

## THE WIFE AS PRIEST

### I Peter 3:1-6

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#### INTRODUCTION

We've now looked at the priestly calling of a husband to be a ministry of grace to his wife. We turn to the wife today and her priestly role toward her husband.

#### WITHOUT A WORD LIKE JESUS

Peter begins by saying "likewise," and that's important because he has just come off several verses about Christ's suffering and submission (2:21-25). He was sinless and had every reason to defend himself and didn't (2:22). He returned not a word to his persecutors (2:23), but committed himself to God who judges righteously (2:23). But this example also includes a ministry of healing and reconciliation (2:24-25). Wives are called to this ministry toward their husbands. Wives should behave in such a way that even if they have a husband who does "not obey the word," he should be won over without a word in imitation of Christ (3:1). Instead of words, Peter calls the Christian woman to embrace a beautiful conduct that is "incorruptible" and winsome.

#### INCORRUPTIBLE BEAUTY

The language of "incorruptible" and "corruptible" has been used frequently in I Peter. Peter opens his epistle tying our "incorruptible inheritance" to the resurrection of Jesus (1:3). It is the reality of that incorruptible inheritance that is being revealed (1:5). And the proof of that inheritance is seen in faith that withstands trials, revealing our faith to be more "precious than gold." Therefore Peter calls us to holiness (1:13-17) because we were not redeemed with "corruptible things" like silver or gold but with the "precious blood of Christ" (1:18-19). Jesus is our reason for faith and hope in God because he has been raised from the dead (1:21). And therefore we know that our new life in him is just as "incorruptible" as his word (1:23ff). Therefore, we are being built up into a house that cannot be destroyed, a house of living stones that are "precious" to God (2:4). And therefore, wives are to adorn themselves as "living stones," as members of the new temple of God. Gold is perishable (3:3), but a gentle and quiet spirit is "incorruptible" and it is "precious" before God (3:4). The point is not an internal/external dichotomy; the point is that the Spirit always makes or breaks a house of God.

## HOLY WOMEN

Peter points to the “holy women” who “hoped in God” in the Old Testament, and therefore they submitted to their own husbands. Sarah obeyed Abraham, and Peter calls Christian women to the freedom of “doing good” and not fearing “any terror” (3:6). Like Paul in Gal. 4:22, Peter says we need to see Sarah’s submission and obedience as the way of freedom. But this takes wisdom; it takes the Holy Spirit to enable us to be that royal priesthood, to make us “precious” and “incorruptible,” to make Christian wives virtuous and excellent (Pr. 3:15, 8:11, 31:10). And this consists in hoping in God, doing good, and banishing fear (3:5-6). As Paul insists, wives are called to picture the Church, revealing her glory and beauty (Eph. 5:24). You are a picture of the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, a bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2), and this means that you must first love and fear your first Husband.

## CONCLUSIONS & APPLICATIONS

Two extremes are refusing to see weaknesses and only seeing weaknesses. Neither are faithful, and both ignore the opportunity to serve and bestow grace. You are one of the key ministries of grace and healing to him.

Bestowing honor and respect, calling him ‘lord’ is a ministry of grace and healing, and God calls wives to this specific ministry. You are his wife; you have been called to this. And giving is the means to receiving. If you want to find your life, you must lose it.

The point is always Jesus. Submission and faith in the Lord, means hoping in the God of the resurrection, the God who makes everything right. That means believing that God has begun something incorruptible in you and believing that he will see it to completion.

In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen.



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