

## ***FAMILY HOPE, 1PETER 3:1-7***

A New Hope #6

◆**Intro:** In Lemony Snicket's story *A Series of unfortunate Events*, things go from bad to worse for the Baudelaire children. In fact the author writes things like, "if you thought perhaps the children's lives would get better I'm sorry to tell you its not true. In fact you might even want to put this book down and read something else." One of those miseries is Count Olaf, who tries to steal the Baudelaire orphans fortune by marrying the daughter **Violet**. He schemes up an elaborate wedding **play** in which he invites a real judge to play the part as the judge, and his henchmen to be witnesses. And he forces Violet to play the part of the bride, while he is the groom. She, of course is on to him, but her little sister is locked in a cage in a high tower under the threat of torture & pain if she will not submit. Submission in this marriage doesn't seem hopeful.

◆Even when marriage doesn't start out that way, many folks can get to the point of feeling the squeeze of marriage that Violet was experiencing. Marriage can be tough.

◆One son asked his father, "Daddy, why is a man only allowed one wife?"

◆Father: "Son, when you grow older you will understand that the law protects those who are unable to protect themselves."

◆So when the Bible tells us to submit, does it mean to begrudgingly consign ourselves to a series of unfortunate events

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caused us by another person? What are the real lessons here? Here's one that applies even if you are not married.

◆ **1. What I say is not as important as how I behave.** In our text for today, marriage is another area of application that Peter has been making for his instruction back in 2:12.

◆ *Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

◆ Then he begins making application of how to live godly/good lives.

◆ v13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority...

◆ v18 Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh...

◆ 3:1 Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands...

◆ 3:7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives...

◆ You see, he's applying humble Christian submission to various areas of authority structure in society, down to the foundational building block, marriage between a man and a woman.

Remember too that our goal according to 2:9, is that Christian people behave in such a way as to witness to the world, be priests in a broken world by showing God's way of getting along. In a

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nutshell: inner beauty outranks outer beauty, and honor for another outranks honor for yourself.

- ◆ Some folks interpret this text to mean Christians shouldn't wear jewelry, or braid their hair. Avoid makeup and try to be as plain as possible in your looks. That's just silly talk. Genesis 12 tells us Sarah (mentioned in v6) was in fact a jaw-dropping beauty!
- ◆ Verse 3 literally says, "*Your adornment must not be external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold, or putting on clothes.*" If women are going to give up jewelry on the basis of this verse, they'd also have to give up clothes! I'm rather certain that would be a *slight* hinderance to the good behavior Peter is writing about!
- ◆ In 7th grade I attended Kailua Mission School in HA. It was a Christian, Seventh Day Adventist school, that forbid jewelry on the basis of this verse. My brothers and I used to collect puca shells (tiny caps of shells with a hole/puca in the middle) on the beach and make necklaces. They sold for hundred's of dollars in Honolulu! Well I made a nice one, wore it to school, was made to take it off, upon which someone promptly stole it out of my desk -in a school where no one believes in jewelry! It kinda makes *Peters point: how you live, is more important that what you say.*
- ◆ **2. What about submission?** This is the behavior Peter has been writing about. There's beauty in godly submission! What is it's opposite? The demand for my rights!

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◆ At first glance it might seem like Peter is saying, “Wives obey your husbands, and husbands, be nicer.” But that would be a poor reading. The term “obey” in the New Testament is used of children, citizens, and slaves, but never of wives to husbands. The closest it ever comes is our text (v6) where it says Sarah obeyed Abraham. The term means “listened to”. But if you know Abraham’s story, you know Abe also listened to/obeyed advice from Sarah.

◆ A. Here are a few things submission is not:

◆ 1) Agreeing with everything: You can see from v1 that the wife here is a Christian and her husband is not. Peter is telling her to submit, but obviously that would not mean to agree with his religious views. So submission isn’t mere agreement.

◆ 2) Leaving your brain at the altar: Peter is not asking the wife of an unbeliever not to think for herself. She obviously differs with her husband who “does not believe the word”. Here is a husband who has not chosen Christ. But she has thought it through and believed Jesus’ claims.

◆ 3) Avoiding every effort to change your husband: This is clear because the whole goal of the text is that she will win her husband to Jesus, ie. change him, by her behavior.

◆ 4) Putting the husband before Christ: Peter also teaches in the book of Acts that Christians must obey God rather than

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men when the two cannot fit together. Verse 5 reminds us that her hope is in God first.

◆5) Acting out of fear: Verse 6 shows us that the wife is being like Sarah when she submits not out of fear, or inability but out of her own freedom to do so. Remember, submission cannot be forced. External submission/Obedience can be forced but true submission involves the inner choice.

◆B. So what does submission mean? It is the willing disposition to voluntarily yield to leadership or defer to another. What Peter is outlining here is not a creational evaluation of the place of women as being less than men. It's an application of Christian respect for social structures that leads to social harmony.

◆1) Peter tells husbands to "honor" their wives. That is to recognize them as precious (same term) and worthy. He even calls them "joint-heirs"! That's entirely radical in a time when the Romans, the Greeks, and the Jews all shared the view that a woman was more like property, and carried no legal standing or rights, and received no inheritance. In fact, Jewish men recited a prayer daily in which they thanked God they were not born a woman! (greek: co-inheritor vs english: "heirs with you")

◆2) The Apostle Paul would agree, as he instructs mutual submission in a letter about the husband being the head of the home.

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◆ *Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

◆ Now, while a man could often push a woman around because by nature men are physically stronger than women, the Christian man is not to do so. If you behave like being the leader of the home means you make financial decisions without consulting your wife, or you get to outline where she may or may not go, and how often -you do not have a Christian marriage. You might have an employee, but you don't have a partner God meant for you.

◆ The best possible world is when both husbands and wives act like Jesus, who voluntarily gave up rights, even life, to give us worth. Andy Stanley writes,

◆ "When I was twenty-six, I flew to Washington, D.C. to be a groomsman in a friend's wedding. After the reception, the wedding party of twelve or so headed to an upscale bar in Georgetown. Being part of the wedding party I tagged along. The turning point in the conversation came when the girl next to the girl who started all of this said, and I quote, "Andy, I heard a preacher say that the man had to be the head of the home because a two-headed home is like a two-headed monster. Is that what you believe? That the man is the head?" Here's the gist of what I said, which was directed at the girls who were asking the questions:

◆ Before I answer your question, imagine you're married to a man who genuinely believes you are the most fantastic person on

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the planet. He's crazy about you. You have no doubt that your happiness is his top priority He listens when you talk. He honors you in public. To use an old fashioned term, he "cherishes" you. He's not afraid to make a decision. He values your opinions. He leads, but he listens. He's responsible. He's not argumentative. You have no doubt that he would give his life for you if the need arose. You never worry about him being unfaithful. In fact, to quote an old Flamingos song, "he only has eyes for you."

◆As I was saying all of this, the folks on the other end of the table tuned in and began to listen. The longer I talked, the more I sensed their resistance ebbing. When I finished, I paused and asked, "Would either of you have trouble following a man like that?" The girl to my right blurted out, "Well, no! I want to meet that guy." Everybody laughed. Without realizing it, she made my point. It's easy, perhaps natural, to submit to someone who genuinely has your best interest in mind. There's no *fear*. No reason to resist. Conversely, anyone who has your best interest in mind has in effect submitted to you. That person has chosen to leverage him- or herself for your benefit, basically saying, "You first."" (The New Rules of Love, Sex, and Dating).

◆You see, when both husband and wife follow Gods headship principle, there is a non-threatening balance. I know what you're thinking: but what if my partner doesn't ...? Of course the place to start is with yourself, your behavior. Not your words. Are you going to trust Gods design?

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◆ **Conclusion:** this really applies to all of us, married, or not.

Peter encourages Christians to winsomely win the world toward God by good behavior, and by respect for authority structures.

◆ Now, no one is to follow an authority, be it a husband, a boss, or a president, into sin. But being a courageous (not fearful), person who "hopes in God", and then respects authority structures, –this brings hopeful living. Whereas being a person in rebellion against leadership, demanding your rights, to the disrespect of others carries no real hopefulness. What you end up with is rebellious children who know more than their parents, employees who do as little as possible to get by, and people obsessed with how they look on the outside, possibly because there's no one at home praising them, and affirming love for the person inside on a daily basis.

◆ The theme of this text is behavior that will glorify God by creating harmony among people. Marriage is the illustration Peter uses to describe it here. We learn that gentle submission is more powerful than hard subversiveness. On a field trip to the zoo, a group of children were looking at a deer.

◆ Teacher: "Curtis, what is that?"

◆ Curtis: "I don't know." (he had never seen one before.)

◆ Teacher: "Well, what does your mother call your father?"

◆ Curtis: "No! Don't tell me that's a louse!"

◆ Listen friends, as goes the home, so goes the culture. Peter has backed us up from Christian submission and respect for the King/



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President, to Christian submission and respect in marriage, it's foundation stone. In other words, it's wives that won't let their husbands lead, and husbands that don't treat their wives as equals that culminates in city riots where people demand their rights to peaceful, equal treatment by breaking the peace and infringing on everyone else's rights around them to make their point. When Dad and mom are too busy each insuring their own way, the whole country is destined for disaster. But when both Dad and Mom follow the example of Christ, we get the same thing Jesus our example achieved- dead people can come back to life.