

“Anchored” *The Book of 1 Peter*
Class Notes
Session 17

1 Peter 3.1-6 Peter now addresses the wives of *non*-Christian husbands. “Likewise” The believer’s submission...servanthood...is to be practiced in the home!

“Subject” ...ὑποτάσσομαι (*hypotassomai*)... “To bring under control”

To be “subject” to a husband meant to *willingly* submit to the husband’s authority or leadership in the marriage.

Wives in the ancient world were expected to adhere to the religion of their husbands.

However...Christianity was viewed as subversive because it called women to commit to Jesus whether or not their husbands approved.

Peter is concerned with the issue of salvation!

(vs.3-4): Peter now offers examples... Often, men in the Greco-Roman world displayed their wealth and social status in the dress of their wives.

Possibly...“External adornment“ could be a manner of submission....Still better...

...A gentle and quiet spirit...

“Gentle’ means an amiable friendliness in contrast to roughness, bad temper, or brusqueness. These virtues were also valued in women by pagan writers. “Quiet” (also appearing in the NT in 1 Tim. 2:2) is the opposite of restless, rebellious, or insubordinate. Thus up to this point Peter has not said anything that a pagan moralist might not have said. He is advising women to live up to the best common morality of their day. It is only when he mentions the worth of this virtue “in God’s sight” and goes on to refer to ‘the holy women of the past,’ meaning Hebrew and Jewish heroines of the faith, that Peter gives a motivation that goes beyond the best of pagan ethics. Christians live up to the best of their culture, but for better reasons.”¹

(vs.5-6): More motivation...Examples of holy women...

Sarah (Abraham’s wife) honored and obeyed Abraham and called him her “lord”... A title of respect...

Genesis 18.12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?”

The common virtues of Sarah and all holy women is their hope and trust in God!

Peter ends his encouragement to wives by telling them not to fear anything!

“To the moral characteristics of Sarah Peter adds ‘do not fear any intimidation,’ perhaps from Prov. 3:25...Here is the other side of subordination. These women’s husbands surely did not like their going to Christian meetings and refusing to worship the family gods. All types of intimidation—physical, emotional, social—would be used to force them back in line with the husband’s religious beliefs. While calling for gentleness and inner tranquility overall and subordination to their husbands in all areas indifferent to their Christian faith, he encourages them to stand firm in the light of their hope in the coming Christ and quietly refuse to bow to the threats and punishments of their husbands...their subordination is revolutionary in that

¹ C.E. Arnold. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation*. (Zondervan, 2000).

they are subordinate not out of fear or desire for social position or other human advantage but out of obedience to Christ, who treats them as full persons and allows them to rise above the threats and fears of this age.”²

1 Peter 3.7-8 Peter now turns to the husbands. The command for Christian husbands is to be considerate.

Literally, the words read...“living with one’s wife knowledgeably.”

The Christian husband should be considerate, sensitive, and serving. “Since a wife is a gift from God and of one flesh with her husband (Gn 2:24), she deserves honor.” (*The Lutheran Study Bible*)

The motivation should be because the woman is a “Weaker vessel.” ἀσθενής (*asthenes*)... “A state of limited strength” ... The focus is on *physical* strength.

The picture is the man (Husband) serving...honoring...valuing...protecting...his wife (Women).

Peter cautions that a husband’s disrespect and mistreatment of his wife prevents husband and wife from *praying together*.

Consequently, this disobedience would lead God to refuse their requests!

Luther: “A husband must bear in mind that his wife is a Christian too and is God’s work or vessel. Both should conduct themselves in such a way that the wife holds her husband in honor and that the husband, in turn, gives his wife the honor that is her due. If this were observed, peace and love would reign. Otherwise, where this understanding is lacking, there is nothing but aversion in marriage. For this reason it happens that if a man and a woman take each other solely for the purpose of sensual pleasure and are intent on having happy days and sensual pleasure, they find nothing but heartache. But if you have regard for God’s work and will, you can lead a Christian life in matrimony. Then you will not live as the heathen live” (AE 30:92).³

(v.8): Peter begins to sum up the purposes of *Godly submission...Humility and Love!*

Going Forward...

- In your relationships this week, how can you show *submission* to others?
- “Choose to bless and not curse or retaliate. Speak words of blessings, and be a blessing everywhere you go.”⁴

² P.H. Davids. *The First Epistle of Peter* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1990).

³ Quoted in, *The Lutheran Study Bible* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009).

⁴ NKJV *Spirit-Filled Life Bible*. Jack Hayford, Ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2018).