

The Personal Work of Being a Wife

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1 Peter 3:1-6 *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, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. Your adornment must not be merely external--braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 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. 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; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.*

Being a Christian means having a life that is in line with the law of Christ and the way of Christ. It is not just one part Christian, but all things are in Christ. In Ephesians 5-6, Colossians 3-4, and 1 Peter 2-3 there are a series of relationships (husbands and wives, parents and children, employees and employers) in which we are told how to conduct ourselves. This is (time-wise) most of what it means to be a Christian.

In 1 Peter 3:1-6 there are four points given to us to consider about being a Godly wife:

1. *The concept of submission*
2. *Incorruptible beauty*
3. *Trust in God*
4. *The example of Sarah*

1. The Gift of Submission

Submission means putting another person's needs or will ahead of our own. It is expected of all Christians; indeed, one cannot be a Christian if they cannot submit. Submission is a gift, not an expectation. In that way it is like the gifts of God – unearned (Ephesians 2:8). Submission is not surrendering the mind and opinion (1 Corinthians 14:35, Matthew 18:15-16, Esther 7:3-4), surrendering equality or value (1 Corinthians 11:3, Philippians 2:6), nor is it invalidated by the unworthiness of the person to whom we submit (Acts 23:3-5).

2. Incorruptible Beauty

We are told that one of the most beautiful things a person can possess is the nature of gentleness. This characteristic is one that all Christians are to seek and possess. Colossians 3:12, Galatians 5:23, Ephesians 4:2, Titus 3:2 and 2 Timothy 2:25 all speak to this characteristic. Note though the last two passages; these are qualifications of the evangelist. Peter said that this characteristic can win over the unbelieving husband; indeed, faithfulness in gentleness can win many to Christ.

Gentleness and kindness are actually forms of wisdom; some might say the ultimate forms of wisdom. It comes from understanding that our place among others is not above them. Just as a child needs to grow up to understand they are not the center of the universe, it takes a mature mind to be able to submit to others. In James 3:17 we are told that wisdom from above is peaceable and gentle. This same wisdom is the beauty of the Proverbs 31 woman in 31:26.

3. Submission Means Trusting God

Worldly view of submission is that you should only trust yourself. Many think that submitting to others (husbands, elders, employers, parents or government) is “*Choosing weakness*”, and those who do so are

“Deserving of abuse”. Some say that we ought to *“Be wolves, not sheep”*. This is the worldly, demonic wisdom speaking (James 3:15-16). How many times has God demonstrated that when we obey His commands, He Himself acts on our behalf? Joshua at Jericho, Gideon at Jezreel, Elijah at Mt. Carmel and Jesus feeding the 5,000 are just a few times where we are shown that God is mindful of us when we obey Him. Submission may not seem to be the path to victory, but according to God, it is just that.

4. Sarah: A Model of Faith

Sarah was one of the most beautiful women in the world. She is mentioned here because her greater beauty was within. She is the most mentioned woman in Scripture. God changed her name (Sarai to Sarah (Princess)). She is a model of faith (Hebrews 11:11). She is a foreshadow of the church (Galatians 4:31). Peter says that those who submit with courage are her daughters. Consider the courage she possessed in submission. She left her homeland, and she bore a child in old age. Submission requires courage; it is one of the bravest things we can do, to give up our strength for God’s promise.

Conclusion: *To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:8-9*