

EXCELLING IN MARRIAGE

1 Peter 3:1-7

Intro: Saw a sign on marquee of church today: Renewal of marriage vows. It would seem that is a worthy for every Christian as the subject of marriage is discussed. Let's talk about "excelling in the home". (No visual but the text itself).

Key verse: 1 Pet 2:12. Now illustrated in the ensuing sections. Christians devote themselves to excellence in every relationship! And that more specifically involves submission in places where order is significant.

He begins with all of us as we submit to the government, then to servants who must submit to masters. Now he extends the principle to wives who are instructed to submit to their husbands; but not without a word also for the husbands. And keep in mind that it is excellence that is the ultimate theme that binds these sections together.

God's people should be noted for their excellent home lives. Peter gives here a prescription for a happy marriage. We will try to fill out the details of it tonight.

WIVES (exhortation, illustration, motivation)

Her attitude is submissive

A charge for a woman to be submissive to her husband does not demean her any more than the previous exhortations to everyone to be submissive to government and to their masters demeans them. It is just another sphere where the principle of authority should be acknowledged.

In this case the woman's submission has a powerful effect in the life of her unbelieving husband. One might even wonder who has the greater power, the man who exercises the right of leadership over his family or the woman whose example is so powerful that she without words leads her husband to the Lord!!!

Will result in conversion without formal discourse (without a word, not without "the" word), and certainly without nagging. The word of the gospel is being displayed daily in the Christian woman's life.

He watches her behavior:

Chaste--morally pure, not chased

Respectful--

Her adornment:

Adornment is "kosmos", arrangement or order of a thing. Cf. cosmos, the whole order of things. Or, cosmetics (the thing used in arranging a woman's appearance)

Not external: braiding hair, gold jewelry, putting on dresses.
That is, emphasis is not there. This is a Hebraistic see-saw, not an absolute prohibition against jewelry, fashionable clothing, etc.
But internal:

Meek--tranquil, calm, spirit; self-possessed not anxious and on the verge of hysteria or given to outburst.

Quiet--sober not giddy, controlled not boisterous

A thing God values.

And they are lasting (incorruptible).

Sarah illustrates these qualities:

Obeded Abraham—submissive.

Respected him--calling him "lord", something like "sir"

Why? Because she placed her hope in God and wanted to be holy.

To hope in God is to live the life of trust in His provision and His rewards.

Godly women are the daughters of this noble woman when they emulate her character. That just as Abraham is the "father of the faithful" in view of the promise that in his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed, so Sarah his wife and also partaker in that promise is the "mother" of those women who do right with the courage of their convictions. Christian women who advocate subjection and purity may be hooted at, and even criticized for acquiescing to male domination. But when they do right they have the same hope as Sarah.

HUSBANDS

Be understanding

Men jokingly talk about the impossibility of understanding a woman. But God not only says we can understand them, we must do so. The godly husband treats her with an informed love.

There is first a forthright commitment to the concept that a man's wife, as a woman, is the weaker vessel. (The finest china is also the most fragile. Yet it is greatly valued). And that is said to prevent the kind of exploitive ness and mistreatment that grows out of a woman's fragility physically and emotionally.

People applaud today liberated concepts of woman. They contend that the Bible is sexist and demeans women. But here is the most exalted view of a woman. It makes provision for her care and protection in view of her nature.

It is upon this basis that a man should:

Care for her and provide for her.

Refrain from burdening her with physical and emotional burdens beyond her strength.

Grant her honor as fellow-heir of the grace of life.

Grant her honor

I can hear here echoes of Prov. 31. It extols the value of a godly woman. It rehearses her many contributions to her

family; but it is sandwiched by two important value statements:

An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. (Proverbs 31:10)

Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband also, and he praises her, saying: "Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all." (Proverbs 31:28-29)

In addition, a man demonstrates by his life the value he places upon his wife. The time he is willing to commit to her, to serve her, to help her, the expressions of endearment he gives are all a part of the honor he grants her, of the support he shares with her.

Fellow-heir of the grace of life

I see here first the idea that wives are to be equal recipients of the joys of living.

Second, as Christians they are also fellow-heirs of the blessings of God. Though there are different roles for men and women in the kingdom, women are not second class citizens. Indeed, "you are all one in Christ". Paul said that in the context of the reception of the blessing of eternal life promised to Abraham and his seed.

It is the realization of both facts that causes the man to "honor" his wife.

Conclusion: Beginning a marriage as a Christian couple definitely gives one an advantage. But it also leads others to the Lord. Let the world see in you an excellent partner.