

Don't Forget To Take Your Spouse Along by Jeff Strite

1 Peter 3:1-3:7

OPEN: A desperate woman wrote Tech Support:

Dear Tech Support,

Last year I upgraded from Boyfriend 5.0 to Husband 1.0 and I noticed a distinct slowdown in the overall system performance, particularly in the flower and jewelry applications.

In addition, Husband 1.0 uninstalled many other valuable programs, such as Romance 9.5 and Personal Attention 6.5, and then installed undesirable programs such as Newspaper 5.0, TV News 3.0 and Basketball Game 4.1.

Conversation 8.0 no longer runs.

Please note that I have tried running Nagging 5.3 to fix these problems, but to no avail. What can I do?

Signed, Desperate Woman

Dear Desperate Woman,

First, keep in mind, Boyfriend 5.0 is an Entertainment Package while Husband 1.0 is an older more reliable operating system. Please enter command: `ithoughtyoulovedme.html` and try to download Tears 6.2. And don't forget to install the Guilt 3.0 update.

If those applications work as designed, Husband1.0 should then automatically run the applications Jewelry 2.0 and Flowers 3.5.

However, remember, overuse of the above applications can cause Husband 1.0 to default to Silence 2.5, Happy Hour 7.0 or Beer 6.1.

Whatever you do, DO NOT under any circumstances install Mother-In-Law 1.0 (it runs a virus in the background that will eventually seize control of all your system resources.)

In summary, Husband 1.0 is a decent program, but it does have limited memory and cannot learn new applications quickly. You might consider buying additional software to improve memory & performance.

We recommend: Cooking 3.0 and Hot Looks 7.7.

APPLICATION: Obviously that conversation never took place. But I want you to notice something here: There was a problem... this wife was unhappy. The correspondence in the illustration had several suggested solutions to her problem.

1.) Nagging 5.3

2.) Tears 6.2

3.) Guilt 3.0

4.) Hot looks 7.7

You know what that sounds like to me? (pause) Manipulation 5.0

As humorous as that supposed conversation was supposed to be, it points to a very real difficulty in human relationships. Too many people (not just in marriage, but in all kinds of relationships) believe that they need to control those relationships. If necessary they'll manipulate others. They'll do everything they can to convince others to do something THEY want done and they'll do so by nagging, guilting, tricking, tempting or browbeating them into it.

ILLUS: I recently read the confessions of a divorced woman. She said that after 19 years of marriage, her Christian family was torn apart by divorce... partly by her husband's faults... but also partly by her own faults.

And then she listed some of HER OWN failures:

- I yelled... A lot.
- I looked out for "number one" and tried to protect her (me).
- I was cruel and self-serving and critical with my words. Probably daily.
- I didn't serve my then-husband enough.
- I didn't build him up enough.
- I didn't respect him.

I used to argue that once I felt he deserved respect, I'd begin to respect him.

(Elisabeth K. Corcoran)

Now her husband (if he'd been honest) probably could have listed a lot of similar faults on his part. But the point is this... there are too many marriages where each partner tries to manipulate the other. Whether it's the wife or the husband - one or both of them can get into the habit of trying to "control of the relationship."

And Peter says: DON'T DO THAT!

Do not do that.

Don't try to control your partner.

You are a servant of the most High God.

You are a servant of Jesus Christ.

So learn to deal with people like Jesus did. Particularly people who make your life uncomfortable.

Don't look at your spouse just now... but is there someone in your life that you're not comfortable being around, who makes you upset or frustrated? (Ask for a show of hands).

I Peter 2:21b-24 says

"Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

- 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.'
- When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate;
- when he suffered, he made no threats.
- Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."

Just two verses later I Peter 3:1 says this:

"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 behavior of their wives"

In the same way?

In the same way as what?

Wives treat your husbands in the same way Jesus treated those who crucified Him.

How did Jesus do that?

1. He committed no sin
2. He did not retaliate
3. He made no threats

And He trusted Himself to His Father who judges justly.

So, wives - in your relationship with your husbands, you need to KNOW that this is what God expects of you. Don't sin. Don't retaliate. Don't make threats.

And fully trust your Father to work things out for you.

Peter tells us that wives are to imitate Jesus in their relationship with their husbands.

And HOW does he say wives are to imitate Jesus?

Wives are to imitate Jesus by being submissive to their husbands.

Submissive?

What in the world does that mean?

ILLUS: Candace Cameron Bure was a star on the TV sitcom "Full House", and this is HER

understanding of submission:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbobNUh2-WU>

Now she said it better than I could ever hope to.

And being a woman her testimony on this has more weight than mine would have.

But notice where Candace Bure is sharing this.

“Huff Post Live”

It’s a liberal blog.

The folks at the Huff Post are NOT comfortable with Christians and they are seriously upset about this “submission” idea. To worldly folks like them, submission is out.

Control and manipulation is in. They believe that if you can’t control/manipulate your partner - you just move on and find one you can.

You can almost hear the disbelief in the interviewer’s voice:

Candace says: “I allow my husband to make the final decision”

And the interviewer is shocked: “Even to the detriment of your family?” (Even if it hurts your family?)

Now, why would the interviewer ask that question?

Why would she imply that submission would “harm” the family?

Because husband AREN’T always right. They do mess up... sometimes a lot. And when it looks like the man is going to blow it you’ve got to protect yourself. If you don’t protect yourself nobody else will.

That is the view of worldly of relationships... that’s why non-Christians do what they do.

But there are TWO reason why we Christians do submit.

1st EVERY Christian is commanded to submit to others – that’s our law.

In Matthew 20:25-28 we’re told that Jesus called His disciples together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jesus said submission is who we are and what we DO.

In fact Jesus said - if we learn to be servants of others then we will become great.

Now, that doesn’t make any sense!!!

How could we possibly end up in 1st place if we insist in serving in last place?
How could we possibly end up being great if we insist on being slaves?
IT MAKES NO SENSE!!!

And that's absolutely true... except for the 2nd thing the Bible teaches us.

Why did Jesus treat those who crucified Him the way He did?

"...he entrusted himself to him who judges justly." 1 Peter 2:23

And how can wives submit so confidently to their husbands?

1 Peter 3:5 declares: "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"

A submissive spirit makes a wife beautiful to her husband.

But the only way to be properly submissive is to put your hope in God so that God can have control in your family.

As Peter says in later on: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." 1 Peter 5:6

Jesus repeatedly taught us that if we were willing to humble ourselves and be servants of others, God would lift us up. He told his disciples (for example) that if they went to a meal, they should take the lowest least significant seat at the table, because then the host would look and say "that's not where you belong. Come up to a better place." And he would honor you before all those assembled. (Luke 14:10)

Every Christian must learn submission and humbleness so that God will lift us up in due time.

Now feminists smirk at submission for wives in the marriage because they think men are getting off lightly. But that's not what God tells us here.

"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 Peter 3:7

Notice the words I highlighted in the text.

In the same way.

Where have we seen that phrase before?

That's right in verse 1.

But, in the same way?
In the same way as what?
In the same way as Jesus.

You are to respond to your wife in the same way Jesus responded to those who crucified Him.

- Not sinning against her.
- Not retaliating when she irritates you.
- Making no threats against her.
- And trusting to your Father who judges justly.

That's another way to say you should submit to your wife.

Now men are usually bigger and more powerful than their wives (although I've seen some women who could take me 3 out of 4 times). And men are genetically wired to be decision makers.

ILLUS: Just as an illustration of that, consider the major argument of most women: "He doesn't 'listen' to me." What's she saying? She's saying she wants to share her story with the man, but the man isn't cooperating. When the woman shares her problem with the man... what's the man want to do? HE WANTS TO FIX IT! He doesn't want the wife to share her troubles and leave it at that. He wants to fix the problem and then get on with life. Man is inherently a problem solver. That's how God created him.

But God – having designed the man with that ability – warns us men that we should be "...showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." 1 Peter 3:7

God is asking you to think of your wife as if she were a fragile glass.

I have friends that get uncomfortable with me when I'm in a store with glass items. I've got this inherent desire to pick up the glass items and look at them. And when that happens, my friends get uneasy. Why? Because they're afraid I'm going to break something. They visualize me as being something of a bull in a china shop.

God warns men not to be bulls in the china shop with their wives. Their wives are to be treated like the most fragile crystal goblets. Even if the woman is built like a mud wrestler or a hockey player, God has designed women's psyches to be responsive to being handled gently. Like she'd break if you misused her.

And if men aren't gentle with their wives... God kinda takes that personally.

He says to husbands, if you're rough with your wives don't expect me to give you anything. I won't be listening to you. I won't be blessing you... you'll be all on your own, and it won't be a pleasant trip.

Men who are bullies and run roughshod over their wives will not like how things turn out in their lives, because they will have turned God into their enemy.

Now, there's one more thing. Husbands and wives should have one main objective for their spouses. Notice what verse 1 says:

"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 behavior of their wives"

1 Peter 3:1

Whether you are the husband or the wife in a marriage you have ONE objective. And that objective is not to have a home where things go YOUR way. It's to have a home where your spouse ends up going to heaven.

ILLUS: At a commuter train station a policeman noticed a woman driver leaning over her steering wheel in evident discomfort.

"Is there anything wrong?" asked the police officer.

Half crying and half laughing, the woman replied,

"For ten years I have driven my husband to this station to catch the train.

This morning I forgot him!"

She got where she wanted to go... but she forgot her husband.

She'd left him behind.

He wasn't going to get on that train.

He wasn't going to make it to the ultimate destination.

CLOSE: I loved my Dad, but he wasn't always a godly man. Not that he was a "bad" man, he was just a "man's man." He could handle himself in any and every situation. He'd been a great basketball player and a great baseball player, and he could handle himself in just about any fight. He figured "what do I need God for?" and so he rarely went to church or bothered much to pray.

But mom did. Mom was a faithful Christian and went to church just about every time the doors opened. And it made Dad jealous. He didn't like sharing his wife with God. So one day he figured on a way to maybe "guilt" her into backing off her faith.

He asked her "Martha, would you be happy in heaven if I were in hell?"

Mom knew what he was asking and why. She thought for a moment and then replied:

“Lowell, would you really be comfortable in hell if I were there with you?”

That simple answer shook Dad. He’d never thought of it that way before. Then one day, not so long after that, Dad went to church and went down front during the invitation and surrendered himself to Jesus.

Mom said that on the way home, Dad pulled the car off to the side of the road and began to weep uncontrollably. He was grieving for how much he had missed. In time Dad became an Elder and when he died he knew exactly where he was going. Mom had loved Dad into heaven.

She didn’t nag him.

She didn’t guilt him.

She didn’t argue with him.

She loved him into heaven.

And that is the objective of every Christian husband or wife.

You don’t want to leave your spouse behind.

You want them to join you in heaven.

But you can’t get into heaven until you belong to Jesus yourself.