

BUILDING BLOCKS OF FAITH-SUBMISSION

I Peter 2.13-3.1-7

**Good Morning...it is good to be with you this morning.
This story has been on emails lately, so maybe you've heard it.**

**An 80 year old woman was arrested for shoplifting.
When she went before the judge, he asked, "What did you steal?"
She said, "A can of peaches?"
The judge asked, "Why?"
She said, "Because I was hungry."
The judge then asked, "How many peaches in the can?"
She said, "Six"
The judge then said, "I sentence you to six days in jail."
Her husband asked, "Judge, may I say something?"
The judge said, "What is it?"
The husband said, "She stole a can of peas too."**

They've been married all these years and they just didn't get it-did they?

**Today I want to talk relationships in general and marriage more specifically.
Those relationships bring us our greatest pleasure-don't they? Some of you
are smiling. And they can bring us our greatest pain, heart wrenching, gut
wrenching pain that at times we can't even find words to describe.**

**Some of you know what I am talking about. Know you are not alone. Many
have experienced that same pain and God knows your pain.**

**We're still preaching from the book of I Peter. And Peter had some
interesting things to say about relationships and to say about marriage.**

**Remember, Jesus is the chief cornerstone, the foundation of our faith lives,
our spiritual houses and today we add another building block to these
spiritual houses, the Building Block of Submission.**

**I know that is a difficult word for us but it can be wonderful word.
Submission actually frees us. Before I say more, let's hear a word from
people on the street.**

VIDEO-people share what they think the ideal marriage is.

Interesting isn't it. We all have our own idea on marriage and what the relationship should be like.

A pastor/teacher, Gary Richmond, has logged countless hours working with animals in a zoo and countless hours counseling couples. He compares and contrasts our human relationships with those of the animal world.

He says some are like sea lions. The male establishes his kingdom and moves from side to side to defend it. In the process the male crushes the females and the young. Perhaps much like the workaholic husband and father who doesn't know he is destroying his family by working so much.

Richmond says some families are like the Black Widow Spider and her mate. The male carefully dances his way across her web, but after mating, he is too tired to make the return trip safely. He gets caught in her web and then ends up as her lunch. Aren't some husbands totally dominated by their wives?

Then there is the Pied Hornbill. The male puts the female and the young in a hollow tree trunk and covers the opening, leaving only enough room to feed them. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that in a human relationship that describes a very jealous, controlling, and paranoid male.

Snakes just have chance meetings and no commitment. Some people do that, don't they? They seek partners for brief encounters or short periods of time.

Penguins have a very low divorce rate, only about 16%. That despite the male is gone about six months during the year.

Wolves pair bond for life and both "work" and care for the children.

We see how different species relate to one another.

So, the question then begs to be asked is-if God created all of these creatures, and gave them a way to interact, a way to relate to one another-would God not have done so for human beings?

I think we could say a big YES to that even though we're all a little different.

Our God is a creative God. God made the alligators and the giraffes, the caterpillars and the cows, the birds and the bugs. God made us unique.

Even though unique God gives us some instructions as to how to relate to one another. One of the characteristics of that relationship is Submission.

Peter encouraged the persecuted people to submit to government, to submit to their owners, and to submit to their marriage partners as a WAY OF LIFE and A WITNESS OF FAITH.

I Peter 2.13 says, “*Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake (note why do we submit-for the Lord’s sake) to every authority instituted among man...*” In verse 17 he says, “*show the proper respect for everyone, fear God, honor the King.*”

Good words-right? Or maybe not so good, at least a bit confusing when we think about Nero being the king. He was probably responsible for Peter’s death. He killed and tortured Christians. He used them as human torches to light his royal race track 24/7 so he and his friends could enjoy the chariot races into the wee hours of the morning.

We need to remember the people of that time lived under a dictatorship. Peter was saying as part of your witness, submit to this government.

Just as people of ancient times we are to submit to our form of government. Unlike those people, we live in a democracy and in submitting to our form of government we are to become part of the decision making process, pray for and show proper respect for our government leaders.

In verse 18 he tells slaves, “Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect...basically as Jesus submitted and suffered himself unto death.

We need to know that Peter isn’t condoning slavery. At this time many slaves we foreigners, spoils of war, or willing subjects trying to improve their position in life. These slaves, even though they might be teachers, doctors, engineers and other professionals, were still considered the property of another.

The application for us is to submit to our bosses, teachers, and coaches.

We read chapter 3.1, “*Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands...*

Ladies, we’re not just picking on you. Paul tells us in Ephesians 5.21-22, from the Living Bible, “Honor Christ by submitting to each other. *You wives must submit to your husband’s leadership in the same way you submit to the Lord.*”

I love to watch the faces of the grooms at weddings when we read the verse about wives submitting to their husbands. They smile until remind them the verse before says “*husbands and wives, submit to one another out of your reverence for Christ.*”

Now, you have to know this, the word, submit, DOES NOT mean you don’t state your opinion. Submit does not mean there can’t be some friendly competition.

Submit DOES NOT imply that wives are inferior, less than, not as competent or intelligent as their husbands. It does not say husbands are more inferior or superior. Men are considered the physically stronger of the sexes.

Submission does not give permission to use the other as a punching bag or a verbal dartboard. It DOES NOT give one or the other permission to dominate, dictate, or depreciate the other.

We often think of the words submit or meek as meaning weak or weakly. That isn’t the Bible’s definition at all. You have a God-given will, you submit from a position of strength or weakness, but you have a choice. As you submit to Christ you can submit from a position of strength.

A soldier signs up to serve. He serves or submits to authority, not because he is weak. The soldier could be stronger, faster, smarter, a better shot, better at many things or not, than his commanding officer. They are partners with a mission. Their roles a bit different but they’re in it together.

We know a horse is bigger, stronger, and faster than it’s rider, but it submits to the will of the rider. At least it is suppose to.

A plane submits to the pilot in the sense that the plane “allows” the pilot to use its power and speed.

As people of faith, we're partners, and out of our submission to Christ, we submit to one another.

It's like the wife is the servant or subject of her husband. He is her king. And it like the husband is the servant of his wife. She is his queen.

Jesus modeled that when he washed the disciples feet and made it pretty clear they needed to wash each other's feet, to submit, to serve each other.

We know Peter speaks to the women first for a couple of reasons. One, women have finally moved up the social ladder. They are not property. Christianity doesn't considered women to be property.

A woman was property in the ancient Jewish culture. She had no rights. The male was the religious leader of the household. He could divorce her at his whim.

In the Greek culture women were to stay home and be completely obedient.

In the Roman culture the wife could make no decisions for herself. If the husband even claimed she was unfaithful, there was no due process. He could have her killed.

Peter's second reason, verse 2, "*if any of them do not believe they will be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see (one of the operative words-men are more visual, woman more audio in how they learn) the purity and reverence of your lives.*"

We think that at that time, there were probably many women who had accepted Christ and their husbands had not. So there's a problem. The wife is called to submit to a husband who is not a believer and...and she can't talk too much about her faith, because the husband will get upset. That is a struggle for some of you-isn't it? I know it was for my wife, Char.

Well, God simply says, your husbands will be won over by your behavior. Wives, you don't have to use too words. In fact it is better that you don't, because most of us men don't like to be told what to do. It is better we as men see the faith in your lives, that inner beauty, that special presence of Christ.

That is part of my friend Nolan's story. Nolan was a very intelligent, insightful, and intuitive child.

Also as a child Nolan, was beaten and verbally abused. He joined the army and served in Vietnam. When arriving back in the states after his tour of duty, he was spit on and called a baby killer. The man that said that ended up needing surgery on two crushed kneecaps and a broken face.

Nolan continued to be angry and obviously didn't like anyone telling him what to do. We can understand that. He wasn't able to trust anyone because of his family. They betrayed him and the country for which he was willing to die and for which he was wounded, turned it's back on him.

He married Linda, who was a very devoted Christian woman. He wasn't easy to live with and life wasn't always easy but she continued to loved.

While everyone else talked about Christ, he saw it and experiences it in her. Eventually he was able to trust himself to trust God. He professed Christ as his savior and Lord and was baptized. At his baptism 4 years ago he said he felt a new peace and a love for the church.

Let's go on. There are some interesting words here. Listen to this, verse 3, *"your inner beauty should not come from outward adornment, (the word for adornment is cosmos, meaning what you see out there...you don't know exactly what it is, what it is made of, but that is what you see. It's also the root word for cosmetics, outward covering) such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine cloths. Instead it should be that of the inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's eyes."*

Translation-real beauty comes from the inside out, not from outside to in. Peter is not saying not to take care of you, not to not look attractive. He is saying the priority of your lives is to have Christ with in, creating an inner beauty, which is unfading, incorruptible.

Husbands know you're being given special authority to please and provide for your mate, not to dominate and dictate. In TLB Ephesians 5.25 says, *"And husbands show the same kind of love to your wives as Christ showed the church..."*

Love as Jesus loved? What did Jesus do for the church? He gave to the church; he provided for the church, he sacrificed his life for the church.

Here is what Peter says, verse 7, *“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, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”*

Men, considerate here means much more than just being nice. It more than knows another...it is acting on the knowledge. You do something you might not really want to do not because you like the activity, not to manipulate, not because you want to watch the super bowl in peace, but you do it because you love your wives.

Take shopping for example. How many of you men like to go shopping? I'm the president of that club.

A study found that for about 70% of the men who went shopping with their wives, they had elevated their blood pressure comparable to that of fighter pilots engaged in combat. Honest, I read about this. Now in the same study the wife's blood pressure went that high in only about 27% of the women.

I asked Char what that was about. Without missing a beat she said, “The 27% of women who's blood pressure went up? They took their husbands shopping with them and they listened to them complain.”

Men, we're told to be more considerate and respectful to our wives, to honor them and out of reverence for Christ.

Hey, maybe there is time to go shopping before the Super Bowl.

Peter gives us another pretty good reason to be considerate. Not to do so “will hinder our prayers.” It seems as if God is like that parent who has told us what to do, and until it's done, we won't get to do this or that, and our prayers, pleas, and appeals will fall on deaf ears.

Submission, essential in our relationship to Christ, essential in our marriages, essential in our relationships with one another, and an essential building block of faith.

Let's stand and sing, “I Surrender All”

