

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

How to Win Your Mate To Christ 1 Peter 3:1-7 Part Two

I would like to wish all the mothers here this morning a happy Mother's Day. Typically I would interrupt the current series of messages that I am going through in order to prepare a special message just for this day. However this morning it appeared to me that this would be unnecessary. Hopefully as we develop the passage we are considering it will become clear to you why I am saying this.

Peter's Epistle is written so that believers might know how to righteously respond in the midst of suffering and persecution. In order to help us actually visualize the source of potential difficulty Peter begins to examine certain basic relationships that make up our society.

Last week we began to consider the marital relationship. We all know that marriage can be a source of trouble, but it is not just any kind of marriage that we are talking about, rather a certain kind of marriage. We are talking about a marriage between a believer and an unbeliever. Hopefully we began to appreciate the potential difficulty believers can experience in the marital relationship when they are married to unbelievers. Peter, understanding this, is giving instruction to Christian wives and husbands on how to righteously live with unsaved mates.

1 Pet. 3:1-7 “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, (2) as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. (3) And let not your adornment be merely external, braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; (4) But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. (5) For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands. (6) Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. (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.”

Peter begins by giving instructions to the wives in VV. 1-6. In Peter's instruction to these Christian wives we learn how powerful a tool their behavior can be, perhaps winning their unsaved husbands. In giving these instructions concerning her behavior three specific duties are outlined. The first of those duties was the “duty of submission.” V. 1 says, **“In the same way you wives, be submissive to your own husbands** (We examined this duty last week) **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 particular behavior emphasized in this section of scripture is that of submission. We will now continue on and consider the second duty Peter outlines for the believing wife which can be such a powerful tool in winning an unsaved husband.

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I hope that our study this morning will not only be enlightening, but encouraging to all of us, but particularly to wives and mothers. WHAT IS THAT SECOND DUTY?

2) CHASTE AND RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOR - Look at **V. 2** “**as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.**” When we think of the word “chaste” we usually think of sexual purity. If this is all that it means then most of all the married women of our community could feel pretty good about themselves. Certainly I don’t think we would think that a husband would be persuaded to switch to Christianity simply because his wife is not an adulteress. I can’t imagine that you would very often hear a husband say he was converted to Christianity because his wife had remained faithful to him. I would think that the vast majority of husbands expect this of their wives. It must mean more than that. So let us look at the word more closely. The word translated “**chaste**” can also be translated “**pure.**” In fact that is exactly how it is translated in the NIV. Certainly the word “pure” can also have as it’s emphasis sexual purity but it can also mean much more. And that is exactly how I believe we need to understand this passage. The concept is not to be limited to sexual chastity or purity; It denotes that purity in character and conduct should characterize all of the Christian life. This is how it is used in **1 John 3:3** where it says, “**And everyone who has his hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**” The word translated pure in this verse is the same word used in **1 Peter**.

How might this pure behavior translate itself in the life of a Christian woman? To help this concept come alive for us, let’s turn in our Bibles to a very familiar passage of scripture. **Prov. 31** which gives us, not the description but a description of a virtuous or a pure woman according to Solomon. Let us begin to read beginning with **V. 10**, “**An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. (11) The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. (12) She does him good and not evil all the days of her life. (13) She looks for wool and flax, and works with her hands in delight. (14) She is like merchant ships; She brings her food from afar. (15) She rises also while it is still night, and gives food to her household, and portions to her maidens. (16) She considers a field and buys it; from her earnings she plants a vineyard. (17) She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong. (18) She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night. (19) She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hands grasp the spindle (A spindle is a rounded rod, usually of wood, tapering toward each end, used in spinning by hand to twist into thread the fibers drawn from the mass on the distaff, and to wind the thread on as it is spun.) (20) She extends her hand to the poor; and she stretches out her hands to the needy. (21) She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. (22) She makes coverings for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple. (23) Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land. (24) She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies belts to the tradesmen. (25) Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future. (26) She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. (27) She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.**” Now let me ask you a question? How might people especially her family, most likely respond to this kind of woman? I think they would be in awe of her. I believe that we would all see very clearly that this kind of woman could not go unnoticed and that is exactly what we see in the very next two verses.

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VV. 28-29 “Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband also, and he praises her, saying: (29) “Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all.” This kind of woman is the woman who may very well win her husband without a word and by living a life of outstanding purity. She may not get her husband to respond to the gospel when it is first shared with him but this may change when he sees it’s power!

If you are a woman here this morning and are comparing yourself to the woman of **Proverbs 31** and are beginning to feel a degree of despair I can perfectly understand. The picture that is painted for us in this chapter, I would think can be overwhelming. But we cannot deny that this woman is held up as a model. And my prayer for you women is that you would not become discouraged but be thankful that in the Lord’s goodness he has given us a target to shoot for. And certainly the potential results make it worth the effort. Not only in respect to the husband, **BUT ALSO IN RESPECT TO YOUR CHILDREN.**

Let us go back to **V. 28.** Even before it talks about this woman of virtue and purity being praised by her husband, it talks about her children **“rising up and calling her blessed.”** Why are the children doing this? Because it was she who was always there for them. To feed them, clothe them, to sympathize with their heartaches and their sorrows. It was she that was there for them early in the morning and late into the night. While she is doing all of what she was doing for her family, where was the husband? **Sitting with the elders in the gates of the city.** It should not be at all surprising to us that children typically have a closer emotional attachment to their mothers than their fathers. This is not to say that fathers are not loved and respected. This is only saying that typically the mothers take the brunt of their children’s care and the care that they render is usually given with a greater tenderness and with greater patience than usually typifies the father.

Combined with the term **“chaste”** is the word **“respectful.”** If the unsaved husband is going to be won without a word by the behavior of the wife then the “chaste” or “pure” behavior must be married or coupled with “respectful behavior.” The word translated **“respectful”** comes from the Greek word PHOBOS. Which we have already seen is commonly translated “fear.” This is more clear in the KJV where it is translated **“While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.”**

It could mean reverential awe toward her husband, her deep concern to show proper respect and not to be remiss in any duty, but it is more likely that the reference is to her reverence toward God and deep devotion toward Him. This is consistent with what we have already seen in the epistle. **(1:17 “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,” 2:17 “Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.”)** IT IS FEAR OR RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOR TOWARD THE LORD WHICH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN A PURE LIFE THAT POTENTIALLY CAN HAVE SUCH A DYNAMIC IMPACT ON THE HUSBAND.

This is exactly what we see in **Prov. 31** and the description of the virtuous woman. It says in **V. 30** after she was described and after seeing the blessings that came to her from her husband as well as her children the following statement **“A woman who fears the Lord will be praised.”**

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Peter is saying to the unsaved wives not only are they to live a kind of life that will truly capture the attention of the husband such as we see in **Prov. 31**, but that life needs to be lived in such a way that she will be seen as living her life in “**reverential fear of the Lord.**” The verse says, “**As they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.**”

This is important to understand. What this is telling us is that if you are married to an unsaved husband, though you may because of the instruction found in this particular passage cease preaching to him it does not mean that you discard those behaviors that separate you out as a “God fearer.” For your husband to know that you are a woman of prayer is not bad, for your husband to know that you are a woman of the Word is not bad, for the husband to know that you value and Christian fellowship and is not bad. For the husband to know that cherish the opportunity to publicly worship the Lord in the community of the saints is not bad. In fact not only is it not bad, it is part of your testimony.

But someone might say what happens if your husband objects to that area of your life which continues to give testimony to the fact that you are a God fearer? I really really truly believe that this is more hypothetical than real. If a family is being served in the way that we have described this morning as a wife seeks to work out obedience to what she is being called to in **1 Pet. 3:2** a wife typically will be given the green light to pursue those things within her life that she sees as necessary in living out a reverential, respectful life before the Lord.

When virtue and purity of life, a “chaste” life is combined with a “respectful” life, a life characterized by the fear of the Lord it is a powerful one-two punch that perhaps might bring your husband to the saving knowledge of Christ.

Is this a certainty? The answer is No. The passage only says “**that they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives.**” It does not say that “**They will be won.**” In fact it appears that Timothy’s mother apparently was married to an unsaved man according to **Acts 16:1**. And though it is clearly stated that she was a a woman of faith in **2 Tim. 1:5** there is no indication that her husband ever converted.

CONCLUSION

But though we do not know about her husband, we do know about her son. Not only did he convert he became one of the greatest examples of faithful Christian devotion in the New Testament. There is power in the testimony of a Godly wife. If perhaps the husband is not converted by it, it very well may be that the children will be.

There is a song that has been sung by Steve Green entitled “Find Us Faithful.” I would like to read you the words of this song and hopefully they will become for mothers and fathers as well our hearts desire.

We're pilgrims on the journey of the narrow road. And those who've gone before us line the way. Cheering on the faithful, encouraging the weary. Their lives a stirring testament to God's sustaining grace.

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Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses let us run the race not only for the prize but as those who've gone before us let us leave to those behind us the heritage of faithfulness passed on through Godly lives.

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful. May the fire of our devotion light their way. May the footprints that we leave lead them to believe and the lives we live inspire them to obey. Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful.

After all our hopes and dreams have come and gone, and our children sift through all we've left behind, may the clues that they discover and the memories they uncover become the light that leads them to the road we each must find.

Oh, may all who come behind us find us faithful, Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful.