



April 23rd, 2023 • 1 Peter 3:1-7
Standing Firm in the Grace of God • The Book of 1 Peter
Message #8 • by Pastor Marcus Johnson



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Godly Wives, Godly Husbands & Gospel-centered Living

1. Peter’s Gospel-centered Instructions for Godly Wives

- **Likewise** (see 1 Pe 2:11-25):
as godly sojourners & exiles, being respectfully submissive for the Lord’s sake, living as God’s servants & following in Christ’s footsteps...
- **Be subject to your own husbands**
(to win without a word those who do not obey the word)
- **Be adorned with godly hearts & imperishable beauty**

2. Peter’s Gospel-centered Instructions for Godly Husbands

- **Likewise** (see 1 Pe 2:11-25):
as godly sojourners & exiles, being respectfully submissive for the Lord’s sake, living as God’s servants & following in Christ’s footsteps...
- **Live in an understanding way with your wives & the females in your Households**

---> showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel

---> who are heirs with you of the grace of life

---> so that your prayers may not be hindered

Some Highlights of 1 Peter 3:1-7

Source: *1 Peter* by Karen H. Jobes, pp. 203-212 (ECNT) – Words in {curly brackets} added for clarification

The wife’s reverence for God is her motivation for submitting to her husband ... In Greco-Roman society it was expected that the wife would have no friends of her own and would worship the gods of her husband ... If this expectation is applied to a Christian wife, it might result in trouble for several reasons. First, the very fact that a woman would adopt any religion other than her husband’s violated the Greco-Roman ideal of an orderly home ... disorder in the home was a threat not only to the family but to society. Christians were frequently blamed as the cause of public calamity because they introduced a new god, upsetting the religious status quo of the empire ... Second, the husband and society would perceive the wife’s worship of Jesus Christ as rebellion, especially if she worshipped Christ exclusively ... Third, the wife’s attendance at Christian worship would provide the opportunity for her to have fellowship with other Christians who possibly were not her husband’s friends ... [T]he writings of the Greek moral philosophers do not usually address women (and slaves), but here Peter does so ... Peter affirms wives’ (and slaves’) choice to leave their former way of pagan life while at the same time instructing them to remain within their most basic relationship. The metamessage of Peter’s instructions is probably not lost on the husband, who could see in it two points: (1) The apostle of Jesus Christ instructs the Christian slave {household servant} and wife, a role that is normally the prerogative of the husband. (2) This direct instruction to slaves and wives implies that both have a measure of moral responsibility and choice unprecedented in Greek thought. The husband or slave master cannot object, since Peter does indeed affirm the man’s authority. On the other hand, he also sees in this affirmation that his wife’s or slave’s submission is motivated no longer by the expectations of Roman society or the principles of Greek moral philosophy but instead by the authority and example of the crucified and resurrected Christ. **In a masterful move, Peter both upholds and subverts the social order.** {bold font added for emphasis}

The exhortation for wives to be subject to their own husbands in proximity to the discussion of Jesus as the model for Christian suffering immediately raises the question of whether women should stay in marriages where there is physical abuse ... The nature of the suffering that Peter is addressing {1Pe 2:21ff} is primarily verbal abuse and loss of social standing ... Peter wants Christians to conduct their relationships in a way that would be considered a good witness to unbelieving society. Because even Greco-Roman statues did not sanction spousal abuse, a woman who endured domestic violence would not necessarily have been considered a virtuous wife ... Peter is speaking specifically of suffering that may come from standing for an unpopular belief and doing what is good and right in the name of Christ ... Peter delicately prohibits domestic violence in the exhortation to husbands that immediately follows ... How should Peter’s instructions for order in the household be applied today? ... [M]any Christians today live under governments where there is a mechanism for change – unlike the dictatorial regime of the Roman emperors – and Christians can work to change their social order for justice and equity in accord with biblical principles ... Christian men and women are called by the household codes {1Pe 2:18 – 3:7} to live out their marriages in a way that honors the gospel in today’s social order. Peter wanted the first-century wife and husband to relate to each other in a manner that reflected the biblical view of marriage ... spousal abuse, infidelity, or malicious neglect violates both biblical standards and the higher ideals of social expectations ... **Churches must consider how their position on the role of women within the Christian community speaks to the larger social order.**