

<sup>3:1</sup> Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, <sup>2</sup> when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. <sup>3</sup> Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. <sup>4</sup> Rather, 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. <sup>5</sup> For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, <sup>6</sup> like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

### Review the context.

- What is the biblical definition of *submission*? What story/image does the Bible give us to help us understand submission better?

### Understand it.

**Wives and Husbands.** In the first century Greco-Roman world, women were often subjected to their husbands as their household managers. The average wife then was typically uneducated and quite younger than her husband. Her role was seen as either providing children or making her husband look significant in his (or their- see Acts 18:3) professional enterprise or in social standing.

- How is this different than (or similar to) our cultural view of marriage today?
- Why might a wife's behavior be more winsome than her words to a harsh or unbelieving husband? (v.2)
- Why might a woman attribute her beauty to "outward adornment" rather than from the "inner self"? (v.3-4) How does this perspective differ or align with the concept of beauty today?
- How might Peter's instruction to husbands to "respect" their wives be revolutionary and counter-cultural in the first century? (v.7)
- How might the understanding of "weaker partner" (the word used is "vessel/instrument") be problematic to the Church? (v.7)
- Why is it important for a husband to see his wife as a fellow heir of God's "gracious gift of life"? (v.7) [Greek: *sugkleronomos* = "with"+"one who receives possession due to sonship"]
- Peter says that unhealthy respect of women/wives might hinder our prayers. (v.7) Can you think of some ways this could happen?

### Apply it.

- How can the Christian Church better represent a society of submission *without* devaluing a woman's giftedness or role?
- How might men/husbands still apply the teaching to "respect women as the weaker partner and heir"? (v7)
- How can you pray for your marriage? How can you encourage someone who does not experience biblical submission or respect?