

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **How to Win Your Mate To Christ**

#### **1 Peter 3:1-7**

#### **Part One**

When we are suffering it is very difficult to focus on the needs of others. Our natural inclination is to meet our needs first. When we are suffering thirst our bodies cry out for a drink, when we are suffering hunger our bodies cry out to be fed, when we are suffering loneliness our bodies cry out for companionship.

One particular group that suffers acute loneliness are those people who are married to unsaved spouses. They suffer loneliness because it is impossible to build closeness with an unsaved mate. They do not look at life the same way at all. And therefore there is an emotional distance that exists between them. They have different values, different ambitions, different goals. It would be very easy for a spouse married to an unsaved husband or wife and suffering the loss of intimacy to begin to distance themselves emotionally and eventually perhaps even physically in an attempt to fill the vacuum in their own lives. I believe that this response by a saved spouse can be very understandable because it is natural for all of us to seek to meet our needs before we seek to minister to the needs of another, but what does the Scriptures tell us?

Let us read 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.”**

Notice the very first phrase of the very first verse says, **“In the same way you wives.”** This phrase implies that the paragraph is another in a series devoted to the subject of Christian submission: First of all we see the readers submission to governing authorities addressed beginning in 2:13, then Christian slave's submission to their masters in 2:18, and now Christian wife's submission to their unsaved husbands in 3:1.

Our response of submission is not simply done in order **“to find favor with God”** as we see in **1 Pet. 2:20** but also to find favor with men. We see this in respect to our submission to governing authorities in **1 Pet. 2:15**. And we will see this clearly in the passage we will be studying this morning. In fact we will discover that a submissive response to those who may be in fact making our lives very difficult such as an unsaved spouse can be a very effective evangelistic tool. This is the point that Peter is making in **1 Pet. 3:1-7**.

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Peter does not deny that a unsaved spouse has needs but he focuses our attention on the greater need and that is the need of the unsaved spouse to become a Christian. In making this point he first of all addresses Christian wives.

### CHRISTIAN WIVES

As we consider the instruction given to Christian wives who were married to unsaved husbands we quickly notice that six verses are dedicated to them while only one verse is dedicated to Christian husbands. The reason for this is very simple. The challenges faced by Christian wives married to unsaved husbands far exceeded the challenges faced by Christian husbands married to unsaved wives.

In the Greek culture for a woman to change religions without their husbands doing the same thing was unthinkable. As soon as the woman embraced Christianity there would be tension in the home. The man had the freedom in that culture to make choices such as what religious faith he would choose to embrace, but this certainly was not true of the wife.

In addition to this women were treated as sheep and goats by their husbands. Or in other words, they were simply property that ultimately existed to serve his needs. This view by Greek society opened the door to emotional as well as physical abuse, first by their fathers and when they got married by their husbands. This abuse was given as well as received by the women because of the very low view of women in that society and even by the women themselves.

However when these women came to Christ and they received Him as their Lord and savior they would soon begin to see themselves quite differently. In **Gal. 3:28** it says, **“there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”** When these wives became Christians they had an equal standing before the Lord. Their new faith led not only to a new birth but to a new self concept. Before they became Christians it was much easier to be treated badly because they had a self concept shaped by their society. After receiving Christ and seeing themselves not through the eyes of society but rather through the eyes of the Lord, certainly they no longer saw themselves as those worthy of abuse. The better people feel about themselves the less abuse they will generally tolerate.

It would be very easy therefore for these wives who had become Christians to no longer be as tolerant of the way they may have been treated. It may very well have been the case that they felt that considering their new standing in Christ that they should not continue to be treated as they were. It would have been very easy for them to begin to resist their husbands and insist that things would have to change. It would have been very easy for them to resort to protests of various kinds and to even go on strike. BUT HOW SHOULD SHE CONDUCT HERSELF? THREE SPECIFIC DUTIES ARE OUTLINED.

1) SUBMISSION - Let us look at **V. 1 “In the same way you wives, be submissive to your own husbands.”** The word for submission is the Greek word HUPOTASSO. It literally means to line up under. It is frequently used in military contexts. And just like in the military those of lesser rank are not necessarily inferior in character, intelligence, virtue, or spirituality to their commanding officers, so it is also true of the marital relationship.

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The man's position of leadership in the home is not based upon personal qualifications but rather according to **1 Tim. 2:9-15** upon the order of creation and the consequences of the fall of man.

I have been married to my wife Lynn for 26 years. And after living with her for 26 years I cannot with confidence stand before you this morning/evening and tell you that I am better qualified by intelligence or character to lead our family. In fact it might be that Lynn is better qualified. But I do understand that it is my responsibility to give leadership to our home. And may God gave us as men, grace to do this whether I am better qualified or not. And may the Lord give grace to the women to submit whether they are better qualified or not. If the women can carry out this responsibility consistently within their marriages they will be blessed.

Note that it says that the Christian wives are to submit to their **“own husbands.”** This indicates the close tie between husband and wife. It emphasizes the private and unique relationship established by the marriage tie. The closeness and exclusiveness of her relation to her husband should motivate the wife's submission. Peter is attempting to encourage the believing wives in their submission to their husbands by reminding them of the special nature of the relationship that they share with this person. We can see the specialness of this relationship clearly communicated in **Eph. 5:28** when Paul is addressing the husbands in respect to their responsibilities toward their wives. He says, **“In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.”** The reason why Paul can say this is because of the special relationship that exists between the husband and the wife. For the husband to exercise loving leadership in the home will be as if he is serving himself and if the wife will exercise loving submission in the home it will serve her in very much the same way as the husband is served in loving his wife.

There was a time in my life that when I was suffering, Lynn and I were not getting along. I was not performing well at work and after a particularly difficult day at work and a conversation with a Police Sergeant I turned in my resignation. This was without any communication with Lynn at all. I just did it. Though I had failed to love Lynn she had not failed me. I came home to her and immediately applied to Multnomah school of the Bible and though it meant leaving her family, going back to work, and leaving the state she had always lived, she went with me. If she had begun to fight me at that time in my life I really believe an ugly situation could have become much uglier. Ultimately she was served by her willingness to do what she felt was right before the Lord.

Certainly fulfilling our proper role to our spouse would be important for us. But it can be even more important for our spouse, and this certainly is true if our spouse is unbelieving. Look at the remainder of **V. 1**, **“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.”** When it talks about husbands being **“disobedient to the Word”** we should understand this in respect to the Gospel. Now please note this. It does not say that they will be saved without **“THE WORD.”** It says they will be saved with **“A WORD”** and this is an important distinction. Peter has already acknowledged in this Epistle that no one can be saved without the Word. In **1 Pet. 1:23** it says, **“For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.”** Certainly the wives had tried to explain their new faith to their unbelieving husbands and it might have been that some of their husbands might have even visited the church's where their wives were attending.

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But the point that Peter is making is that once THE WORD has been communicated and the husband has rejected that truth, then another tact needs to be pursued which will not so much involve what they say but what they do. IF THE HUSBAND WILL NOT YIELD TO THE AUTHORITATIVE SPOKEN WORD OF THE GOSPEL, HE MAY BE REACHED BY THE WIFE'S SILENT DEMONSTRATIONS OF ITS TRANSFORMING POWER IN HER DAILY CONDUCT.

And of primary importance for the wives as they seek to bear testimony to their faith in Christ by their behavior is “**submission.**”

Men love submissive wives. It makes them feel strong. It makes them feel as if they are being trusted. It makes them feel as if they are respected. You may say, “but I don’t see my husband as strong, I don’t see my husband as trustworthy, I don’t see my husband as respectable.” I am not telling you that you have to believe or say things which we do not believe to be true. I am simply saying to you that men love submissive wives and the reason that they love submissive wives is that it makes them feel all these things.

This may be a very difficult thing for women to appreciate. In the book “His Needs Her Needs” it lists the 5 most important needs of the woman. They are:

- A. Affection
- B. Conversation
- C. Honesty and openness
- D. Financial support
- E. Family Commitment

Notice what is missing from the list! Respect. This is not so for the man. It is listed as one of their basic needs. It is important for wives to understand this. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT WIVES OF UNSAVED HUSBANDS UNDERSTAND THIS. WHAT THE WIVES MAY HAVE RESPECTED IN THEIR UNSAVED STATE MAY BE QUITE DIFFERENT IN THEIR SAVED STATE AND THAT WILL PROVIDE THEM SPECIAL CHALLENGES.

The husband might have been given over to foul speech before she became a Christian and what she found acceptable before, now becomes loathsome in her sight.

The husband might have been given over to excessive drinking before she became a Christian and what she found acceptable before no becomes unlovely in her sight.

The husband might have been given over to the storing up of material wealth before she became a Christian and what she found acceptable before, becomes pathetic in her sight now.

In fact the very things that may have drawn and bonded them together becomes the very things that now repulses her. It is very important that she hears the instructions that Peter is now giving her.

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### CONCLUSION

We live in a hostile world. A world that is at war with Christ. This hostility will express itself in all our various human relationships such as the ones Peter mentions through chapter 2 and now into chapter 3. Peter is telling us that as we encounter this hostility we should not react to that hostility by fighting for our rights, or by standing up for our rights, or defending our rights. Rather we are to submit ourselves to those who we are relating with while committing ourselves to the Lord who will righteously judge.

This is even true of wives who are married to unbelieving husbands. Hopefully as their husbands observe their submissive attitude flowing from a chaste and pure spirit, demonstrating a healthy alignment of priorities their husbands will be won to Christ without even a word.