

1 PETER 3:1-7 WHY?

^{3:1} *Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,* ² *when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.* ³ *Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes.* ⁴ *Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.* ⁵ *For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands,* ⁶ *like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.* ⁷ *Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.*

Why should we submit to authority even when it is pagan? Why is that our call as Christians? Peter literally brings that question home when he applies it to the marriage relationship. It is one thing to keep the question at arms length by discussing our relationship to the state, or discussing the slave-master axis. It is quite another thing to meddle in our home life. How dare Peter dictate how I am to deal with my spouse. Obviously such passages get our attention and are an opportunity to instruct us in the ways of the Lord.

When a woman dresses and acts in a solicitous manner toward her husband, her focus is on the man. When she clothes herself in gentleness and submission she is focusing on God. A life that is focused on God is a holy life – one that is set apart to God. But beyond the matter of focus there is the matter of effect. A gentle and submissive attitude in combination with a quiet confidence in God can't help but be a witness even to a pagan husband. In addition, such a life will be a powerful testimony to the pagan culture.

Likewise, when we interact with the world through our various authority structures, every Christian is called to be a witness for the kingdom. Because we are sons of God and heirs of the kingdom, we have every reason to live with confidence. We don't need to adorn ourselves with inflated resumes or demonstrations of our assertiveness. Rather, we witness to the truth of the Gospel through gentleness and submission. In that way, some may be won over by your behavior toward them.

Thank you, Father, for placing me in the relationships of my life. My desire is to witness to your love and mercy in these relationships and beyond them to the world. Give me the quiet confidence of knowing you as my Father, so that I might be secure enough to be gentle and submissive, as you have shown me through Jesus Christ. Amen.