

# UNSAVED HUSBANDS

First Peter 3:1-6

Peter is about to continue his theme of *actions speak louder than words* by turning his attention to marriages. Already he has applied this to Christian citizens to the Empire, Christian slaves to non-Christian masters. His first instructions are to Christian wives of unsaved husbands. The interesting phenomena about the spread of Christianity is that it has always been far more readily accepted by women than men. Consequently, we find in our modern churches the same predicament that was in the first: women have become Christians, when their husbands have not. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is the very nature of how Christianity is spread. It is *communicated* usually by the spoken word. And women tend to have more say to each other than men do! Thus there is a greater likelihood of a woman witnessing than there is of a man witnessing. There is also a greater likelihood of a woman opening up and expressing her real feelings, and thus recognising her need for a Saviour. But once a woman does accept Christ, and her husband has not, the woman finds herself in a dilemma: *loyalty to Christ, or loyalty to her husband?* The New Testament is consistent in telling women how to relate to their husbands.



1. Note the following references about wives relating to their husbands?
  - a) Ephesians 5:22 \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Colossians 3:18 \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) 1Peter 3:1 \_\_\_\_\_

To "submit" means *to render obedience to*. Husbands are instructed to lead their wives as Christ leads the Church. The basis of this leading is *love*. Husbands are to love their wives. The husband has the responsibility of leading his wife. We see this as God's plan for husbands and wives from the Garden of Eden. Adam was given the responsibility of leading, watching over, protecting-but most of all- loving, his wife. Even though a couple does know the LORD, this is still the God-ordained pattern for a marriage. When a woman usurps her husband's authority, she is out of divine order (and blessing). But what about the wives of unsaved husbands?

2. Note again Peter's instruction to wives of unsaved husbands- (1Peter 3:1)

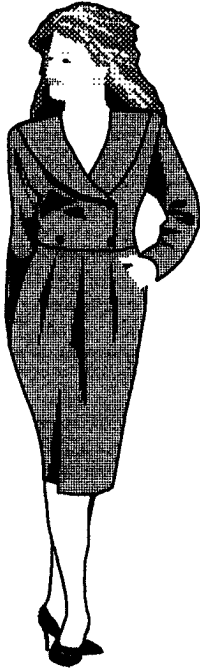
The wife of an unsaved husband was to render loyalty to her husband without forsaking her loyalty to Christ. Her submission to her husband should not be undermined. Doing so would place her outside of God's order and blessing for her life. Naturally, though, the wife of an unsaved husband seeks two basic things: *her own spiritual growth, and the salvation of her husband (his spiritual growth)*. To achieve the first objective the wife must be careful not to move outside of her husband's authority, because (despite him not being saved) he is still the *spiritual* head of his household. God's order is still true despite a husband not being submitted to Him.

3. How is the wife to work toward achieving the second objective according First Peter 3:1-2?

Many wives of unsaved husbands do themselves a dis-service in their evangelising of their husbands when they continually preach *at* them. Peter says that unsaved husbands should *see* Christ in their wives. Several years ago, David Pawson visited Australia on a preaching tour. He had many wives of unsaved husbands request prayer for their husbands. Instead of praying for them, he counselled them to stay at home with their husbands on a Sunday rather than go to Church (much to the shock and dismay of the local pastors). He shared with these wives the principles of First Peter 3. When David Pawson returned to Australia twelve months later he revisited these churches. At every church he returned to, women came to him to thank him for his advice and to introduce him to their husbands (who were now saved)! Previously these husbands had felt that Church and Christianity was

a wedge between their relationship to each other. When their wives stopped at home and showed their husbands their love and loyalty to him, they were now more open to the Gospel than ever before!

## INNER BEAUTY



Peter advises women to make *inner* beauty a priority. Their beauty should not be superficial. Does this mean that a woman should look plain?

4. Does First Peter 3:3 say that women should not wear beautiful things or adorn themselves in a beautiful way?

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5. What things should a woman firstly adorn herself with? (1Pt. 3:4)

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6. According to verse 5, how did women of old make themselves beautiful?

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"The outstanding wives of the Old Testament times, particularly Abraham's wife Sarah, are introduced as an example or parallel to inspire Christian wives. These women enjoyed a privileged status as members of God's chosen people; they were *holy*. They learnt for themselves to make the God of Israel their confidence and hope... Their lives were adorned by those desirable characteristics of personal conduct, particularly in relation to their husbands, namely, submission, active well-doing and freedom from panic and alarm."

Alan M. Stibbs, commentary on First Peter

To make the point about wives submitting to "unworthy" husbands, Peter uses Sarah as an example. On numerous occasions Abraham made terrible blunders in his judgments and decisions. But Sarah submitted herself to him, despite these short-comings of her husband. Does this mean that Sarah never expressed her opinion to her husband? Hardly! We remember the incident involving Hagar and Ishmael. Sarah told Abraham that she wanted him to kick them out (Gen. 21:10). Abraham strongly disagreed (Gen. 21:11).

7. Who did God tell Abraham to listen to in Genesis 21:12?

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Sarah was free to discuss things with oft bungling husband. But she always submitted to him and thus enjoyed the blessing of God upon her life. At times this required great faith. Her submission was no licence to her husband to abuse her in any way, and no wife should tolerate a husband who treats his marriage vows with flippancy.

*Amen.*