



lyona bible church

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS – MARCH 7, 2010

Announcements – Please read these to your group!

Please check your bulletin and the website (www.lyona.org) each week for additional information.

- **THEOS:** A new semester starts next Sunday, March 14 beginning at 9am.
- **Sportsman's Banquet:** This year's expo and banquet will be held on Saturday, April 24 starting at 4pm.

Desperate Households: Value and Submission, Part 4 (1 Peter 3:1-7)

Questions

1. What was the most interesting idea or principle about this Sunday's message?
2. When you hear the word "submission," what goes through your mind?
3. Submission is an equal placing themselves in subjection to another for the benefit of all concerned. Domestically, a wife submits to her husband because of his position of authority. Have someone read Genesis 3:16. Why is it a natural response for a wife to struggle submitting to her husband?
4. How did your childhood and adolescence play into your ideology of submission?
5. Have someone read 1 Peter 3:1-2. The early church spread faster among women, who were basically second-class citizens, because of their domestic and social treatment. Husbands could legally have their babies killed or thrown out on the street, have extra-marital affairs, and treat their wives like meat and slaves. We don't live in the first century so why is submission an issue?
6. Have someone read 1 Peter 3:3-6. How can a wife consciously and subconsciously berate and belittle her husband?
7. Have someone read 1 Peter 3:7. Submission is easier to do when a wife feels valued by her husband. If she is not valued, she will have a harder time submitting to the "big" decisions. How can you as a husband value your wife?
8. Do you, after hearing the sermon this Sunday, need to confess anything or repent of anything? What in your life needs to change?

Prayer Requests

A place to write out your groups' prayer requests

SERMON NOTES

DESPERATE HOUSEHOLDS, *Value and Submission*, Part 4

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INTRODUCTION

As I was writing out this message, I thought back to the things that I heard in the line of churches that I grew up and served in. It was popular to teach that women were to submit to their husbands. Period. There was no reason other than the Bible says so. Nothing was ever said to the husband other than love your wife as Christ loves the Church. There were no illustrations or examples to make this relevant or relatable to husbands and wives.

There is a lot of mistrust and misunderstanding of the word “submission.” From the feminist to the male chauvinist, there is a world of extremes where we normally have men and women fall into. There is a huge misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Scripture, where both men and women manipulate those passages to defend their cause.

When you hear the word “submission” what goes through your mind?

As a guy, you treat your wife like a slave and a piece of meat. You do nothing around the home but sit through re-runs of *Sportscenter* and *Man vs Wild*, while your wife is in desperate need of some alone time so she can cultivate her relationship with God. As a guy, you are weak and you allow your wife to berate you. Then you go and entertain thoughts about the woman you work with.

As a woman, you may have been raised by a parent who was physically and verbally abusive. You decided very early on that you would never marry a man like that, but you find yourself married to a husband who does nothing to value or honor you. Perhaps you are the woman who has been taught by your mom to stand up for yourself and let no man control you. So you have been through marriage after marriage because you have a misunderstanding of what submission means. You may have been raised to think that you are to “obey” your husband and never speak your mind, which has caused nothing but heartache and pain for you.

How did your childhood and adolescence play into your ideology of submission?

No matter where you find yourself, there is no joy. You are desperate for joy and purpose in your marriage. The truth is that submission is much easier for a woman when her husband values her. There is cause and effect to this principle. There is a danger to think your wife is to submit to you when you do nothing to value and honor her. There is a danger to think your husband is to value and honor you when you do nothing but undermine and berate him.

You portray yourself as the couple that has it all together. Yet you are running in opposite directions from each other, living separate lives, and drowning in a sea of hopelessness and pain. Additionally you may portray yourself as the husband who is a teddy bear to those at the church, but as soon as you are in the car you are a grizzly bear. You may portray yourself as the wife with the gentle and quiet spirit but at home you tear down and belittle your husband.

We all have our reasons for not submitting and not valuing to your spouse. We all have our idea on how to submit to our husbands and how to value our wives. But are we right? Let’s take a look at 1 Peter

3:1-7 to see that it takes two people to support each other in the marriage by the wives submitting to their husbands and the husbands value their wives.

¹Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, ²when they see your respectful and pure conduct.¹

This passage will seem very calloused and bigoted when read in a 2010 perspective instead of understanding the context in a first century Roman culture, where this passage would have been very counter-cultural. The early church spread faster among women, especially wives, than men because men had more to lose socially when converting to an unpopular religion. Husbands could legally have their babies killed or thrown out on the street, have extra-martial affairs, and treat their wives like meat and slaves. Women were basically second rate citizens. Even if a woman would divorce her husband, he would normally retaliate by handing her over to the authorities for believing in Christ. There was not much freedom and options for women during the time of the early church. So the things we will read about are very counter-cultural for the early church and can give us who live in 2010 American Evangelicalism a better perspective on the word *submission*.

What is submission to you? We don't live in the first century so why is this an issue?

Likewise refers back to Peter's thoughts and instructions to submit to the authorities over us (2:13-25). So he is continuing on with the subject of submission and specifying it in the marriage context. Peter explains that everyone submits to an authority—everyone does. Submission is an equal placing themselves in subjection to another for the benefit of all concerned. The word for submission in this context is actually a military term. So it is basically submitting to authority in the home, which is the husband.

This goes back to Genesis 3, where the woman was deceived and the man disobeyed. Due to the fall, this is where the head of the home comes from. One of the consequences to the woman eating of the forbidden fruit was to submit to her husband. If we want to blame anyone we need to place blame on our first parents. A woman submitting to her husband was not going to be easy. God explains to Eve that her desire is to fight against her husband and in result she needs to submit to his position (Genesis 3:16). In response, Adam was to cultivate his wife, along with the earth. We'll unpack this later when we get to verse 7.

Peter continues to coach his female audience, even with all the unfair treatment and abuse that they have taken, he gently wants those with unsaved husbands to submit so that their husbands could be gained to Christ by their respectable and pure conduct. Even in our culture this happens all the time, where one or the other spouse will get saved before the other—normally it is the wife.

Let me quickly unpack the respectful and pure conduct. This is the key to submitting to her husband. Respectful means that you are not nagging him or annoying him about spiritual things and things around the house. Nagging causes the husband to actually resent you even more and if your husband is not saved this does not help him with his issues with God. This is not hiding a tract under his napkin as you

¹ All Scripture referred in this sermon, unless otherwise noted, is taken from: The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001).

prepare dinner and act surprised how it got there. This is not threatening him with hell, where he will never see his kids. Having a pure conduct is not having any hidden agendas but everything has pure motives. This is not bargaining with her husband—“if you do this, I’ll do this for you. If you don’t do this, you can catch this goodbye.” This woman will continue living out the Gospel and praying that God will draw her husband to Himself.

How can a wife subconsciously belittle their husband?

I can remember talking with my grandparents about their conversion experience. My grandmother got saved three months before my grandfather, while attending a Bible study with her friend. She said that someone showed her this verse and it spoke to her. Those three months were hard for her as she dealt with a husband who wanted nothing to do with Christ and everything to do with the bar scene. She prayed fervently and thoughtfully lived out the Gospel and eventually by her actions my grandfather was gained to Christ.

³Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—²

This verse has been taken out of context some many times over the years by denominations that take this to the extreme because of bad exegesis. If you read this as things a woman cannot do, you have read it wrong. If this is about make-up, gold, and braided hair, you are totally off the mark.

Peter writes that when a woman makes herself look attractive it should not *merely* be external and gives a list of illustrations. We cannot make a doctrine on illustrations. Peter contextualized this principle of adorning but using cultural illustrations at that time. Peter could have used anything and could have included much more, but he just chose three illustrations. Once we make this about hair, gold, and make-up, we have totally misunderstood what Peter was teaching women. These women were putting their hope and money into stuff so that they could draw attention to themselves.

The same goes on today, especially in major cities where women spend a fortune to look like the women in magazines and television. Living in Dallas for a couple years was definitely an eye-opener to all of the tanning salons, boutiques, and expensive department stores. Women were putting their hope in designer labels like Coach and Jimmy Cho and their favorite tanning salon. Their hope was tanning beds and designer clothes not Christ. Only Christ can fill their need to draw attention to themselves.

You did the Dallas thing, what kept you from that lifestyle?

⁴but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.

Peter quickly explains that a woman’s adorning should not just be in designer jeans and tanning beds but that they focus on making their mind and soul attractive with the never-dying beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. In the culture that Peter wrote to, quiet and gentle women were considered more attractive than the women who dressed in the latest fashion.

² The three illustrations/examples that Peter uses were very cultural relevant to his women readers. In that time, hair was braided as a sport. Women kept up with the latest fashions, which included wearing a load of jewelry. The purpose of women keeping up with the latest fashion was to draw attention to themselves. They would put all their hope into the external so that they could feel better about themselves.

The internal attraction looks like a woman who is gentle with her husband. She is not undermining him or his leadership in the home. She is gently leading him to lead her and the kids. There are times when I will be wrapped up in ministry or fall asleep on the couch that I neglect to lead Jenny as her spiritual head of the home. So there are times that while I am brushing my teeth, she is placing our marriage devotional on my pillow. As I turn to get into bed, I see the book on my pillow and realize that she is gently nudging me to lead her as her husband. She is not brash and mean about it. She is gentle about getting me to lead.

Why do you do it? How do you feel when I return the favor?

The internal attraction also looks like a woman who is quiet with her husband. She is not nagging and berating him to do things around the home or even leading her. She is quiet when discussing things with him. This kind of behavior in the Scripture is sometimes referred to as *quarrelsome*. There are four times in Proverbs that deter women from being quarrelsome. A quarrelsome wife is like a continual dripping of rain (Proverbs 19:13; 27:15), which is annoying and irritating and something we beg to stop. Solomon, the author of Proverbs, says that it is safer for a guy to live in a desert or on the corner of the roof than to live inside with a quarrelsome wife (Proverbs 21:9, 19). It is better for your husband live in the corner of your house in 8-degree weather with snow than to live inside with heat with you nagging him.

Your godliness and your time cultivating your relationship with God are precious in His sight. God will use your godliness to gain your husband to Christ and get your husband to begin leading you and the family. Pursue that gentle and quiet spirit.

⁵For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, ⁶as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children³, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening⁴.

Let me quickly unpack Sarah calling Abraham lord. This was a sign of respect to Jews. This was nothing more than respect. This is a not woman going around and calling her husband *lord*. It is like calling your husband his name or a cute little nickname you have for him with respect. When Jenny addresses me with respect, she will by saying my name in a normal tone. But when she begins to have some pitch to my name or she uses my full name then I know there is an issue.

⁷Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel⁵, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

³ Jews considered themselves the children of Abraham and Sarah.

⁴ Along with the cultural context of this text, women were mistreated and abused. It was cultural for a woman to fear her husband as well as submit to him. Peter disagrees with the fear factor because he says that a woman is to submit to her husband but not fear him. Peter encourages these wives to continue living in peace without being intimidated by their husband's authority, threats, and power.

⁵ The phrase "weaker vessel" refers to the cultural context that women were socially inferior to men. In most Roman circles in which Peter refutes, women were viewed morally, intellectually, socially, and naturally inferior to men. Much of this preposition was resulted in Aristotle's influential teaching that women were by nature inferior to men in every way expect sexually.

Without this verse to converted husbands, the last six verses can be very difficult for wives to live out, especially when it comes to those with unchurched husbands. Submission is easier to do when a wife feels valued by her husband. If she is not valued, she will have a harder time submitting to his decisions. Husbands need to spend time with their wife so they can better understand them. If you are not spending time together, you are going to have a hard time comforting your wife and meeting her needs because you do not understand her. Our date together is something that I look forward to each week. Whether it is ordering pizza and renting a few movies or going out to a nice restaurant, I enjoy spending time with her and valuing her by complimenting her.

When it comes to decisions around the house, I leave them to Jenny. Please understand I am an opinionated guy with passionate thoughts. But I choose to shut my mouth and she makes the decisions around our house. Like when it comes to decorating and cooking, she makes those decisions. Whatever she decides, I praise her (Proverbs 31:28). When we are in the car and we both of two different tastes for music, she puts whatever she wants on—9 times out of 10 it is something I don't want to listen to. The reason why I do this is because I know that there are going to be times where I am going to make a big decision—like moving and finances. I am willingly to lose those small decisions so that when it comes to those “big” decisions she will have an easier time submitting to the decision I am thinking we have to make together.

How does this prepare you for those “big” decisions?

Peter instructs the husbands to live with their wives in an understanding way and valuing her as the weaker vessel. Peter reminds men that they were created equally with women. Even though they are the spiritual leaders of the home, they were never to forget that their wife was their equal spiritually. Value your wife by giving her time by herself—away from you and the kids. Give her time by herself—so she can get time to do the things she enjoys and she expresses her love for God. There is quality time in the kitchen, with clean-up duties, and getting the kids ready for bed. When you fail to do this, you will quickly jeopardize the effectiveness of your prayers (1 Peter 3:12). Without valuing their wife, they might as well kiss that dream job good bye.

Submission is much easier when your wife is valued.

Hopefully this has cleared up some of the mistrust and misunderstanding of the word “submission” through faithfully exegeting the passage. Hopefully we have come along way from those extremes and found a middle ground.

As a woman, stop belittling and berating your husband, especially in front of your friends you get together each week with. Allow your godliness (quiet and gentle spirit) to gain your husband to Christ. Submit to his position as head of the home without questioning or undermining his God-given position. Find your hope in your godliness and not in designer jeans and tanning. Allow God to use your actions to gain your husband to Christ or gain your husband to better lead you.

If you are a husband, please begin to value and cherish your wife. This is not about always being right. This is about creatively loving your wife by valuing her. Give her time by herself so she can cultivate her sanity and her relationship with God. Spending all day with toddlers and kids can drive a mom insane, so please give her time by herself. Help cook and clean out of appreciate and gratitude. Even when you are tired from working all day, spend time with the kids so your wife is able to spend time by herself.

Get a babysitter and have a date with your wife regularly—whether that’s once a week or once a month. Spend time with her to better understand her.

Imagine the impact that when your wife is valued and how much easier it will be for her to submit to you as the leader of the home. Think about the impact this will have on your kids, especially as they get older and begin the dating stage. Imagine the things you can teach them—the things to do and the things to avoid. Imagine how your wife will feel when she is treated equally. Imagine how your husband will feel when he is no longer berated and belittled by you. Imagine the joy you both will find in a marriage that is Christ-centered and Gospel-centered. Imagine a Genesis 2 marriage, where neither of you hide anything from each other.