



*1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. 8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: 9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. (1 Peter 3:1-12)*

Due to the pronounced sentiments surrounding political correctness in our day, I searched diligently for a rendering of this text that did not so forcefully reveal the sins of our day; however, not finding such a rendering, I decided to settle for the pure Word of God as presented in the majesty and reverently accurate King James Version of the Bible.

Peter was a man of the sea in his pre-conversion life. This introduction of the third chapter of First Peter, in naval jargon, might be considered a shot across the bow of modern social engineers as regards womanhood, marriage, and lavishly revealing apparel. But I would like to begin the devotion with a letter a woman of 250 years past (how social mores have changed!) wrote to her husband proclaiming her great love for him:

If ever two were one, then surely we  
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee;  
If ever wife was happy in a man  
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.  
I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold  
Or all the riches that the east doth hold.  
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,  
Nor ought but love from thee, give recompense.  
Thy love is such I can no way repay,  
The Heavens reward thee manifold I pray.  
Then while we live, in love let so persevere  
That when we live no more we shall live ever.

Anne Bradstreet  
wife of the Governor of Massachusetts Colony  
1678

This poem of Anne reflects perfectly that endearing love that the Church should harbor for her Betrothed Bridegroom - the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what proper marriage is intended, by God, to foreshadow and exemplify. Ironically, the New Testament does not command women to love their husbands, but the Word does command the husband to love the wife. How much, you ask? *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:* (Eph 5:24-29)

We may wonder, why the word does not command the same love from the wife? I believe it is because of the nature of the feminine heart - tender and always ready to respond to the unimpeded love of her husband. If the husband is true and gallant in his love for his wife, his wife cannot resist returning that love.

The heart of a strong man can be melted with love and turned into a gold mine of virtue by a virtuous woman. *"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives."* On earth, the agency for teaching and nurturing in the Word is the proper role of the Church. The woman may serve that role (being a reflection of the Church) in the life of a rebellious man. Kindness can master the waves of the sea: *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.* (Prov 25:21-22) By the way, "being subject" to one's husband does not mean to be as a servant or as a second-class mate in a marriage. It means to submit to the GODLY leadership of the husband, but not the ungodly! The Law of God always takes precedence over all inferior laws.

So we see that the conversation of the wife must be virtuous and wholesome, not profane and vulgar. What of apparel? Yes, that is covered as well to the chagrin of modern fashion - it is for this reason that the modern world hates the Word of God (it keeps getting in the way): *Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.* Truly, flimsy fashions in dress are inappropriate for a proper lady and particularly one of faith. Remember that I have written that when the Word refers to MAN in generalities, it refers to both men and women (womb-men). The reason for modesty in dress is that the hidden man of the heart is reflected in the outward appearance.

Husbands, if you will stand in favor of God and desire answers to prayer, you had best heed this counsel: *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.* As a good shepherd cares for his sheep and is willing to lay down his life on their behalf (as did our Lord) so must the husband love and honor his wife!

Our Lord prayed, on the night of His betrayal, that we (the Church) would be One with Him as He was One with the Father. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art*

*in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.* (John 17:20-23) You will remember God's first institution in the Garden eastward in Eden - Holy Matrimony? "*They twain shall be ONE flesh.*" How completely descriptive of both Godly marriage and the Kingdom of God! Peter says: *Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.*

Another important aspect of divinely ordained marriage is that of serving as an example to the world of true living and Godly demeanor: *Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

Volumes have been written without exhausting the depth of meaning of Marriage. This short devotion only touches on a single facet of that Holy Institution. It is my hope and prayer that further curiosity of the matter will be spurred herewith to search the Scriptures for fuller beauty and truth on the subject; and that marriage will be restored in our time to the Holy plan of our Father in Heaven to reflect that biblical relationship which exists between one man and one woman in the Holy Bands of Matrimony.