

MESSAGE TITLE: Roles and Goals, part 1

SCRIPTURE: I Peter 3:1-6

KEY TRUTH

God has designed specific roles within our marriages. Wives are called to live as pictures of purity and reverence as a testimony to Jesus.

GETTING STARTED

Peter gives instructions to believing wives so that they may testify to the Gospel in the home. Read I Peter 2:13-3:12 first to understand how 3:1-6 fits into the overall context of how the Gospel informs social order for believers.

OBSERVATION

What does Peter instruct wives to do in verse 1 and why? Read Ephesians 5:22-24 for a similar teaching on this subject.

How does Peter say believing wives may win over their unbelieving husbands to faith in Christ? What does Peter hope unbelieving husbands will see in their wives? How can wives testify to the Gospel without using words?

Is Peter telling women not to braid their hair or wear jewelry? Then what would it look like today for a believing wife to ‘not let your adorning be external’?

What does Peter encourage women to adorn themselves with instead? How does God value this kind of internal adorning?

Is Peter saying that wives should call their husbands lords?? What’s his point in referring wives to Sarah as their example of a model wife?

APPLICATION

Consider the points of application from this passage for wives:

- *Be subject to your own husbands.*
- *Win over your unbelieving husbands by respectful and pure conduct.*
- *Adorn yourself with a gentle and quiet spirit, rather than giving priority to external adorning.*
- *Do not fear circumstances beyond your control. Trust God’s hand in your life.*

Which of the applications above do you believe come easier for most wives than others? Which is the most difficult?

Do you see any other points of application in this passage for wives?

How do these application points reflect the Gospel? How does the Gospel, the good news of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, impact the way wives apply this passage?

How can husbands make it easier for wives to put this passage into practice?

PRAYER

Take time to pray for the believing wives in your group and congregation. Mention them by name if possible. Ask that God would equip wives with the biblical understanding and power they need to pursue a gentle and quiet spirit. Some wives come to church without their husbands because their husbands do not know Christ. Pray for the salvation of husbands who live with believing wives. Ask that God would show them how to win their husbands to Christ by their respectful and pure conduct.

COMMENTARY NOTES

3:1 For a believing wife to have a different religion than her husband was quite astonishing for that culture. For example, the Greek historian Plutarch said, "A wife should not acquire her own friends, but should make her husband's friends her own. The gods are the first and most significant friends. For this reason, it is proper for a wife to recognize only those gods whom her husband worships." Even though Peter calls on wives to submit to their husbands, it was a different kind of submission than was common in that culture. Scripture never teaches that women in general are to submit to men in general, but it does affirm male leadership in the home. The wives' devotion was first and foremost to Jesus.

3:2 If a wife has an unbelieving husband who is disobedient to the word, she should not try to pressure him into becoming a believer. Instead, her godly conduct will testify without a word to the truth of the Gospel.

3:3-4 Peter's instructions here were common in his day. Such external adorning can be witnessed in portraits and sculptures from the first century, where the elaborate braiding of women's hair and the wearing of ostentatious jewelry was common in upper class Roman society. In contrast to this, the believing woman should focus on inner or hidden beauty of the heart. What matters to God is the godly character of the wife, characterized by a gentle and quiet spirit. It is clear that Peter is not literally prohibiting all braiding of hair or all wearing of gold jewelry because if this were the case, the same prohibition would apply to wearing clothing! Instead, Peter warns against both a preoccupation with personal appearance and material excess in such matters.

3:5 Hope in God is expressed in a wife honoring her husband by submitting to him, as the honorable women in the Old Testament did.

3:6 Peter describes Sarah's submission in terms of obedience. Such obedience does not mean the relationship between husbands and wives is like that of parents and children

but it does show that a wife is to follow her husband's direction and leadership. In the culture of her day, Sarah expressed her submission by respectfully referring to Abraham as lord. Peter calls on wives to model themselves after such godly women, not fearing that harm will come to them, but trusting God as Sarah did.

SOURCES CONSULTED

ESV Study Bible

HCSB Study Bible