1ST & 2ND PETER STUDY GUIDE LESSON FIVE – 1 PETER 3:1-12

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We will see through this week's study that God has given the final decision making authority to the husband in a family. As President Harry S Truman said, "The buck stops here." There are not two Commander-in-chiefs. What a political mess that would be! There are not two CEOs of a company. Someone has to make the final decision to maintain order and God has determined that the responsibility falls to the husband. When a woman gets her mind wrapped around letting her husband lead, she will find out two things. First, it's very freeing to give up the responsibility of making every decision and second, God will work in the heart of her husband through the decision making process to mold his character and deepen his faith.

At this point a woman may ask questions like, "Ya, but what do I do when he is in sin or not walking with the Lord? What do I do if he is hurting the family by his self-centered decisions? What do I do if he is verbally, emotionally, or physically abusing me or the children? Am I supposed to just stay silent and let him continue in sin?" The short answer is no!

To read 1 Peter 3:1-6 on wives being subject to their husbands without reading it in context of the rest of Peter's letter has led many to be confused about the role a woman plays in her marriage. One of the central themes of 1 Peter is how to follow Christ in His suffering in practical ways as we live and work in this dark world SO THAT we can bring others to a closer walk with Him. Peter's first letter flows in a back and forth movement from Christ and His suffering and sacrifice to exhortations for us to follow Christ's example of compassion to sinners.

Christ didn't sacrifice Himself to give us an example of how to let people mistreat us while we stay silent. He died on the cross out of a depth of compassion for lost sinners who are buried under the pain of shame and guilt. When we look at the cross and realize that we are set free from shame and guilt our compassion for other sinners grows and we fervently desire them to be set free as well. This is the context of *"wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."* (1 Peter 3:1-2 NASU) As we work our way through this lesson, my prayer is that women will see that God calls us to minister to sinners and compassionately seek the most loving course of action. Compassion for sinners leads us to do something with a genuinely loving attitude.

Review 1 Peter 2:20-25

- 1) Why do you think it is commendable to God when you are patient when being mistreated? Or, if it helps, you can flip the question around. How does it not glorify God when you are impatient with the person who is treating you bad?
- 2) From verse 21, we are called to this purpose (to be patient with sinful people) because of what Christ did for us. What does verse 21 say that Christ did for us?

3) Christ left us an example of how to patiently submit to those who treat us unfairly. From the following verses, underline the six steps we are to follow. (The steps are listed for you in Lesson Four.)

Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. (1 Peter 2:22-24 NASU)

4) The only way we can respond to others in love is to realize that at one time we were straying like sheep (verse 25) just like those who mistreat us. But we have returned to a place of safety. How is Christ described in verse 25? (*If someone has been unfair with you recently, take a moment and pray that they would return to the safety of Christ's love.*)

Note: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. (Psalm 103:8 NIV)

Read 1 Peter 3:1-6

- God is a God of order. Every institution runs better when there is clear leadership whether it is a government, a business, or a family. We are to submit to our husbands in the same way as we would to those who lead in government or those who lead in business. Read 1 Corinthians 11:3. Who is the head of Christ? Does it comfort you to know that Christ understood how to submit even when it was very hard?
- 2) Read Ephesians 5:22-33. Symbolically, what does Paul compare marriage to? From this passage, pull out phrases that describe what Christ does for the church.

3) Winning difficult or unbelieving husband "without a word" (verse 1) does not mean that we just shut down and never say anything while he continues in sin. Consider the following verses on ministering to sinners. What does each one encourage us to do?a) Rom 15:14

b) James 5:19-20

c) Luke 17:3-4

d) 2 Tim 4:2

Note: 1 Peter 3:2 reads in the NKJV as "when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear." The word "chaste" means "pure or innocent." The phrase "accompanied by fear" means "respectful behavior."

4) We are to be a living witness to our husbands but with respect and a gentle and quiet spirit. Read Proverbs 21:9, Proverbs 21:19, and Proverbs 27:3. What is our husband's attitude likely to be when we are not gentle and quite?

Note: Contentious means that you are always ready to argue. You are quarrelsome. You strive in opposition and competition. Vexing means to "give trouble to in a petty or nagging way; disturb, annoy, irritate; to afflict or plague; to keep bringing up, going over, or returning to a matter that is difficult to solve."

5) Are you in competition for the authority that God has given to your husband? If so, write a prayer of surrender. Ask God to develop a gentle and quiet spirit within you. Perhaps meditate on Psalms 101:1-2.

6) A woman can be beautiful on the outside but competitive, self-absorbed, and discontent on the inside. Our society values beauty, health, and wealth. Many women buy into the lies that they will not be accepted unless they are thin and dressed to get attention. Women who buy into these lies are in constant fear about their image and their marriages usually suffer. **Personal questions – Do you constantly compare yourself to other women? Is there fear, guilt, or shame attached to food, exercise, or the way your clothes fit? Can you praise God for your body just the way it is?*

Note: The goal of the Christian life is not how many people love you, but how many people you love. We can reach out and love others regardless of how we look! ③

7) 1 Peter 3:5 says that the holy women in the former times adorned themselves with a gentle and quiet spirit and were submissive to their husbands. Who did they put their hope or trust in? From your own experience, why is it important to keep your hope and trust fixed on God and not on your husband?

Note: Peter used Sarah, Abraham's wife, as an example in verse 6. We read about Sarah in the book of Genesis. She was not a perfect woman or wife. When you study her life you see that God caused her faith to grow along with Abraham's. Yet, when you look at her life as a whole, you see that she was beautiful in appearance but more importantly, she was a respectful and loving companion to Abraham.

- 8) The end of verse 6 says that we are Sarah's daughters if we do right without being frightened by any fear (NASU). The word for fear here is terror. The NLT version reads, "You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do." If you read the story of Abigail (1 Samuel 25) last week, you saw that even though she didn't follow her husband's commands to not give food to David, she followed God and saved her household. She was not afraid of what her husband would do. For those of you who are married to a rebellious man, I encourage you, out of love for your husband, to seek help so that he is held accountable. Read Proverbs 3:25-26. Where does our confidence come from?
 - a) Connect this phrase about not being fearful to next week's lesson. Read 1 Peter 3:13-15. We are encouraged not to fear their intimidation (NASU). What is the defense or answer we should always be ready to give?

Read 1 Peter 3:7

- 1) Husbands are to treat their wives in the same way, which is with understanding and respect. Look again at Ephesians 5:22-33. From Ephesians 5:28-29, how does Paul illustrate that husbands are to love their wives?
- 2) What do you think it means that wives are the weaker vessel?
- 3) A husband's prayers can be hindered if he does not honor his wife. Compare this thought to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:23-24. If you and your husband had a fight on the way to church on a Sunday morning, it's very hard to stand there and worship or pray. Our prayers are hindered because there is anger and bitterness in our hearts. What does the Matthew passage tell us to do?

Read 1 Peter 3:8-12

- 1) This section sums up the discussion on specific aspects of submission while the theme of suffering continues. List the ways that we are to treat others from verses 8 and 9.
- 2) Peter quotes Psalms 34:12-13 in verses 10-12. The Psalmist used three verbs we must put into action if we want to love life and see good days. Finish the thoughts from verses 10-11.
 - a) KEEP –
 - b) TURN –
 - c) SEEK -
- 3) What is the promised blessing and warning from verse 12?

NOTES FOR LESSON FIVE:
