

"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," 1 Peter 3:1, NAS95.

Why would Peter need to write this to wives who are Christians?

Was there a historical or cultural context in understanding submission of wives to their husbands that was altered by being a Christian?

It is significant for us to know that Paul also writes about submission of wives and slaves.

Eph. 5: 22 Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

Eph.6:5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; 6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

Paul also writes about children and masters of slaves concerning obedience for children and the attitude of Christian slaveholders.

Our text from Peter follows the larger theme of enduring suffering and looking to Christ for our example when we are experiencing unjust attitudes from others and how we are to understand that as we mention last week we have someone to watch over us. The link between slaves and wives is that both (wives as women) were in the lowest rung of society. They were looked upon as being inferior. Christ, in creating one new people who are all submissive to Him, because of their new hearts gives dignity to people that they never had as a class the structure of the society.

Paul's context is looking at the body of Christ as a whole and each of its parts are to be submissive to Christ and to one another in their various roles and then begins a discussion of spiritual warfare that is waged demonstrating Christian character.

The Greco-Roman world used this form of expression of order in society and how one should be obedient to the authorities in each circumstance. In the culture of the day the head was named and those who were under the head were listed as the ones who

should be obedient. There was no mutual regard or responsibility, just obedience to the authority.

However, Paul undermines the idea of an ultimate authority being the head of the household and that all are submissive to him as a mere authoritarian, a military commander of the household which kept order in the society, by prefacing his propositions with all being submissive to one another. This was unheard of. Yet, Paul does not eliminate the idea of a patriarchal or a hierarchical head or a direct responsibility to be obedient to the direct authority, nor does Peter.

The Christian idea of submission is not the cultural norm. Peter and Paul's context is in regards to showing respect and obedience for the husband in his role as the head and all others showing respect and obedience as is needed to one another because of the divine order of God and it is to be done in the fear of God as a direct result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit who enables each one to such obedience.

So this is not linear or reciprocating mutual submission, as some feminist Christians or egalitarians would like it to be, where all are equal in authority - so the wife submits to the husband, the husband to the wife, the children to the parents, the parents to the children, masters to slaves and slaves to masters depending on the circumstances.

The fear of the Lord brings one to the place of responding to whomever God has ordained as an authority, wherever it is, and whoever it is.

So what is written here is teaching on reciprocal obligations. All were responsible in their particular roles. No one has a better role.

We are equal, yet different.

What was the reason?

In the text there is not any particular reason for these statements.

The proper role relationships have to do with the unity of Christ's body and the husband and wife is the greatest picture of that relationship, especially in Paul's letter.

Were these aliens and strangers given any instruction about family living in light of

their new life in Christ? We know that Paul told the elders as he gathered them together at Ephesus before leaving them that he had instructed them in the whole counsel of God for three years. That is a lot of bible teaching. We know that he taught on family and marital relationships in other letters. Colossians, and Corinthians. It was important enough of a topic for Peter to also give instruction to husbands and their wives even while in this time of diaspora.

The whole counsel of God would have been any Old Testament passages in light of Christ that would be necessary for their godly living in a pagan world and any other revelation given to him, and that would have included the Genesis account of chapter two and three. Remember that Jesus when questioned about divorce went to Genesis to give an answer. Paul or any of the other apostles may have taught them of the godly wives that had preceded them including Sarah as Peter will refer to her in v.6 and then there is Ruth, Esther, and Hannah as other examples.

So, from the Christian ethic, not the societal norm of Peter's day, what would be taught defining what a wife is?

This takes us back to Genesis and before there was a wife, there was a man.

What did God intend at Creation Gen 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.28 God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

God makes man with a revealed part of his decree that is unique. It is announced and makes the creation of man a special event. God makes the crown of His creation, not by the sheer power of His spoken word by direct and personal interaction.

He was created in the imago Dei, the image of God. All of what this means is seen in different ways by many commentators, but whatever it truly is it definitely makes man

unique and ultimately he finds his identity in looking upward to God rather than down toward the other earthly creatures.

Man is given dominion over the animals - he stands between God and them, as God's ruling representative.

We came from God, we bear a resemblance to God and there is a dual sexuality of man, male and female. Both display the glory of God with equal brilliance. He created them to be fruitful and to rule. And yet there is a hint as recorded by Moses that God has more in mind.

He named the race man not woman. It is reckless theology to say however that God needed both man and woman to adequately reflect His image. Both were separately made in the image of God. And the fact that only one could bear that image is reflected further in Gen 5:1-3

5:1 This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.3 When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.

Therefore, in the family or in the church, both sexes are not needed to have an adequate representation of an authoritative head.

Then the paradox is revealed in Gen. 2:18-25

18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." 19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.22 The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man. 24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

The paradox is that having been created equal, in this part of the account, now God

establishes a head and gives responsibilities and roles to each. They are spiritually equal; yet different. They are of the same nature and substance therefore they are suited for one another yet they are different, not one but in union shall become as one.

It is not just some biological differentiation, God wants men to be men and women to be women and yet the synergy of their union makes a more effective single family unit.

The paradox continues.

The man is not made to be the helper of the woman, she is made to be the helper of the man. Eve was Adam's equal in personal worth and dignity but her role was different. "The man is to love his wife by accepting the primary responsibility for making their partnership a platform for God's glory and the woman is to love her husband by supporting him in that godly undertaking." Raymond Ortland Jr.

The woman is made from the man (equality) for the man (inequality). They were not made at the same time, and the woman was not first.

She is bone of my bone yet he exercises dominion by naming her yet she is his counterpart - from the man- woman. He found his identity in her and she in him.

Joint dominion only comes through marriage. In marriage the man leaves his household to establish another; the man heads the home and the wife helps him to fulfill the divine calling.

How wonderful is the order of God. How wonderful is His decree. How blessed are Adam and Eve until the fall.

How does the fall affect their relationship and affect submission of the wife in her role?

Gen. 3:6

Satan would have Adam & Eve (us) to have:

a wrong emphasis Gen. 3:6 lust of the eye

a wrong attitude Gen. 3:6 lust of the flesh

Satan introduces a problem to Eve. "Why does God want to limit you?"

The first recorded encounter is with Eve in the garden in Gen 3. Satan appeared to Eve as the serpent, more subtle than any beast of the field, (Gen. 3:1). He appeared in the form of a creature that is described as being crafty, a good quality until touched by Satan and sin, for God said of His creation at its completion, "It is good!" Was Eve in the habit of carrying on discussions with a serpent? Did Adam or Eve talk to the animals like the fictional Dr. Doolittle? If this was not the normal experience of Eve, then there was something about her character that Satan knew he could possibly take advantage of by approaching her in this form. Satan always wants to present his agenda to the believer in an appealing manner first, "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). He wants sin and false teaching to be attractive and does not want us to consider the consequences of our choices against God, for "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest" (Psalms 51:4). Whether or not we find his "appearance" appealing, the next step he uses is to plant the seed of doubt about the inerrancy, the authority, and the sufficiency of God's Word in our lives. "Yea, hath God said....?" (Gen. 3:1). His negative restatement of God's prohibition also tests the waters of resentment in her heart as she responds, "neither shall ye touch it...." (Gen.3:3). Satan cannot read our minds, but it is obvious that he is a student of human behavior and attitudes. He can read our body language and our countenance. He has studied man for 6000 years. He recognizes our fears and foibles. He is not omniscient about human conduct but he can observe and analyze and therefore tempt us or attack us accordingly until he finds our "Achilles heel", "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles (stratagems) of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11).

Planting the seed of doubt proves that Satan can communicate with us, because we are spiritual beings, or God's spirit, with the Word, could never speak to us to be saved

through the process of dialogue. Satan is able to reason with us and thereby implant suggestions in our minds. The process of dialogue is in my estimation the most subtle and oft used strategy of Satan against the believer. If he can bring us to the place of doubt about the Word of God in any of its capacity, if he can tempt us to respond to his suggestions that appeal to the old man and the lust of the eye (wrong emphasis), the lust of the flesh (wrong attitude) and the pride of life, (wrong worship) if we capitulate to those things that are a direct connector to what we were rather than what we are in Christ, then he has temporarily succeeded, by winning the battle of the moment, possibly the day and for some believers, too much of their life in Christ, whereby Christian is entrapped in the slough of despond rather than keeping in step with the Spirit and experiencing the kingdom of His glorious light in progressive sanctification. The mind, which is also synonymous with the heart in many passages of scripture, is a battleground for the control of the believer's life and his ability to bring glory to God in the context of his daily living. This battle began while we were lost and continues as we are children of God. When we were lost we could not understand or have any reason to accept the truth that we are in a constant dialogue with either God or Satan. Christians struggle with Christ-likeness because they believe they can produce an independent thought, but the Bible teaches that "thought" is dialogue. For there to be dialogue, there must be something to reckon or give consideration to. In Mt. 15:19 for example, the word thoughts, here in a negative context, is from the greek λογισμὸς logizomai which is a derivative of to separate and λογίζομαι to reason.

The unsaved say, "I think I'm good". "I get offended if someone tells me I am no good and I need Jesus". "I'm not bad, others do much worse". Where do these "thoughts" come from. Are they independently produced? A fine Bible teacher, George Duke once said, " Intellect reigns as king with emotion as queen and experiences as princes". Adam and Eve thought they knew better than God. "The Satanically energized serpent spoke to them and these obedient children, once they began to hear a voice from outside the "home", allowed "thinking" to set in. Eve changed God's Word. She acted like a child who is told she cannot leave the house and then converses with a

friend and says that she cannot do anything.”~

This is rebellion. “You shall become as gods”, said Satan. Gods are self-determining, and masters over their own destiny. They are not interested in a subordinate role. Eve ate, went against God’s Word, established herself as against Him, alienated herself, she is now dead spiritually, formerly enlightened by truth now living in darkness. She condemned herself as did Adam and as all are condemned, Jn.3:18. She was not coerced into sinning. Satan did not make her do anything. “She simply received his invisible idea, his invisible words, turned them over in her mind against what was already there from God, liked the idea; commenced to make the invisible words of Satan visible by her action of taking and eating the fruit in direct disobedience to the Word of God.”

The lie that she was willing to receive caused her to reinterpret all of life and to redirect her loyalty from God to self. Once the lie is planted, Satan says no more.

She usurps Adam’s authority and leads the way to sin. Adam passively participates, by not intervening and gives up his headship. Both bring man into sin but the blame rests with ADAM. Rom. 5:12-21. Why. Because Adam had the responsibility as we said earlier to lead their partnership in a God-glorifying direction. And so anytime the husband, in a Christian family fails in this there will be difficulties, but thank God for Jn.1:9, but also realize there may be some irreversible consequences for our sin.

Adam attempts to shift the blame. It does not move God.

And then comes the curse and we want to focus on one part,

Gen 3:16 To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; *Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you.*”

(It could mean either he must rule - (Godly) natural desire for a submissive role is gone. or he will rule - (ungodly) rule is now an ungodly exercise which we see so often in Christian and non-Christian homes with all the abuse) Contextually it should mean the first. God will have His order of things once hearts are regenerated by grace.

In this we have the reason why Peter and Paul would teach about the woman’s role in

the home.

This is not talking about sexual desire, although that does occur in a healthy relationship. A further explanation of this desire is found in Gen. 4:6,7

¶ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ¶ "If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, *sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it*

Her desire will be to rule over him. Her natural disposition and role in submissiveness is now overcome by wanting to be what she was not created to be, the head.

(part two next week What is and what is not submission)