

The Role and Responsibility of the Wife

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I. Introduction.

A. Marriage is a unique relationship that constitutes a remarkable partnership.

A. A one-flesh relationship.

B. The greatest problem in contemporary society is a blurring of roles in the marriage.

1. Roles create responsibilities.

II. Overview of 1 Peter.

A. Every passage exists in relation to a context.

B. Three major divisions.

1. Salvation (1 Peter 1:1-2:12).

2. Submission (1 Peter 2:13-3:12).

3. Suffering (1 Peter 3:13-5:14)

C. These are not isolated doctrines. Salvation comes before submission and submission must come before suffering.

1. Suffering is nonsense even to the believer who is un-submitted.

2. Submission is foolishness until one has been redeemed.

D. Three areas of submission.

1. Government.

2. Employment.

3. Family.

E. Submission is the lifestyle of every Christian.

III. Submission (1 Peter 3:1-6).

A. Two principles for the wife.

1. Character (verses 1-3).

2. Conduct (verses 3-6).

B. Negative Attitudes.

a. Sometimes you have to deconstruct some ideas before you can plant them. There is a great deal that needs to be torn down before people can accurately understand what you are telling them.

b. Illustration: sharing the gospel.

1. Submission does not mean inferiority.

a. 1 Corinthians 11 deals a death blow to this concept.

b. A woman who even submits to the headship of an unregenerate husband is in no way inferior.

c. The issue is not how the husband treats the wife but how the wife reacts.

2. Submission does not mean intellectual suicide.

a. Verse 23—you commit yourself to God.

b. Ephesians 5:22; we have overemphasized submission to the husband and we have underemphasized submission to the Lord.

c. A woman who can submit herself to God is a woman who can submit herself to the Lord.

d. Only when we submit ourselves to the Lord are we intellectually freed.

3. Submission does not mean lack of fulfillment.

a. It is not a question of a woman doing her own thing but of a woman doing God's thing.

b. Romans 12—be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

c. We are only fulfilled when we do what is good, pleasing, and perfect.

d. A woman finds value in the body of Christ—not in the world.

e. You can only find fulfillment in the will of God as he has it for you.

4. Submission does not mean you become a vegetable.

a. "Be in subjection."

1) Present tense in continuous action.

2) Imperative—a command.

a) “You will never learn to be a good commander until you’ve learned to be a good follower.”

3) The action is reflective—the actor is the one who stands to receive the benefit of the action.

b. Submission is an active attitude of voluntarily placing yourself under the will of God regardless of what it is.

1) Ephesians 5—we are all responsible to submit to one another.

2) Submission is the name of the Christian game.

3) Philippians 2:5—“Let this mind be in you.”

a) It is the mind where submission occurs.

b) Christ did not hold on to equality—he emptied himself of his own will, subjecting himself to the Father.

c) God highly exalted Jesus.

d) The way up is down.

e) The mark of humility is service.

4) God only holds wives accountable for submission not for their husband’s decisions.

C. You will not be criticizing your husband if you understand the sobering responsibility he has; you will respect him.

D. God is asking the wife to submit to a nonbeliever; the witness to him occurs through the submission.

1. Personal example of a woman who tried to win her husband to Christ without words. The only reason he was ever won to Christ was because he saw Christ through his spouse.

E. Women’s adornment.

1. Paul is not talking about apparel, but of the heart.

2. Three contrasts:

a. Internal and external.

b. Perishable and imperishable.

c. Appeal to men and that which is pricey in the sight of God.

3. It is important to not look like an “unmade bed,” but the emphasis is not on the external.

4. The primary beauty of your bride is not external.

5. We are all in the process of deteriorating, but if your beauty is internal, every day that Jesus Christ forms in you, you will become more attractive.

Application questions:

1. What are some misconceptions of submission that you have held? Explain.

2. What does submission look like in your life? What are some ways you can submit to your spouse and demonstrate your love for him? Be specific.

3. Does your relationship with your husband communicate Christ whether he is a believer or not? What kind of ‘adornment’ can you bear that will serve as a testimony of your own submission to Jesus Christ?
