ephesians 5:1-2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, **an offering and a sacrifice to God** as a fragrant aroma.

Colossians 4:5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise wins souls.

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, that they may encourage the

young women to love their husbands, to love their children, [to be] sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, ***being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.***

Note, submission is not based on whether it is easy, acknowledged, or appreciated. Rather, it is based on our love and obedience to God. Circumstances should not be the sole dictator of our actions; instead, God's love for us and our gratefulness to Him, should cause our willful subjection to authority.

The act of submitting to those in authority, and especially to one's husband, is considered archaic and even oppressive in our culture today. This is not a popular or accepted ideal. This means we will look different than those around us who do not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. By our unusual example, perhaps we will have the opportunity to share truth.

Galatians 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

Proverbs 16:7 When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Hebrews 13:20-21 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, [even] Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom [be] the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Does my conduct influence those around me, specifically my unbelieving husband if applicable, to desire the very thing that causes my pleasing acceptance of their leadership?

Is my example godly or worldly?

Consider how the behavior and words of others affect you either negatively or positively. We can be drawn towards another and more readily listen to them and observe them with interest. Or we can be repulsed by someone's actions, wanting nothing to do with their philosophies.

Read Paul's account of humility in his letter to the church at Philippi.

Philippians 3:7-8 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ,

1Peter 1:17-19 And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay [upon earth]; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, [the blood] of Christ.

Fear and reverence of God will result in subjection to obedience towards your own husband and towards those placed in authority. We are called to share the Gospel when we speak; we are called to exemplify the Gospel through our behavior.

1Peter 3:2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

Whether we like it or not, whether we admit others are affected by our words and actions, the reality is others do watch. Consider a child imitating their parent or an employee watching the example of their employer. We may not be responsible entirely for someone else's decisions however we must realize that our example does absolutely affect others. For this, we are responsible!

The word observe used in 1Peter 3:2 can be translated to inspect, to watch, to behold. When we inspect something, we look at it carefully, we check for accuracy and verification of its source. In this case, the unbelieving husband pays attention to his wife's behavior. He can either be drawn towards her beliefs or pushed away from them. There is no guarantee that excellent behavior will draw him in however we never want to be the one whose inconsistencies deter someone away from the Gospel. In the same principle, we never want to be the cause for confusion in a believer's life.

The wife in this scripture is called to be chaste or pure in her example, morally upright. She is called to be respectful in her behavior and conversation. Back up to the second Chapter of 1Peter for a moment and recall its words –

1Peter 2:12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe [them,] glorify God in the day of visitation.

Ephesians Chapter 5

Ephesians 5:33 commands a wife to respect or revere her husband.

Is all your conversation and behavior filtered through your reverence for God?

Are you mindful of your words and actions towards those in authority?

Are you emulating Jesus' example of humility in all circumstances?

"The trait of character which is referred to is that of proper respect and reverence in all the relations which she sustained, as opposed to a trifling and frivolous mind. Leighton suggests that the word fear here relates particularly to the other duty enjoined--that of chaste conversation--"fearing the least stain of chastity, or the very appearance of anything not suiting with it. It is a delicate, timorous grace, afraid of the least air, or shadow of anything that hath but a resemblance of wronging it, in carriage, or speech, or apparel", Albert Barnes' NT Commentary.

What does God say about our conversation?

1Peter 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; KJV

Philippians 1:27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs,

that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;
KJV

1Timothy 4:12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but [rather] ***in speech, conduct, love, faith [and] purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.***

Our call is to submit regardless of the circumstances in the hope that our example may represent Christ's righteousness and draw those around us to desire to know Him. Our behavior and conversation can be used as a valuable tool in encouraging others in Christ.