

## Ancient Beauty For The Modern Woman

**November 23, 2014**

Good morning CrossWinds. One of life's problems is the check out line in the grocery store. While we are waiting in line to pay our bills, we are subjected to the covers of women's magazines. The women on the cover is usually flawless. They are provocatively dressed and Photoshopped to the point of perfection. Men of decent character try to look away. Many women look on the covers with envy. The single woman looks at the cover model and says, "If I looked like her, I would be married." The married woman looks on the cover model and says, "If I looked like her, my marriage would be exciting."



Ladies, this is a great morning for you. We are studying ancient beauty secrets from the Bible. We will learn how a wife can be more attractive to her husband than those cover models, no matter what her age. This will be a great study.

If you are new, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors at CrossWinds. On both our Spirit Lake and Spencer campuses we are studying our way through the book of 1 Peter. This morning, we are in 1 Peter 3:1-6. These six verses talk about women, beauty and marriage. 1 Peter 3:7 talks to men, about masculinity and marriage. Normally we would cover verse 7 next week. We are going to make an exception. Next week we start a five-week advent series from the book of Luke. We won't get back to 1 Peter to talk to the men until January. Guys, I

don't want you to feel left out this morning. This message is geared to wives.

Just remember. Verse 7 is coming.

Let's take a moment to read the passage.

Likewise, 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, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external — the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear — but 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. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. 1 Peter 3:1–6 (ESV)

This passage gives us three ancient beauty secrets for the modern Christian woman. Ladies, I guarantee you that applying these beauty secrets will make you irresistibly attractive to your husband, but most importantly, incredibly beautiful to God. When we are done we will see an example of these beauty secrets in action through the life of Sarah in the Old Testament. At the end of our study I will bring up Cindy, my wife, for a little Q&A about this text and the beauty secrets it reveals.

### **1. A wife that submits and supports her husband is beautiful.**

Likewise, 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, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. 1 Peter 3:1–2 (ESV)

In this section of 1 Peter, Peter talked about honoring Christ by honoring those in authority over us. This theme of Christians honoring those in authority began in 1 Peter 2 where we learned that Christians are to obey and honor their government officials, even if we don't agree with them, even if they are corrupt. This means the civil unrest in Ferguson, Miss., where police officer Darren

Wilson shot and killed Michael Brown is something Christians should be very cautious about joining. Christians should not be throwing rocks at police. Christians should not smash the windows of local businesses. Christians should not be involved in that kind of social unrest. If the police officer is in the wrong and shot Brown unprovoked, there are God-honoring channels to address grievances. Christians honor Christ by submitting to authority, even unjust authority.

Last week we looked at employer and employee relationships. Christian employees submit to and serve their bosses, even if their bosses are unfair and cruel. Christian employees serve their unjust bosses like they are serving Jesus, giving their absolute best at all times. Can you look for another job if you feel your job is unfair? Of course! While working for your employer, Christians respect their bosses and work hard for their bosses. When they work this way they attract others to Jesus through their lives.

This morning we move from government-citizen submission, and boss-employee submission to wife-husband submission in marriage. How should a wife respond to her husband's leadership in their marriage? This is a crucial question because it is a matter of honoring Christ and God drawing others to himself through the life of a wife as others see how a wife honors and submits to her husband.

Right off the bat in this verse we see there is order in marriage. A wife is to be subject to or submit to the authority of her husband in their marriage. Most women hear these words and are repulsed. They sound out of touch with

modern society. They appear to say a wife is inferior to her husband. Is this true? Is a wife a second-class citizen?

When Peter talks about a wife's submissiveness to her husband's leadership, he is not saying a wife is inferior, that she has less value or personhood. He is simply saying that a marriage relationship is not a 50/50 proposition. A husband and wife must function in different roles in the marriage. It is the same way between God the Father and God the Son. In the Bible God the Father and God the Son are both called God. They are equal in identity. God the Son voluntarily submitted his will to the leadership of God the Father. The Bible tells us that God the Father planned creation but it was God the Son that carried it out. God the Father planned redemption, but it was God the Son who submitted himself to his father's will and carried it out. Marriage functions in a similar way.

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. 1 Corinthians 11:3 (ESV)

There is God-given order in the Godhead and a God-given order in marriage that a husband and wife cannot ignore if they want their marriage to work.

**Where did the idea of a wife's submission to the leadership of her husband originate?**

Some people believe a wife's submission to the leadership of her husband was a product of the fall. It came from sin and Christ came to take that away. They quote Galatians 3:28.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28 (ESV)

The problem with this logic is that it is simply isn't true. A wife's submission to a husband's leadership in marriage was established in Genesis 2 *before sin entered the world*.

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Genesis 2:18 (ESV)

A wife's rebellion against her husband's leadership in marriage came about as a product of the fall.

To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Genesis 3:16 (ESV)

The Hebrew literally says, "your desire shall be for your husband's position." A consequence of sin is that a wife does not want to submit to her husband or be a helper for her husband. She wants to boss him around and tell him what to do. Sin gives her the desire to usurp her husband's position of leadership in their marriage.

Wives must understand that submission to their husband's leadership was not a man's idea. It is also not a husband's responsibility to enforce it. There is no command in the Bible telling husband's to make their wives submit. This command comes straight from God. It is part of the creation order. Wives are answerable to God for a lack of submission to their husband's leadership and a lack of willingness to function as his helpmate. Ladies, don't get mad at me. I didn't write the mail. I am only reading it.

Notice that a wife is not to submit to the leadership of all men but only to the leadership of her husband. Women should not seek leadership in their lives

from men other than their husbands, no matter how worthy of respect and honor those men may be.

### **How do you answer someone who claims Galatians 3:28 takes away marital roles?**

The answer is pretty simple. In Galatians 3:28 Paul told the Galatians that while there may be different groups of people on Earth, Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free, men and women, when it comes to knowing God there is no privileged status. Everyone is on equal footing. It is only through a personal relationship with Jesus. Christ doesn't abolish the role relationships between people. He abolishes the barriers between us meeting directly with God.

### **How is a wife's submission to her husband misunderstood?**

**A husband's leadership is superior to Christ's.** If your husband wants you to get drunk, to lie, to hang with him at a party that breaks your Christian witness, to lie on the taxes or to speed to work, you don't submit to that leadership. Wives are loyal to Christ over their husbands. Submission does not mean a wife submits to her husband if he tells her to sin.

**A submissive wife can't think for herself.** A mindless blonde is not the poster child for the submissive wife. On the contrary, a good wife should be creatively and thoughtfully influencing her husband toward Jesus, not mindlessly following him. Submission does not mean a wife can't think for herself.

**A submissive wife should be weak or passive.** Proverbs 31 describes a woman who is submissive to her husband's leadership. She is extremely intelligent and has great leadership abilities. She works with her hands (gardening, cooking, making clothing). She buys land (a real estate agent). She

dresses herself with strength (goes to the gym and works out). She gives to the poor (makes meals for those in need and gives to those in need.) She makes and sells clothing ( has a side business.) She makes a great bedroom for her marriage (a creative lover.) Submission does not mean a wife is lacking intelligence or leadership.

### **What should a wife's submission look like?**

**A wife uses her gifts and strength for her husband's benefit.** God gives a wife unique gifts, ideas, talents, and insights that her husband needs. A husband is created needing the gifts of his wife. A wife is to give of her skills for her husband's benefit. In my marriage, this is very apparent when it comes to clothing. I have no sense of fashion. Sunday morning my wife approves my clothes before I go out the door. I desperately need her sense of fashion. You learned this summer that she is a much better cook than I am. Leave it to me and my children would be malnourished. Thankfully Cindy uses her cooking and color matching skills for my benefit.

A wife is not to strive to have a separate life, pursue a separate career and fashion a separate identity from her husband. Submission means she submits her will to the success of their life together. This doesn't mean a wife can't have a job. It means her job doesn't come before submitting to her husband's leadership. Her job does not come before her role as her husband's helpmate.

Practically this means a wife prays for her husband every day. She encourages her husband throughout the week and when he comes home. A wife is committed to using her gifts for her husband's benefit, not just her own benefit.

**A wife will bend her will to her husband's if they can't agree.** There will be times when a husband and wife can't agree. A wife needs to decide ahead of time that when those conflicts happen she will defer to her husband's will. She will also decide ahead of time to not continually pester him or dig at him once she submits to him. Ideally the number of times this happens should be very small because a husband's greatest desire is to sacrifice himself for his wife.

When Cindy and I were engaged, we needed parts for my car. She wanted to buy them at an auto part store where she used to work because she could purchase them for cost. It was the same store where her old boyfriend worked. I was in school. I asked her to not buy the car part from that store even if she was given a huge discount. We disagreed. She was for saving the little money we had. I was for protecting the future of our relationship. I wanted her to avoid all contact with her old flame. I know what men are like. I am one of them. I don't trust them.

Cindy and I were locked in a disagreement. To decide where to buy car parts, we went to the Bible. In the end she submitted to my desires and bought the parts at another store without the discount.

### **What if my husband doesn't deserve my submission?**

This is a great question. Does a husband need to earn the right for his wife to submit? Can a husband lose the right to have his wife submit? What if he is lazy, inconsiderate, watches ESPN all day, is financially irresponsible and doesn't discipline the children? Does a Christian wife still need to respect and submit to that kind of a husband?



I want you to notice Peter didn't give any exception clauses for a wife submitting to her husband. Peter didn't give exception clauses because *a wife's submission to her husband is not a right a husband earns from her, it is a role a wife must play in marriage because it is given her from God.* In the same way headship in marriage is not something earned or lost by a husband. A husband's headship and a wife's submission in their marriage are God-given roles that continue to exist even when your spouse does a really bad job of following his or her role.

Why must a wife continue submitting and supporting her husband even if he is a mess?

**A wife's submission is a place of power, not weakness.**

Likewise, 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, when they **see** your respectful and pure conduct. 1 Peter 3:1–2 (ESV)

The roles a husband and wife play in marriage are God-created roles that a husband and wife are created to function within. Just as a husband and wife's biologies are created to complement one another and bring great joy to one another, husband and wife roles are created by God to complement one another and bring great joy to one another. When a husband is a good leader and a wife is a good helpmate they will experience great joy. *Just as a husband and wife are created by God to complement one another physically, a husband and wife's roles are created by God to complement one another relationally.*

When a wife chooses to submit to her husband and become his helpmate, she steps into a space in his life that God created him needing her to fill.

Wives, a husband is built by God to find your submission to his leadership and help in his life *extremely attractive*.

Wives, you have the power to change your husband's life by playing your God-given role. When he sees your respectful and pure conduct, he will be changed. If he isn't a Christian, it will be hard for him not to become one. A husband finds a wife that delights in supporting his leadership and helping him as incredibly attractive.

The word "see" in this verse is a special Greek word. It means to be captivated by what you see. Wives, when you focus on submitting to your husband, following your husband, being his best friend and his best helper, the Bible says he will be captivated by what he sees. He will have a hard time taking his eyes off you.

Let's see what this looks like.

**Preach wordless sermons.** Many wives try to change their husbands by nagging and pestering. This does not work. To a husband, nagging sounds like the teacher from the Peanuts. Submitting to him, delighting in helping him and being his best friend, that will make him listen. He will be captivated by you. Submission is a position of power, not weakness.

**Keep your conduct respectful.** What does it mean to be respectful? It means to honor or speak well of someone. It is the same word used to describe the way we are to treat God's name in Psalm 19:9. We don't use God's name as a swear word because it dishonors God by dishonoring his name. In the same way, a wife is to never shame her husband in public or in their home.

**Keep your conduct pure.** Pure means blameless or modest. This means you watch your relationships with other people, especially other men. You do not let them get close to your heart. If you sense someone of the opposite sex growing close to your heart, you cut them out of your life. Your heart is reserved for your husband. You watch what you read, what you look at on the Internet and how you spend the family money. A husband is attracted to a wife he can trust because she is pure in her devotion to him.

Submission is not a position of weakness, it is a position of power because a husband is created by God to find glory and joy in a submissive, helping wife. Just as a husband and wife are biologically designed to complement one another, their roles are created by God to bring complement one another.

## **2. A woman that cares for her spirit, not just her body, is beautiful.**

Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— but 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. 1 Peter 3:3–4 (ESV)

This verse is often misunderstood. It says, “don’t let your adorning be external.” Throughout history women have taken this verse and run with it. They tell their husbands God doesn’t care what they look like. There is no need for a hairbrush or a curling iron. There is not need for a bath or a razor. All God cares about is the heart. There is nothing wrong with having more body hair than a wookie. No-shave November isn’t just for men anymore. What do you think? Is this what Peter was saying?

### Is it wrong for a woman to tend to her physical beauty?

If you look at the Greek text, it literally reads, “don’t braid your hair, don’t put on gold jewelry *and don’t wear clothes.*” If Peter was saying a woman should never braid her hair, that would mean a woman also shouldn’t wear clothes. Something tells me he wanted Christian women wearing clothes, especially in public.

Peter was talking about a matter of emphasis. Women can spend an exorbitant amount of time and money on how they look. The word *adorning* is the Greek word *cosmos* from which we get our word cosmetics. Peter said, don’t go off the deep end with cosmetics, the fancy clothing, expensive jewelry and fancy hairstyles.

When we study ancient Roman culture we discover many of the ancient women spent a great deal of time and money on clothing, jewelry and fancy hair. Let me show some of their hairstyles. Remember this was all before the electric curling iron. Women curled their hair by heating rocks in a campfire. These hairstyles took hours. These women were willing to pay the price because they wanted to be pretty. They wanted to be noticed.

Is it wrong for a woman to wear makeup and to have decent clothes? Absolutely not. In our study of the Song of Solomon we learned one of a wife’s responsibilities is to take care of herself so she can be the best she can be as a gift to her husband. A husband’s responsibility is to take care of himself so he can be the best he can be as a gift to his wife.



If it is OK for a Christian woman to wear makeup? I have a simple answer. If the barn needs painting, paint it. How much makeup should a Christian woman wear? The simple answer is that if a barn needs two coats of paint, that is what you give it. Peter told Christian women that external beauty is not wrong but it is not their great emphasis.

Stoics and other schools of philosophy in the ancient world were pointing out that many ancient women were beautiful but if you talked to them in person they were self-centered, irritable and hard to live with.

Peter picked up on this discrepancy between inner and outer beauty that characterized many women in the ancient world and he said Christian women are in a great position to remedy this problem. While exterior beauty is not wrong, exterior beauty was never to be a Christian woman's primary emphasis. Her emphasis was to be on the inner beauty of her heart.

### **What does inner beauty look like?**

**A gentle spirit.** The word gentle means *mild*. It means *calm*. It means somebody that is easy to talk to. You aren't afraid they will blow up around you when you say the wrong thing. They don't raise their voices. They don't yell and are not given to fits of rage. A gentle spirit is the kind of spirit the Holy Spirit is cultivating in Christian women.

**A quiet spirit.** Quiet means tranquil or peaceful. It is like going to the lake in the morning with just the beauty of the sunrise and the call of the birds in the trees. This is the temperament the Holy Spirit is working to produce in godly women. Any man finds that kind of temperament extremely attractive.

### **Outer beauty fades with time. Inner beauty gets better over time.**

As Cindy and I get closer to 50, we have become acutely aware of the effects of gravity. Everything in our body is moving closer to the ground. While outer beauty fades, inner beauty improves with time. A husband should find himself more attracted to his wife over time as as he has an increased attraction to her godly character.

### **Inner beauty is precious in God's sight.**

While women are very concerned with outer beauty because they want to be noticed, God notices of a woman with inner beauty. God favors a woman of character. Ladies, who would you rather take notice of you? All the men at the mall because you are wearing a mini-skirt or God and your husband because they see the beauty of your heart? Next week we will begin looking at the birth of Jesus. Why do you think God chose Mary? Was it because of her outer beauty or inner beauty that only God could see? God notices a woman's inner beauty.

Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates. Proverbs 31:30–31 (ESV)

### **3. A woman filled with trust in God instead of fear is beautiful.**

For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. 1 Peter 3:5–6 (ESV)

Women are prone to fear. Where will the money come from? How will things work out? I am concerned my kids won't make it in school. What if I don't get dinner done on time? I am afraid my sister won't like the way I cook the turkey at Thanksgiving. I wonder how many women have trouble sleeping at

night because their minds are preoccupied with something that worries them? A wife consumed by worry destroys her beauty. How is a woman to get around this? Turn it over to God.

...casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7 (ESV)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6–7 (NIV84)

A Christian woman has the Holy Spirit to bring her comfort. She knows that if God loves her enough to send his own son to die for her, she can trust God with her life. It may be a bumpy life, but God is good. When a wife is filled with worry and anxiety, she doesn't have to bear it alone. She rises early and gives it to God in prayer. He gives her the peace that passes all understanding so he guards her heart and mind in Christ Jesus. She prays with her husband and asks him to pray for her. God gives them peace together.

But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Matthew 6:30 (ESV)

A husband finds a wife that trusts in God for the future rather than fearing the future extremely beautiful.

### **Q&A with Cindy**

1. What has 20 years of marriage taught you about the power of submission?
2. How important is a kind and gentle spirit for beauty?
3. Do you struggle with worry? How do you get through those times?

## Conclusion

When we began, we talked about all those beautiful women on the covers of magazines at the grocery checkout. The truth is they may be beautiful on the outside, but I suspect they are no different from women in the ancient world on the inside. They are probably women with an attractive appearance but an unattractive spirit.

As Christian wives, no matter what your age, God desires for you to be more attractive to your husband than any woman on a glossy magazine cover. Only a Christian woman understands she was created to submit to and help her husband, and when she does that her husband finds her irresistibly attractive. Only a Christian wife understands that being her husband's helpmate is a not assuming a position of weakness but of power and strength.

Only Christian women have the ability to cultivate inner beauty by the Holy Spirit fashioning them into a gentle and peaceful person. Only Christian women have the Holy Spirit transforming their inner nature to be more like Christ. A husband finds a gentle and peaceful wife extremely attractive.

Only Christian women have the ability to not internalize fear and stay awake all night because of it. Only Christian wives can cast all their anxieties on Jesus and rest assured God will take care of them.



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