

1. ***1 Peter 2:18-25: Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.***
 - Peter continues discussing submission but shifts from focus on government to society.
 - The servants spoken of here are slaves who are household servants. Many commentators on this passage compare the master/slave relationship to that of today's employer-employees. There is some truth in the comparison but not a one-to-one comparison.
 - Slavery in Rome, at the time of Peter's writing, was quite different from the slavery experienced by Africans in America. All slaves are bound to their masters by ownership.
 - (1.) Slaves in Rome came from many nations including Rome. Many slaves were people captured in war. (2.) Slaves were as much as 40% of the total population of the empire.
 - (3.) Many historians have pointed out that slaves in the ancient world were a specialized servant social class. Slaves included not only menial laborers but also highly trained people such as scribes, accountants, skilled artisans, and physicians.
 - It was not unusual for slaves to be more highly educated and skilled than their masters.
 - Masters could set their slaves free at any time. If slaves were set free, they usually took their master's name and were granted the same social status as their former master.
 - With these thoughts in mind, we can correctly apply Peter's admonitions to today.
 - When we find ourselves under the authority of an employer or other contractual authority, we are to accept the responsibility assigned us and not demand rights.
 - If we are mistreated, bearing the pain of unjust suffering is commended if it is done mindful of God and to His glory. Always do what is right. Follow the example of Christ.
 - Christ committed no sin, deceived no one, and did not retaliate when unjustly oppressed.
 - No one who suffers will be as unjustly treated as Jesus. He entrusted Himself to the Father who judges justly. Christ took our sins upon Himself and died a horrible death on the cross that we might be able to live for righteousness. Christ is our watchful shepherd!
2. ***1 Peter 3:1-6: Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, ² when they see your respectful and pure conduct. ³ Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— ⁴ but let***

your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. ⁵ For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, ⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

- The “likewise” that begins this paragraph refers to the example of Christ.
- As all believers are to be subject to government authorities. Servants are to be subject to their masters..
- Peter, in verses 3:1-6, exhorts wives to be subject to their husbands and then in 3:7 comments on the husband’s obligations to his wife.
- The ancient world considered a wife, and in fact, every woman, to belong to some man.
- Until marriage, a daughter belonged to her father. After marriage, she belonged to her husband. She had very few legal rights.
- Christ changed the status of women. In Christianity, women and men are equal before God, equal in salvation, heirs together of the grace of life eternal.
- Christian wives experienced a great increase in freedom, but there were still limitations. The primary limitations were those associated with bearing and nurturing children.
- In marriage, husband and wife were to mutually work out any differences. If a mutual conclusion could not be reached by discussion, then to avoid destructive disagreement, there was the principle of submission.
- Husbands were delegated authority and accountability for making final family decisions.
- In these 6 verses, Peter first implies that a wife’s submission to her husband involves being a godly wife no matter what the husband is like, even if he is an unbeliever.
- The idea is that a wife who lives a Christ-like life will demonstrate attitudes and actions that can win a husband who otherwise might be hard-hearted toward biblical truth.
- The second comment is that a wife’s adornment should not be **merely** external. In other words, don’t depend on your external appearance to define who you are.
- Rather, a wife’s adornment should **primarily** be “the hidden person of the heart possessing the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.”
- This is not to condemn cosmetics and jewelry – it is a commendation and recognition of the importance of character as being much more important than external beauty.
- A wife should never emphasize external beauty if it interferes with cultivating the internal beauty of character.
- Peter closes with reference to great women of the Old Testament as examples of how wives whose hope was in God submitted to their own husbands.
- The proper relation between a Christian and the various God-ordained earthly authority structures dominates this section of Peter’s letter.
- God’s intent is that the authority structures He established on earth lessen confusion and promote orderliness and justice in the world making life easier for His people.

- We all know that in practice authority doesn't necessarily work the way God intends, not government authority nor family authority. The deviation of actual earthly authority from God's intention is not different from what happens in all other human activities.
 - We are a fallen, sinful race and effects flowing from our fallen condition show up in all human activities.
 - Peter's comments about a wife's submission seem to imply that a condition for submission is that her husband carry out his assigned leadership role (for which he is held accountable).
 - The husband is to be the spiritual leader of his family and to be a loving, caring husband to his wife and father to his children.
 - Husband and wife are intended to make joint decisions, each offering their thoughts and working for agreement. If agreement is not possible, the husband as head of the family must break the impasse as well as take accountability for the decision.
 - The intent is that, in this manner, confusion and argument be avoided. The husband as God's designated head of the family is accountable to God for the family's well being both physically and spiritually.
3. ***1 Peter 3:7: Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.***
- Peter outlines a husband's responsibility. In a few words, he covers a lot of territory.
 - Husbands live with your wife in an understanding way, honoring her by being faithful and respecting her intellect, emotions, and work.
 - Integrating and interpreting ideas from both the instructions to wives and husbands gives us something like the following.
 - (1.) Husbands are delegated authority from God to function as head of the family. They are accountable to God for the use or abuse of that contingent and partial authority.
 - The purpose of the "head of the family" designation is that it be used to encourage family members to righteousness, and to protect the innocent and weak within the family.
 - The "head of family" is also intended to defend family members from aggression, and to provide for the general spiritual and physical well-being of each member of the family.
 - The "head of family" authority is not to be used to further unrighteousness, to harm any family member, etc. If "head of family" authority is abused, it may become necessary for family members to disobey. "Head of family" authority is not dictatorial power.
 - (2.) Within the context of "head of family authority," wives should submit to the authority God has assigned to her husband. It is the husband's obligation to use his authority to nurture and protect his family.
 - It is the wife's obligation to cooperate with and encourage the proper exercise of that authority and when necessary to yield to her husband because he is the one accountable.

- Proper exercise of “head of the family” authority enhances the nurture and protection of the family both spiritually and physically.
- (3.) “Head of family” authority and submission to it is a part of God’s design of a family.
- Submission does not imply that the wife is inferior in any way to the husband. Indeed, the husband and wife are “joint heirs” together with Christ. In salvation there is no advantage in being a Jew or in being a male.
- Likewise, there is no disadvantage in being a Gentile or a female. All are saved by grace through faith. Submission as Peter discusses it, has to do with accountability, order, and authority structure, not worth.
- Husbands and wives are to be partners helping one another in their God-given roles. They are not and must not be competitors.
- When husband and wife cannot agree on a course of action, the husband, who is the accountable to God head of the family, must make the final decision.
- Husbands are called to minister to their wives as follows:
- To live or dwell with their wife (physical) which means providing for her needs, making time to be with her, and protecting and nurturing her.
- According to understanding or knowledge (intellectual) which means knowing their wife’s moods, feelings, needs, fears, hopes, ... Listening to their wife with their heart, sharing significant communication, providing within the home a protective atmosphere of love such that husband and wife can disagree and still be happy together (speaking the truth in love, Eph 4:15).
- Show honor (emotional). This means respecting their wife’s feelings, thoughts, and desires. Setting a proper loving, emotional and spiritual “temperature” in the home.
- Do these things so that your prayers may not be hindered (spiritual) which means knowing that both are heirs together with Christ and both should behave accordingly following Christ’s example. The wife should be properly submissive, the husband properly considerate, and both should submit to Christ.
- Some things to be considered by both husband and wife:
- Are we partners or competitors? Are we helping each other to become more Christ-like? Is our happiness together built on sound spiritual understanding and principles, or are we more dependent on external physical things? Do we understand and appreciate each other more and more as time passes? Are we sensitive to one another’s feelings and ideas, or do we tend to take one another for granted? Are we enriched because of our marriage or robbing one another of God’s blessing?
- God expects every husband to live with his wife in an understanding way, bestowing honor on her. Taking time and effort to develop and maintain a good marriage is God’s will. It pleases Him when we do so.

4. **Next: 1 Peter 3:8-12.**