

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Peter 3:1-2 (NIV based)

TITLE: God's Approach To 'Winning Over' Non-believing Husbands

BACKGROUND:

- - Starting with verse 18 in 1 Peter chapter 2, the topic has been 'enduring unjust suffering for doing good is commendable to God'.
 - - Then in verse 21, the topic broadens to 'believers are called by God to follow Christ's example in enduring unjust suffering for the benefit of other people'.
 - - Now in chapter 3 verse 1, this topic first focuses in on and is applied to 'wives', in relation to their 'husbands'.
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READ: 1 Peter 3:1-2

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, determine, expand on, and then explain the dynamics and implications of the concepts contained in the first phrase in verse 1.]

SECTION POINT: Wives would be wise to comply with God's mandate to maintain appropriate submissiveness to the authority that God has given their husbands.

v.1 "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands"

- - Immediately in verse 1, the attention and the topic are specifically directed to "wives".
- - Here, God gives a mandate or command to wives, to all of those wives who are true believers. (v.1:1 - "God's elect")
- - True believer wives are commanded by God - "be submissive to your husbands", meaning willfully and ongoing-ly "submitting themselves" and "subordinating" themselves to and under the authority of their husbands in a manner that pleases God. (Strong's #5293)
- - This authority of the husband over the wife in their marriage is stated explicitly within Ephesians 5:22-24, that "the husband is the head of the wife", and that "wives should submit to their husbands in everything". (vv.23,24)
- - An underlying reality here is that God does not give wives equal authority to their husbands in their marriage.
- - God clearly designates here that the husbands have the higher and final authority in their marriage.
- - The specified manner of submitting is "as to the Lord", in other words 'as if she is submitting to the Lord Himself'. (v.22)
- - Therefore, the submitting should be conducted in a manner that is characterized by genuinely acquiescing - "consenting or complying passively, without protest", hostility, arguing, yelling, demanding, manipulating, harping on, resenting, having a bad attitude, and etcetera. (AHD - 'acquiesce')
- - Furthermore, the submitting should be conducted "in the same way" or "similarly" to the example of Christ, who endured unjust suffering at His crucifixion for the good of us true believers. (Strong's #3668; 1 Peter 2:20b-24)

- - Within this suffering of Christ, "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats." (vv.2:22-23)
 - - Within their submitting to their husbands, wives should likewise commit no sin, speak no deceit, not hurl any insults, not retaliate, not make any threats.
 - - And within their submitting to their husbands, wives should expect that they will endure some unjust suffering from some of the decisions that their husband makes.
 - - But these wives should be heartened, knowing that God sees, allows, and finds "commendable" when wives appropriately endure and "bear up under the pain of unjust suffering because [they are] conscious of God". (vv.2:20,19)

 - - Notice that this mandate of "be submissive to your husband" is not vague, not negotiable, not to be minimized.
 - - Also notice that we men did not invent this mandate - it is instituted by God and written in His Word - very clear, very specific, very direct.
 - - The initial reaction of you wives right now may be to bristle with rejection and rebellion to this mandate, so a caution to you that now you are also rebelling against God.
 - - Failing or refusing to be submissive to your husband is a violation of this mandate from God and thereby is a sin against God, which disrupts you from having a good and healthy relationship with God.
 - - Refusing to be submissive is also a sin against your husband, which disrupts you from having a good and healthy relationship with your husband.
 - - Refusing to be submissive is furthermore a sin against your marriage - it immediately and directly and substantially creates and perpetrates: dissension, division, disharmony, hostility, breakdown in communication, and dysfunction in your marriage.
 - - And it would be wise to realize and remember that God will hold each wife accountable to this mandate.

 - - Logically, you can nicely and gently present your opinion, or you can amicably suggest an alternative, but when you go beyond that, you run the risk of committing one or more sins.
 - - Of course, there are limits to what you should submit to when your husband insists that you submit to what he wants, for example, you can and should respectfully decline to submit to him when he wants you to participate in the committing of a crime.
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[Lesson Question: Expand on and develop implications and ramifications for the concepts contained in the remainder of verse 1 through verse 2.]

SECTION POINT: When wives consistently live in purity, reverence, and submission to their non-believing husband, he will become more open to her religious beliefs.

v.3:1 "so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,"

- - In verse 1, God not only gives a mandate or command to wives, but He also includes giving them the corresponding ministry mission of reaching and facilitating their non-

believing husbands "so that" they "believe the word" - they become true believers like their wife already is.

- - This stated ministry mission for the wife directly matches the objective that God desires and is working to ultimately achieve in the husband.

- - So, God wants to enlist the wife to work in collaboration with God in order to achieve this objective.

- - Notice that this objective of God is very specific and very targeted - the objective of the husband being "won over" or becomes a believer of 'the word'.

- - A sure implication here is that winning over the husband to be a believer will result in their marriage improving substantially and the conditions in which the wife lives with her husband will become easier and more beneficial for her.

- - Another implication here is that "the behavior of [the] wives" is critically important to effectively achieving God's objective in instances wherein their husband "does not believe the word".

- - Undoubtedly, husbands find that their wife is more enjoyable and easier to live with when she is not combative with him.

- - So, husbands definitely prefer their wife being peaceful, especially when issues arise that lead to making a decision in which the wife is not in agreement with the husband.

- - Her appropriately accepting of his decisions is not only appealing and attractive to him, but it eventually makes her faith appealing and attractive to him as well.

v.2 "when they see the purity and reverence of your lives."

- - In addition to being 'submissive' and peaceful, the wife needs to possess "purity" - being comprehensively and consistently clean, meaning being without sin or corruption in her character, personality, thinking, speaking, behaviors, and etcetera.

- - The wife also needs to possess "reverence" - a regard of sincere, earnest, profound, and devout respect, awe, love, appreciation, and healthy fear toward God. (AHD - 'reverence')

- - The wife should possess this 'reverence' not only for God, but also in a healthy and appropriate way for her husband.

- - Furthermore, her 'submissiveness' to her husband needs to be distinctly characterized by this 'purity' and 'reverence', which by implication should also include accommodation, agreeability, appeasing, vulnerability, "quietness", "gentleness", and "fearlessness". (vv.4,6)

- - As the wife is endeavoring to live by these virtues, her husband is watching her closely, even though he is saying nothing about the virtues he sees, her religious beliefs, or her level of godliness.

- - If the wife consistently lives by these virtues, her husband will see her godly 'purity' and 'reverence' in her life, which over time will become attractive or admirable to him even though at first he may be repulsed by it because he technically rejects her religious beliefs.

- - If the wife fails to consistently live by these virtues, then for the husband, her witness about her religion is diminished or even discredited, and her faith in that religion is judged as being fantasy thinking in a bogus religion.

- - So, it is crucial that the wife consistently and genuinely behaves in this godly manner that is prescribed in these verses, so that on some level her non-believing husband will see that her faith in God is real, and effective, and advantageous, and good.
 - - Therefore, how the believing wife lives out her faith dramatically exerts more conducive impact on her non-believing husband than the words that she speaks about her faith and her religion.
 - - Her words about her religion are not significantly effective in winning over her non-believing husband to her religion, but her godly actions, attitudes, behaviors, and speaking are effective in that regard.
 - - From these verses, obviously God wants to use this subtle godly approach by the believer wife to influentially and persuasively reach her non-believing husband.
 - - God approves of, endorses, promotes, and even mandates this approach so that He can and will be actively working to accomplish the good results that He wants.
 - - The objective of the husband becoming a believer is achievable if God is actively involved in the approach.
 - - So at this point, the challenge is for the wife to accept and implement this approach and ministry mission from God.
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BIG IDEA: God wants to use the comprehensive godliness of believing wives to effectively reach their non-believing husband, in order for the husband to become a believer.

APPLICATIONS:

- - For those of you wives who are true believers, are you living in submission to your husband, as described from these verses? Fully and consistently? If not, why not?
- - Are you living in this godly purity and reverence? Fully and consistently? If not, why not?
- - For those of you believer wives whose husband is a **non-believer**, are you willing to take on this ministry mission of collaborating with God in facilitating your non-believing husband to becoming a true believer?
- - Are you willing to implement all of the various aspects of submission, purity, and reverence that God has designated for you to be and to do, in order to fulfill your role in this ministry mission?
- - Are you willing to expend the time and the effort, to fulfill your role in this ministry mission?
- - Are you willing to endure the difficulties, the challenges, and perhaps the unjust suffering that inevitably will arise as you endeavor to fulfill your role in this ministry mission?
- - Are you willing to persevere in fulfilling your role in this ministry mission for as many years as are needed?

- - Are you willing to strive for excellence and consistency in your fulfilling all of these various functions of your role in this ministry mission?
 - - Right now, is God calling you into this ministry mission to your non-believing husband? If so, what is your response, what is your answer to God?
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File name: 1peter3_1-2-sermonorlesson.____ (.htm, .rtf, .doc, .pdf)

Translation used: NIV, quoted or referred to in various places within this document

Source: www.BelieverAssist.com