

Witness in the Family and Home 1 Peter 3v1-7

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Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0 : 00] So we're reading from 1st Peter chapter 3, it's on page 1219, 1st Peter chapter 3 verses 1 to 7.

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands, so that if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah who obeyed Abraham and called him her master.

You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

[1 : 25] Well, before we start, let me say two things.

Hopefully it was clear that this morning the text is about husbands and wives. Maybe you're sitting there thinking, well, I'm not a husband, I'm not a wife.

Please don't not listen because the principles, the applications are about faithful witness in family life, in home life.

So what applies to husbands and wives in turn relates to us all. And the other thing is, with a subject like this, a topic like this, I often find that when I've prepared through it, I'm asking myself lots more questions than what we get a chance to deal with.

So maybe through this you've got questions at the end of it and you want to talk about it, then please feel free to do so afterwards. With that in mind, let's pray and ask for God's help.

[2 : 37] Our Father God, we thank you for the gift of family and for the gift of our homes.

We recognise that all these things come from you. And so it's our desire that we would live according to your plan and according to your design for the family.

So Father, for whatever our experiences may have been, the good experiences and the hard experiences, that you would help us to come under your word today, that we may become husbands and wives that you call us to be.

Father, we need your help and we need your understanding. So please give it to us, we ask. Amen. Amen. Well, being a follower of Jesus Christ in the world is not easy.

As we speak up for Christian truth, as we stand for Christian values, we will face opposition. That's the repeated message throughout 1 Peter.

[4 : 15] And how we respond is crucial. Rather than run away and hide, we are, look at chapter 2, verse 12.

Instead of running away and hiding, we are to live such good lives among the pagans, among those who are not yet followers of Jesus, that though they accuse you of doing wrong, though they mightn't like what you believe or want to listen to what you say, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

You see, our good deeds can soften hard hearts, it can break stubborn minds, it can shatter disinterested souls so that people want to hear the truth about Jesus Christ.

And having explained how we are to live good lives in society and in work, that's what we looked at last week, we are now called to live such good lives within the family.

Chapter 3, verses 1 to 7. In particular, how we are to live such good lives as a Christian if my spouse is not yet a Christian.

[5 : 40] Now, while the text here, chapter 3, specifically addresses husbands and wives and the marriage relationship, the principle, as we were saying just a moment ago, applies to all family relationships within the home.

That how we live affects other people. So back to chapter 2, verse 12. We are to live such good lives among our families who are not yet believers.

Among our parents, among our siblings, that though they do not necessarily agree with you or believe the same things as you, they will see how you live and behave within the family.

And they will glorify God on the day he visits us. So with that in mind, let's look especially at what this means for husbands and wives.

First, wives and husbands. Marriage is a gift from God and it's designed by God. Genesis 1, chapter 24, gives us the pattern and the shape of marriage.

[6 : 53] Let me quote Genesis 1, verse 24, where it says, a man will leave his father and mother, be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

So marriage is a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman, sealed by a sexual union.

marriage is a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman, sealed by a sexual union. This is God's design and it is good for us.

So how are husbands and wives to live out this relationship when your spouse is not yet a follower of Jesus Christ? Well, look at chapter 3, verse 1.

Wives, in the same way. Now look at verse 7. Husbands, in the same way.

[8 : 02] So husbands and wives are called to live in the same way as what? Well, I think he's taking us back to the rest of chapter 2.

So look at chapter 2, verse 13. It's addressing every single person in verse 13. It says, submit yourselves, all of you, submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men, whether to the king, that is our Taoiseach or our government, as the supreme authority.

Or look at verse 18. Slaves. And we were looking there at the context of employees. Employees, submit yourselves to your masters, to your employer with all respect.

This is, you see, God's good order and God's good design for life. There are those who have positions of authority, those who have responsibility to care and provide and watch over others, whether that's the government or whether that's your boss.

Similarly, there are those who are under authority and are there to support and respect those who are in authority. In fact, whatever position we find ourselves in life, we are all called to follow the example of Christ.

[9 : 25] Chapter 2, verse 21. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps.

So, in the same way, all of us, especially in this context, husbands and wives, are to follow God's good order and God's good design for life.

So, in the same way, now if we follow God's good order for our relationships, there will be a deep, intimate joy where husband and wife will flourish together and they will become the people God calls them to be.

But in this context, the reason for calling us to live in the same way, the reason for calling us to follow God's good design is, look at the rest of verse 1 of chapter 3, so that if any of them, if any of the husbands who do not believe the word, so if they are not yet followers of Christ, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives.

Now the same, I think, applies to husbands in verse 7. Look at the first part of verse 7. Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives.

[10 : 57] Now I think the context is pushing and implying that husbands would also win over their unbelieving wives by how they live.

So the message is crystal clear. God is saying, follow my good design for life and you will win over those who are not yet believers within your family, whether that happens to be your husband, your wife, your parents or your siblings.

You see, following God's good design can soften the hard heart of your wife, it can break the stubborn mind of your husband, it can shatter the disinterested soul of your parents so that they will

want to hear the truth about Jesus Christ.

They will see your good deeds and they will be drawn to and attracted to who Jesus is. So what will this good living look like in the marriage relationship?

Well, we're going to take them one by one. First, we're going to look at the beautiful wives. There are three ways believing wives can win over their unbelieving husbands and it's all to do with your beauty.

[12:15] First of all, your submissive beauty. Look at verse 1 of chapter 3. Wives, in the same way, be submissive to your husbands.

Now, I realise that might sound very archaic and very chauvinistic and out of date and, well, we don't use that kind of language anymore. Well, it's important for us to see that biblical submission and we must understand what it looks like is something truly beautiful.

As we'll see shortly, the husband is to respect his wife, to care for her, to serve her. Following the example of Christ, he is to literally give his life for her.

So, for the husband, it's about care, not control. It's about serving his wife, not suppressing his wife. And it's to this kind of Christ-like leadership that wives are to submit.

And in submission, they support their husband, they affirm their husband. Have a look at verse 5.

For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful.

[13:42] They were submissive to their own husbands. Like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master.

If we look back into Genesis chapter 12 where we read about Abraham and Sarah, Genesis 12 tells us that Sarah was a really beautiful woman.

Physically, she was incredibly attractive. She was so beautiful that Abraham was afraid that this powerful rich king was going to kill Abraham and take Sarah for his wife.

So he lied and said, Sarah was my sister. But the beauty that wives are to emulate, that Peter is calling wives to emulate, he's saying it's not about Sarah's physical beauty, but it's about her submissive beauty.

They are, verse 6, like Sarah who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. Now, just in case you're wondering, Kirsty doesn't wander around the house calling me master.

[14:58] We've got to understand again the context. It doesn't mean that Sarah was reduced to a mere slave answering his every beck and call. No, it's an expression of her deep respect and support for her husband.

And wives are called, this is the submissive beauty, one of deep respect and support and affirming the role of the husband. Now, you say, well, that's all well and good when the husband is living as he should be.

What about when the husband is not Christ-like in his leadership? Well, that's precisely the context here. That's what Peter is driving at.

Wives are to be submissive to their husbands even when he is not yet a believer. If he mocks your faith in Jesus, he's saying don't fight him.

Affirm him in his role. If your husband should even stop you talking about Jesus in the home, don't control him.

[16:09] support him. Why? Well, go back to chapter 3, verse 1, the second part. So that if any of them do not believe the word, if any of them are not yet followers of Christ, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives.

When they see the purity and reverence of your lives. So you see, submissive beauty is something wonderful and it can win your unbelieving husband over for Christ.

Now before we move on, there's something else I just want to address here and that is that it may be the case that the unbelieving husband is physically or verbally abusive.

It may be that he is unfaithful in the marriage, sleeping with other women. It could be that the home is no longer a safe and secure place for the wife and for the children.

Does that mean then that they must still stay? What do we do then? Well, if that's the case, the wife and the children need protection and care.

[17:32] Matthew 19 talks about that. That the church family should be there to provide and support the wife and the children.

The right authorities would need to be informed if there's physically an abusive behaviour. And if it's unresolved and if it's unchanged, as Matthew 19 talks about, the believing wife may have to leave her husband.

Abusive and unfaithful behaviour in marriage must not be tolerated. And the church should be a place of safety and security and care and provision for those who find themselves in that situation. However, where possible, wives can win over their unbelieving husbands by their submissive beauty.

The second beauty is an inner beauty. So, verse 3. Your beauty, still addressing wives, your beauty should not come from outward adornment such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes.

[18:54] So, sorry, Kirsty, I won't be able to buy you gold jewellery anymore. Instead, verse 4, it should be that of your inner self. Now, again, let me make it very clear, there's nothing wrong with women making themselves look beautiful.

Wives, it's not wrong to dress well. It's not wrong to go and get your hair done. It's not wrong to go to the gym. However, outward physical beauty is never going to change the heart of your unbelieving husband.

You may do well to attract them to yourself through your physical beauty, but they are not necessarily going to be attracted to Christ through your physical beauty.

Proverbs 11 says this, like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman woman who shows no discretion.

You see, wives, you can be beautifully attractive, you can be drop dead gorgeous, but without that inner Christ-like beauty, you are never going to win your husband for Christ.

[20:15] So, wives, let me ask you, what effort attention do you put into looking physically good? Watch what you eat, you watch what you wear, you watch how you look, you take note of how people look at you.

Do you watch your own heart? Are you developing that inner beauty that will attract your husband to Christ?

Are we working on our own hearts? So, wives are to have a submissive beauty, they are to have an inner beauty so that they can win over their unbelieving husbands.

But there's a third beauty, an unfading beauty. Verse 4, let's read verse 4 again. Instead, of the outward physical beauty, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

Now, let's be real here, let's face the facts. Physical beauty fades. Even the supermodels will droop and wrinkle.

[21:46] We can only put on so much makeup. Unless, of course, you want to look like a plastic mannequin who can't even smile because they've got so much Botox.

Inner beauty, on the other hand, does not fade. It only gets more beautiful and it grows over time. Look at verse 4 again. It should be that inner beauty of the inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.

A wife who is gentle, is not harsh, is not aggressive in her talk, is not nagging and impatient towards her husband.

A wife who is quiet, is calming, brings peace into the home, soothes the troubled waters that there may be.

This is the kind of beauty that will win over your unbelieving husband for Christ. Of course it doesn't mean that the wife can't talk or that she doesn't have an opinion.

[22:57] No, it's talking about this Christ-like character. She does not retaliate. She is not argumentative. She is gentle and quiet in spirit.

Now I know we're addressing and talking about wives here, but before we move on, if you're a single woman who hopes to be married one day, do not try and gain a husband by your physical beauty.

Do not dress in such a way to lure and capture your future husband. Why? Well, because the only reason he's going to marry you is for your beauty.

But as we've just seen in verse 4, what happens then when your beauty fades? Well, that's one of the main reasons why many marriages break up, because the man no longer likes the way his wife looks, so goes off with somebody else.

Women, physical beauty may be the standard of the world, it may be across every magazine that you read. How women look sexually may be the demands and the pressures of men, but God's good and right design for us, verse 4, is that there would be an unfading inner beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth love in God's sight.

[24 : 39] And again, older women within this church, let me encourage you to model to the younger women what this inner beauty looks like.

That is the responsibility of all of us within the family of the church. Women are to demonstrate and show what true inner beauty looks like.

And if you are a mother here today and you've got young daughters, cultivate that unfading beauty to your daughters.

The things that they hear about, the things they read about, the things that your daughters will see are all about dressing sexually. That is the demands and the pressures of the world.

But that inner, unfading beauty, that is what we should cultivate. So wives, young women, desire a submissive, inner, unfading beauty, because it will win over your unbelieving husband to Christ.

[25 : 51] So, beautiful wives, faithful husbands, husbands. And likewise, I've just put it together that there are three ways believing husbands can win over their unbelieving wives.

So husbands, first, be considerate. Look at verse 7. Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives.

in case you didn't know, men and women are different, very different. And it's the role of the husband to be considerate.

That means they are to try and understand our wives. We are to know them, really get to know them, to understand them emotionally, physically, sexually, so that we can serve their needs.

Some years ago, a film came out called *What Women Want*. I don't know if you've seen it or know it. Nick Marshall is the character played by Mel Gibson.

[27 : 04] He has an accident, I think he falls over and he bangs his head, and the result of the accident is he has the ability to hear what women are thinking. It's quite funny. Apart from being the only man on the planet who can understand a woman, he has learned to know what they need.

And of course, the story is he wins over the love of his life. Well, as husbands, I'm not saying go and bang your head so you can understand your wife or women, but we are to consider what our wives need.

That's what it is to consider. We're to know them intimately, how they tick, how they work. Most of the time I confess, I spend my time trying to communicate what I need.

How Kirsty should serve me. But that's selfish. Rather than win your wife towards Christ, it will push them away from Christ. So we need to be as husbands asking questions, learning the concerns, the fears that our wives may have, and in response serving their needs emotionally, physically, and sexually.

So husbands, first, we can win over our unbelieving wives by being considerate, taking time to understand who they are.

[28 : 36] Second, we are to be respectful. Let's read verse 7 again. Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect.

Respectful in two ways. Look again at verse 7. Treat them with respect first, as the weaker partner. Now again, this isn't saying that women or wives are inferior.

No, there's an equality. But what it is saying is simply this, that men, generally speaking, and husbands, generally speaking, are physically stronger.

So if you're to have an arm wrestle with your wife, husband will probably win. So husbands, he's saying, are not to use their physical strength to crush their wife, or to threaten their wife, or to abuse them, or to demand things from their wife.

They are to use their God-given strength to care, protect, and provide. Our homes and our families should be a place where our wives and our children do not fear coming home, where they do not fear speaking to their dad.

[29 : 59] They do not fear speaking to their husbands, but instead they long to be at home because it is a place of protection and safety. It's a place where they flourish in the safety and security that the husband provides.

John Stott, a Christian author, put it like this very well when speaking about wives. He said this, they are delicate flowers which are easily trodden underfoot and which wither and die if the climate

is unfriendly.

you know that husbands that how we talk, how we live, how we behave, provides the climate of whether it kills our wives or whether it causes them to flourish and grow.

They are weaker than you. Use the God-given gift of the strength that he has provided to care so that they flourish and become the women that God calls them to be.

So we are to respect them because they are weaker than you but second because they are heirs with you. Look at verse 7.

[31 : 26] I'll read verse 7 from the start. Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives. Treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life.

In other words, if your wife is not yet a follower of Jesus, treat them, respect them as if they were a follower of Jesus.

Now again, I take this to be talking not just that, yes, the wife here could be a believer, but I think it's also saying that she might not be a believer.

So treat them as if they were a follower of Jesus. Just as Christ has treated the husband in grace, so the husband is to treat the unbelieving wife with grace.

Just as God has pursued you, loved you, and did not give up on you, pursue your love, pursue with love your wife, no matter how she might respond.

[32 : 32] love her. So even if your wife rejects Jesus talk, even if she's hostile to your faith, the answer, respond with grace, just as God responded in grace towards us.

Love her as God loved you and made you his heir. If God pursued you and did not give up on you, and made you his child, so husbands we have no right to give up on our wives.

We pursue them with love so that they also will share in the heirs of the gracious gift of life. So husbands, be considerate, be respectful, and it may win over your unbelieving wife.

And then third, husbands, be disciplined. We're to be considerate and respectful, look at the very end of verse 7, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

As husbands, we should be praying for our wives. Husbands should be praying for their unbelieving wife to become a follower of Jesus.

[33 : 59] God will be God can. God can. And that's simply what we're saying through prayer. We're saying, God, you open the eyes of the wife of my heart.

You open their eyes so that they see the need of Jesus. God can't hear it. But what good is our prayer life if we are not living a good life?

It may be that we want our wives to become more like Christ or to come to Christ, but sadly, our own lives look nothing like Christ. Our behavior can, look at the end of verse 7, it can hinder our prayers.

The very thing that we want to happen as we pray for our wives doesn't happen because of the way in which we're living. Yes, husbands must be disciplined in prayer.

But we must also be disciplined in how we behave. Maybe you think as a husband here whether your wife is believing or not you're thinking I wish my wife was different and you talk to God about it.

[35 : 16] But does our life match what we pray? Before we move on as we said to young women who are not yet married and who may one day be married husbands or those who seek to be husbands and would long to be married one day these are the values these are the kinds of things that you should be cultivating in your life and young women these are the things that you should be looking for in a future husband.

One who is considerate considerate respectful it doesn't matter if they have a six pack doesn't matter if they're successful and have a great career but are they considerate are they respectful are they disciplined will they cultivate a life in which you will flourish and grow and become the person God called you to be.

So husbands we can win over our unbelieving wives by being disciplined. As we finish let me read this quote from a book entitled Married for God.

It shows us that the relationship between husband and wife is something that can win unbelievers over for Christ.

Listen to this quote I like to think that men and women may say to themselves as they watch a Christian husband or a Christian wife I've never seen God.

[37 : 05] Sometimes I wonder when I look at the world if God is good or if there is a God but if he can make a man and woman love one another like this if he can make this husband show costly faithfulness through sickness as well as health if he can give him resources to love his wife when frankly there is nothing in it for him well then he must be a good God.

and if he can give his wife grace to submit so beautifully with such an attractive gentle spirit under terrible trials then again he must be a good God.

you see how we live our behaviour our good lives can attract people to Christ so that they will want to hear the truth about Christ so if you are a believer here today and whatever context your family relationships may be if you are the only Christian in your family your parents aren't yet Christians your husband or your wife isn't a Christian your children aren't Christians it may be a place where they don't want to hear about Jesus they don't want to talk about Jesus but when they see the beauty of your life the faithfulness of your life they will be won over by your good deeds their hearts will be softened the hardness will be broken away and they will be attracted to Christ may God in his grace give to us all that inner beauty and that faithful living so that we win others over for the Lord

Jesus let's pray that that might happen let's do that now where we are in our seats in the quietness pray for the person who you love within your family who is not yet a believer it could be wider a relative parent wife or husband pray that God will give you an inner beauty so that you reflect the beauty of Christ pray that you will have that faithful strength that they will see the faithfulness of Christ his serving and sacrificial life father we recognize that our relationships at times can be hard and difficult it can be hard to be a Christian in the context where others are not father give us the grace that we need to live beautiful and faithful lives and would you please use us to win others over for the

Lord Jesus and may we together as a church family support and encourage one another well as we seek to live for you we ask this in Jesus name amen we're going to sing to sing us to be spread in those as you we to go to his