

## **“Dwelling With Them”**

### **I Peter 3:7**

Introduction: A strange situation exists in society today. We have more readily available information about sex and marriage than ever before; yet we have more marital problems and divorces. Obviously something is wrong. It is not sufficient to say that God is needed in these homes, because even many Christian marriages are falling apart. The fact that a man and a woman are both saved is no guarantee that their marriage will succeed. Marriage is something that we have to work at; success is not automatic. And when one marriage partner is not a Christian, that can make matters even more difficult. Peter addressed this section of his letter to Christian wives who had unsaved husbands, telling them how to win their mates to Christ. Then he added some important admonitions for Christian husbands. No matter what your marital status may be, you can learn from Peter the essentials for a happy and successful marriage.

Body: Our homes can either be wedlock or deadlock! The key to a successful home is found in chapter two. The phrases “in the same manner” and “in like manner” refer us back to Peter’s discussion of the example of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:21-25). Just as Jesus was submissive and obedient to God’s will, so a Christian husband and wife should follow His example. When Christian couples try to imitate the world and get their standards from Hollywood instead of from heaven, there will be trouble in the home. But if both partners will imitate Jesus Christ in His submission and obedience, and His desire to serve others, then there will be triumph and joy in the home.

#### I. The Heart of the Home—The Helpmeet vs. 1-6

##### A. Her Attitude vs. 1-2

##### 1. The Requirement v. 1a

- a. Twice in this paragraph, Peter reminded Christian wives that they were to be in subjection to their husbands (1 Peter 3:1, 5).

(1) The word translated “subjection” is a military term that means “to place under rank.”

(2) He has ordained that the husband be the head of the home (Eph. 5:21-24) and that, as he submits to Christ, his wife should submit to him.

- b. Peter gave three reasons why a Christian wife should submit to her husband, even if the husband (as in this case) is not saved.

(1) Subjection is an Obligation v. 1a

(a) Subjection does not mean that the wife is inferior to the husband. In verse seven we see that they are heirs together.

(b) Submission has to do with order and authority, not evaluation. For example, the slaves in the average Roman household were superior in many ways to their masters, but they still had to be under authority. The buck private in the army may be a better person than the five-star general, but he is still a buck private.

(2) Subjection is an Opportunity vs. 1b-2

(a) An opportunity for what? To win an unsaved husband to Christ.

- (b) An unsaved husband will not be converted by preaching or nagging in the home. Christian wives who preach at their husbands only drive them farther from the Lord.
  - (c) God not only commands submission, but He uses it as a powerful spiritual influence in a home.
  - (d) It is the character and conduct of the wife that will win the lost husband—not arguments, but such attitudes as submission, understanding, love, kindness, patience. These qualities are not manufactured; they are the fruit of the Spirit that come when we are submitted to Christ and to one another.
- (3) Subjection is an Ornament vs. 3-6
- (a) The word translated “adorning” is kosmos in the Greek, and gives us our English words “cosmos” (the ordered universe) and “cosmetic.” It is the opposite of chaos.
  - (b) Peter warned the Christian wife not to major on external decorations but on internal character.
  - (c) A Christian wife with an unsaved husband might think that she must imitate the world if she is going to win her mate; but just the opposite is true.
2. The Reason vs. 1b-2
- B. Her Attire vs. 3-4
1. What is Discouraged v. 3
- a. Roman women were captivated by the latest fashions of the day, and competed with each other in dress and hairdos. It was not unusual for the women to have elaborate coiffures, studded with gold and silver combs and even jewels. They wore elaborate and expensive garments, all for the purpose of impressing each other.
  - b. There is a difference between glamour and true beauty:
    - (1) Glamour is artificial and external; true beauty is real and internal.
    - (2) Glamour is something a person can put on and take off, but true beauty is always present.
    - (3) Glamour is corruptible; it decays and fades. True beauty from the heart grows more wonderful as the years pass.
    - (4) NOTE: True beauty comes from the heart, not the store.
2. What is Desirable v. 4
- a. A Christian woman who cultivates the beauty of the inner person will not have to depend on cheap externals.
  - b. God is concerned about values, not prices.
  - c. Consider a portion of Scripture:
    - (1) Matthew 6:28-29
    - (2) The glory of Solomon was all put on from the outside; the glory of the lily grows from within. Peter urges that women in the church cultivate that inner beauty that is so much more radiant and permanent than any outward, fashionable adornment can ever be.
- C. Her Attainment vs. 5-6 (Consider: Genesis 12:10-20; 18:6, 19; 20:1-13; 22:1-3)

- II. The Head of the Home—The Husband v. 7
- A. He is to be Considerate v. 7- “*Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge...*”
1. Physical Relationship- “*...dwell with them...*”
    - a. This implies much more than sharing the same address. Marriage is fundamentally a physical relationship. Ephesians 5:31
    - b. The husband must make time to be home with his wife. Christian workers and church officers who get too busy running around solving other people’s problems, may end up creating problems of their own at home. One survey revealed that the average husband and wife had thirty-seven minutes a week together in actual communication! I Corinthians 7:1-5
    - c. Is it any wonder that marriages fall apart after the children grow up and leave home?
  2. Intellectual Relationship- “*...according to knowledge...*”
    - a. It is amazing that two married people can live together and not really know each other!
    - b. A Christian husband needs to know his wife’s moods, feelings, needs, fears, and hopes.
    - c. Speaking the truth in love is the solution to the communications problem. It has well been said that love without truth is hypocrisy, and truth without love is brutality.
    - d. When either mate is afraid to be open and honest about a matter, then he or she is building walls and not bridges.
    - e. Somebody asked Mrs. Albert Einstein if she understood Dr. Einstein’s theory of relativity, and she replied, “No, but I understand the Doctor.”
  3. Emotional Relationship
    - a. Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus, John Gray; pgs. 60-61.
    - b. Men Are Like Waffles, Women Are Like Spaghetti, Bill and Pam Farrel; pgs. 106-107.
    - c. Mars and Venus, Together Forever, John Gray; pgs. 46-48.
    - d. Mars and Venus, Together Forever, John Gray; pgs. 53-54.
  4. Spiritual Relationship
- B. He is to be Careful v. 7- “*...giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel...*”
1. Giving honor unto the wife does not mean giving in to the wife. A husband can disagree with his wife and still respect and honor her. As the spiritual leader in the home, the husband must sometimes make decisions that are not popular; but he can still act with courtesy and respect.
  2. Giving honor means that the husband respects his wife’s feelings, thinking, and desires. He may not agree with her ideas, but he respects them. Often God balances a marriage so that the husband needs what the wife has in her personality, and she likewise needs his good qualities.
  3. The husband should treat his wife like an expensive, beautiful, fragile vase, in which is a precious treasure.
  4. Men are not to ride roughshod over their wives, bossing and bullying them, ordering them around, letting them do heavy work beyond their strength, or making unreasonable demands upon them.

5. When a young couple starts dating, the boy is courteous and thoughtful. After they get engaged, he shows even more courtesy and always acts like a gentleman. Sad to say, soon after they get married, many a husband forgets to be kind and gentlemanly and starts taking his wife for granted. He forgets that happiness in a home is made up of many little things, including the small courtesies of life.
  6. Big resentments often grow out of small hurts. Husbands and wives need to be honest with each other, admit hurts, and seek for forgiveness and healing.
- C. He is to be Cooperative v. 7- “...and as being heirs together of the grace of life...”
1. A husband and wife are “heirs together.” If the wife shows submission and the husband consideration, and if both submit to Christ and follow His example, then they will have an enriching experience in their marriage.
  2. The “grace of life” may refer to children, who certainly are a heritage from God (Ps. 127:3).
- D. He is to be Conscientious v. 7- “...that your prayers be not hindered.”
1. Peter assumed that husbands and wives would pray together. Often, they do not; and this is the reason for much failure and unhappiness.
  2. If unconverted people can have happy homes without prayer (and they do), how much happier Christian homes would be with prayer!
  3. The Word of God and prayer are basic to a happy, holy home.
  4. In fact, it is the prayer life of a couple that indicates how things are going in the home. If something is wrong, their prayers will be hindered.

Conclusion: It might be good if husbands and wives occasionally took inventory of their marriages. Here are some questions, based on what Peter wrote.

1. Are we partners or competitors?
2. Are we helping each other become more spiritual?
3. Are we depending on the externals or the eternal? The artificial or the real?
4. Do we understand each other better?
5. Are we sensitive to each other’s feelings and ideas, or taking each other for granted?
6. Are we seeing God answer our prayers?
7. Are we enriched because of our marriage, or robbing each other of God’s blessing?