A Word to Christian Husbands and Wives
(Part One: A Word to Christian Wives)
Message 12 in I Peter Sermon Series
I Peter 3:1-6

This morning as we continue with our series from the Book of I Peter, please open your Bible to the third chapter of I Peter. Our text this morning is taken from verses 1-7.

READ: I PETER 3:1-6

PRAYER

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INTRODUCTION

Its been awhile since I reminded you of the title of this series from I PETER: “Making the Best Out of The Worst of Times.”

Throughout our study Peter has reminded us of the many trials and struggles the Christians of his day were facing as a result of persecution.

We have seen how they were uprooted from their homes……separated from family and friends……discriminated against in the job market……and mistreated because of their faith in Christ.

Those were indeed “the worst of times” for Christian families. Trials and troubles such as those they were experiencing could put a tremendous amount of stress even upon the strongest of marriages.
While we are not being persecuted, these are certainly not the best of times for Christian families today.

ILLUSTRATION: According to the Barna Research Group the current divorce rate is nearly 50% in this country. In other words, two out of four marriages will end in divorce.

Do you know the divorce rate among Christians is as high or higher? In fact, according to Barna the divorce rate among conservative Christians is “significantly higher” than for other faith groups, and “much higher” than the divorce rate among Atheists and Agnostics.

Barna Project Manager, Meg Flemming said: “We would love to be able to report that Christians are living very distinct lives and impacting the community, but in the area of divorce rates they continue to be the same.”

- lack of communication
- lack of affection
- lack of quality time together
- Economic stresses
- Physical abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Parenting issues
- Job demands
- Unemployment
- Blended family issues
- Differing religious backgrounds
- Adulterous relationships
- Christian/ non-Christian marriages

These are just a few of the many problems putting stress on today’s marriages.

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As always, the best source of marriage counseling for Christian couples comes to us from the word of God. After all, it would be God who created the marriage relationship, not man.

I am going to preach this message to husbands and wives in two-parts. Today, in PART ONE, we will consider the LORD’S WORD to Christian Wives.”

Then next LORD’S DAY, Lord willing, in PART TWO of this message we will “get to the root of the problem”……I mean, we will consider the Lord’s word to Christian Husbands.

 First of all WIVES, let’s consider………

I. The Lord’s Word Concerning Your DUTY

Read: Verses 1, 2

1. Notice Peter begins that first verse, “Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands.”

   Two questions come to mind as we look at that statement:

   * First, what does Peter mean by “in the same way?”

   * And two, what does Peter mean by “submissive?”

2. Let’s answer that first question. To understand what Peter meant by “in the same way” you have to reflect on what Peter has been talking about in the verses prior to verse 1.
Remember in the previous chapter, Peter has been talking about **submission**.

He talked to us about……

* submitting to those in **positions of authority**.
* submitting to **our fellow citizens**.
* submitting to **God** and **our fellow Christians**.
* and submitting to our “supervisors” or “bosses.”

Then Peter went on to show us how Christ “modeled” **submission by committing no sin**…..
by **deceiving no one**…..by **not retaliating**…..
by **not making any threats**…..and ultimately
by “submitting” to the will of His heavenly Father **by offering His life as a sacrifice** on the cross.

Now look at verse 1 of our text and see if it doesn’t become “crystal clear.”

> **Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands.**

3. This brings us to that second question: **What does it mean to be “submissive?”**

Wives, first let me tell you what “**submissive**” doesn’t mean. **And to understand this we need to look at the way women were treated in ancient times.**

**Under Jewish law a woman was a thing:** she was owned by her husband in exactly the same way as he owned his sheep and his goats; on no account could she leave him, although he could dismiss her at any moment. **In Greek civilization the duty of the woman** was “to remain indoors and to be obedient to her husband.” It was the sign of a good woman that she must **see as little, hear as little and ask as little as possible**. She had no kind of independent existence and no kind of mind of her own, and her husband could divorce her for virtually any reason so long as he returned to her the dowry. (**that was the money and material possessions given to the bridegroom by the bride’s family for marrying their daughter.**) **Under Roman law** a woman had no rights. In law she remained forever a child. When she was under her father she was under the **patria potestas**, the father’s power, which gave the father the right even of life and death over her; and when she married she passed equally into the power of her husband. She was entirely subject to her husband and completely at his mercy.
Wives, being **submissive**...........

(a) Does NOT mean you are to be treated like a **SLAVE**.

(b) Does NOT mean you have to allow your husband to walk all over you like a **“door mat.”**

(c) Does NOT mean you must let your husband **mistreat** or **abuse** you, verbally or physically.

(d) Does NOT mean you are **inferior** to your husband or that you are to be regarded as **lesser than an equal**.

But here is what **“being submissive”** does mean. It involves three things:

(a) First, being “submissive” means **respecting** and **accepting** God’s “chain of command” in the home.

I told you in a previous message that the word “submit” comes from the Greek word **“hupotasso”** which is a military term meaning **“to fall in rank behind another.”**

Without some **“chain of command”** there is **total chaos**. That is true in the **military**. It is true in **government**. It is true in **business**. And it is especially true **in the home**.

(b) Second, being “submissive” means **honoring** your husband’s **God-given role** as the **head** of your home.

**EPHESIANS 5:22-24**  Wives, submit to your husbands **AS TO THE LORD**. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, His body, of which He is the Savior. **Now as the Church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.**
Third, to “submit” means voluntary selflessness.

ILLUSTRATION: Think of marriage as “riding a horse.” Wives, if you and your husband are riding the same horse, somebody has to be in front and somebody has to be in back, don’t they? Both of you can’t ride in front.

Wives, in marriage, “submission” is like selflessly volunteering to “ride in the back” and encouraging your husband to “ride in the front.”

4. Now submitting may seem like a hard thing to do even if your husband is a Christian. **But what if your husband is NOT a Christian?** Well Peter answers that for us: *(Vs. 1, 2)*

> verse 1,2  Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

5. I have seen this biblical principle work time after time over the years. The best way for a Christian wife to win her non-Christian husband to Christ is without **WORDS**.

- Don’t nag him about not going to church.
- Don’t leave a stick up note that says “REPENT” on the bottom of his beer can.
- Don’t leave “scripture quotes” on his bathroom mirror.
- Don’t leave “gospel tracts” in his car or truck seat.

The best way to win your husband to Jesus Christ is to let him see the genuine purity and reverence of your life. Wives, don’t ever underestimate the “**power of your silent witness.**” **Seeing Christ in you** will have more of an impact upon your husband than you will ever know!

So first, Peter had a word for you wives regarding your DUTY.
Secondly, WIVES, let’s consider…………..

(II) The Lord’s Word Regarding Your BEAUTY (vs.3-6)

1. Wives, in verses 3-6 Peter addresses two issues regarding your beauty.

   (A) A word about your OUTWARD beauty. (v.3)

   verses 3  Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes.

   This verse has been grossly misinterpreted by many.

   Let me tell you what this verse does NOT mean!

   -It does **NOT** mean it is a sin to be outwardly beautiful!

   -It does **NOT** mean it is a sin to fix your hair up real nice!

   -It does **NOT** mean it is a sin to wear jewelry.

   -And it does **NOT** mean it is a sin to wear nice clothes!

   Wives, there is nothing wrong with trying to make yourself physically attractive for your HUSBAND! Let me underscore that: FOR YOUR HUSBAND!
So what DOES this verse mean?

It relates to two matters:

(1) First, it is a matter of **PRIORITY**

Ladies, it is OK for you to want to be outwardly beautiful, but it shouldn’t be your top priority!

**PROVERBS 31:30** Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

**ILLUSTRATION**

Remember the Queen in the class fairy tale Snow White? Remember how she stood in front of her “magical mirror” and ask, “Mirror, mirror on the wall, who in the land is fairest of all?”

For awhile, the mirror would answer “You, my queen, are the fairest of all.”

But then along came Snow White, a fair maiden as beautiful as the radiant sunlight. And when the Queen asks her “magical mirror” who is the “fairest of all” the mirror answered:

“Queen, you are full fair, ’tis true, but snow White is fairer than you.”

Ladies, do you ever look in the mirror and fear that everyone else is “fairest than you? Don’t allow yourself to be pressured into our society’s narrow definition of what constitutes “beauty.”

Don’t let outward beauty be your TOP PRIORITY!

(2) Secondly, **verse 3** is a matter of **PERSONAL MODESTY**

Peter says, “Your beauty should not come from outward adornment.”

The literal meaning of “outward adornment” is, “Don’t dress to attract the attention of other men.”
Remember this passage is addressed to Christian women.

- Christian women are not to dress seductively.
- Christian women are not to dress in such a way to advertise themselves as being “available.”

But “outward adornment” refers to more than just clothing or the lack thereof. Ladies it refers to the way you move, the way you carry yourself, the way you walk, the way you present yourself to the opposite sex.

Ladies before you go out in public, looked in the mirror and ask yourself this question: “Am I dressed in way that is pleasing in the eyes of the LORD or pleasing in the eyes of men?”

After speaking a word about OUTWARD BEAUTY in vs. 3 Peter now gives Christian wives……..

(B) A word about INWARD beauty. vs. 4-6

READ: VERSES 4-6

What Peter is saying in these verses is that true beauty comes from within, not from without.

Ladies, your true beauty is what’s inside your HEART

Your true beauty is found in the things that cannot be seen in the mirror or photographed by a photographer.

You notice in verse 4 Peter refers to it as “the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.

A GENTLE SPIRIT means a spirit that is tender, humble, mild and considerate.

A QUIET SPIRIT means a spirit that is peaceful, a spirit that has a “calming” effect.
2. To draw this discourse to Christian wives to a close, Peter uses the example of Sarah from the Old Testament.

Sarah modeled everything Peter has talked about in these verses.

-SARAH submitted herself to her husband, Abraham. You notice she even called Abraham her “Master.”

Now wives I know what you’re thinking! It will be the 32nd of March before you call your husband “Master.” That’s OK, you don’t have to! Abraham and Sarah lived in a whole different time and culture.

-SARAH was also “outwardly beautiful” but outward beauty wasn’t her main focus.

Remember the scriptures described Sarah as being so physically attractive, Abraham lied about her being his wife, claiming that she was his sister, for fear Abimilech would have him killed to have Sarah to himself.

-And SARAH was a woman of “inward beauty.”

She had that “gentle and quiet spirit” Peter talked about in verse 4

Peter says to you Christian wives, “You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.”
Dr. Richard Selzer tells this touching true story about one of his patients.

I stand by the bed where a young woman lies, her face postoperative, her mouth twisted in palsy, clownish. A tiny twig of the facial nerve, the one to the muscles of her mouth, has been severed. She will be thus from now on.

The surgeon had followed with religious fervor the curve of her flesh; I promise you that. Nevertheless, to remove the tumor in her cheek, I had to cut the little nerve. Her young husband is in the room. He stands on the opposite side of the bed and together they seem to dwell in the evening lamplight, isolated from me, private. Who are they, I ask myself, he and this wry mouth I have made, who gaze at and touch each other so generously, greedily?

The young woman speaks. "Will my mouth always be like this?" she asks. "Yes," I say, "it will. It is because the nerve was cut."

She nods and is silent. But the young man smiles. "I like it," he says, "It is kind of cute." All at once I know who he is. I understand and I lower my gaze. One is not bold in an encounter with GOD. Unmindful, he bends to kiss her crooked mouth and I am so close I can see how he twists his own lips to accommodate to hers, to show her that their kiss still works.


Christian wives, don’t ever forget that you have a beauty that no stroke, no accident and no disease can ever take away from you and that is the inner beauty of a submissive, gentle, quiet spirit.