

Sermon by Bob Brown on Sunday AM 11/2/08  
Hope In Relationships 1 Peter 3: 1-7

Becoming a follower of Jesus should totally change the way we live and act, and it should affect the way we interact in every social relationship, especially in our personal, family relationships.

When we read this passage, in the context of a husband and wife relationship, and see the words "*Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands...*", it has a tendency to get people a bit riled, especially in this day and age.

Think of submission— in a personal relationship—as we see it in **1 Peter 2:17**: "*Show proper respect to everyone: love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.*" Submitting means showing the proper respect to the one who is over you, which includes your boss on the job. In the biblical context of marriage, the husband is the head of the home, not in a demeaning way, but as protector.

Peter is giving "great hope" to the woman who finds herself more personally connected to Jesus than she does to her unbelieving husband. There is hope in her relationship to Jesus and hope in her relationship to her unbelieving husband. Her husband has the ability to see Jesus living in her.

When this unbelieving husband sees that his wife is actually following the God of Abraham more closely, not only in obedience to the Law given to Moses (the Ten Commandments), but now she is following with a new zeal and desire because she is filled with the Holy Spirit. This will affect the husband. The real hope is this; it will affect him, whether he chooses to acknowledge it or not.

The point here is, that all of our lives are a testimony to those around us. There are believers and unbelievers who need to see the "purity and reverence" of our Christ-like character being lived out in us. These words, are written by Peter, to the women of the church, but his words are also duplicated to the men as well. Verse 7 says: "*Husbands, in the same way...*".

Some key words for us to pay close attention to, which are a follow-up to the words of the previous section on submission, are phrases like:

- verse 2: "*the purity and reverence of your lives*"
- verse 4: "*inner self*"
- verse 4: "*a gentle and quiet spirit*"
- verse 6: "*do what is right and do not give way to fear*"
- verse 7: "*treat them with respect*"
- verse 7: "*the gracious gift of life*"

Each one of these phrases has to do with the relationships that we have as we interact, not only with spouses and family members, but in our social lives as well. As we become more and more Christ-like, these types of characteristics should become evident in our lives. We call this sanctification.

This list of qualities that Peter gives, things that give a real sense of hope in relationships, are the very things that helped Abraham become the man of God that he became. He saw these qualities in his wife Sarah, and it affected him. These qualities did not mean she was submissive like a doormat, but she displayed such Godly characteristics in submitting to the Lord, that it was a witness to her husband and others who would seek to take advantage of her. (Abraham, Sarah & Abimelech— **Genesis 20**).

In both verses 1 & 7 we see that believers are to act "*in the same way*". The question becomes the same way as who or what, as the slaves that were talked about in the earlier passage? The answer to that is yes, but more importantly in the same way that Jesus would act. This Son of God who "entrusted himself to him who judges justly". Both verses 1 & 7 refer back to **1 Peter 2:13, 17, 18**.

Many of us are quick to react to things around us, the society and culture in which we live, mostly because of our own insecurities. However, if women can learn to trust God with their whole being, really trust the Lord to take care of them, they won't get hi-jacked by the smooth talk and guile of those who want their own way.

The inner beauty of the woman (and man) of God, who has found her hope in a personal relationship with Jesus, is powerful enough to shape a culture. Think for a moment of Esther, as well as Sarah. Both of these

women submitted to God in their personal relationships and not only was God glorified, but their relationship was strengthened and their culture was changed.

Men, who think that they can dominate by brute force, are brought to their God-given senses by the reality of what true love looks like in a Godly woman. And as we can see from Scripture, this applies to cultures as well.

When we treat our wives, husbands and even those in our other interpersonal relationships with respect, upholding the gracious gift of life that is we all have, we see all of our relationships strengthened and God is glorified in us and through us.

Jesus was a master at building relationships, but as experienced by many of us, the close personal relationship that he built with his disciples, seemed to be tragically cut short, by his seemingly untimely death. We can all relate to that, can't we? Yet, look at the results of what Jesus had to say to his disciples as he met with them for the last time, in his earthly body, in that upper room that we celebrate so often.