

## 1 Kefa 3:1-7

### Wives and Husbands

In my last post, we explored **Submission of Slaves to Masters**. In this post, we learn about **Wives and Husbands**.

***<sup>1</sup> In the same way, wives, submit to your husbands; so that even if some of them do not believe the Word, they will be won over by your conduct, without your saying anything, <sup>2</sup> as they see your respectful and pure behavior.***

***In the same way*** as citizens with their government and slaves with their masters as we have learned in the previous two posts, believing **wives** should exemplify the principle of 2:12 with their **husbands** by submitting to them. In other words, do not be a *noodge* or a *nudnik* (Yiddish for "nag" and "bore"). For **they will be won over** to being curious about the **Messiah**, they already know you believe in **by your conduct, without your saying a word, as they see your respectful and pure behavior**. Then, when you have an interested audience, you can speak! This is equally true for husbands.

***<sup>3</sup> Your beauty should not consist in externals such as fancy hairstyles, gold jewelry, or what you wear;***

Hair was braided in elaborate manners, and well-to-do women strove to keep up with the latest expensive fashions. The gaudy adornments of women of wealth, meant to draw attention to themselves, were repeatedly condemned in ancient literature and speeches, and **Kefa's** readers would assume that his point was meant in the same way. It doesn't appear that much has changed these last 2,000 years.

***<sup>4</sup> rather, let it be the inner character of your heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit. In God's sight, this is of great value.***

Ancients considered a meek and quiet spirit a prime virtue for women. Many moralists advised this attitude instead of dressing in the latest fashions to attract men's attention, a vice commonly attributed to aristocratic women but imitated by those who could afford to do so. <sup>1</sup>

***<sup>5</sup> This is how the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves and submit to their husbands,***

Moralists typically added examples of such quietness to their exhortations; they especially liked to appeal to the distant past's matrons, who were universally respected for their chaste behavior compared to many of the current models in Roman high society. **Jewish** readers would think, especially of the great matriarchs, extolled for their piety in **Jewish** tradition: **Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah, Sarah** being most prominent. The readers may think about head coverings that were prominent in much of the East, meant to render the married woman inconspicuous. <sup>2</sup>

***<sup>6</sup> the way Sarah obeyed Avraham, honoring him as her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not succumb to fear.***

***Honoring him as her lord...*** Midrash Tanchuma states: "Abraham's wife honored him and called him 'Lord,' for it is written that Sarah said, 'My lord is old' (Genesis 18:12). But, conversely, God commanded Abraham to honor his wife by calling her 'princess'; for that is the meaning of her Hebrew name 'Sarah' (Genesis 17:15)." <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Jewish New Testament Commentary.

***You are her daughters.*** As **Abraham** is the father of all **Believers**, his wife **Sarah** is appropriately singled out as the mother of believing women. She is an example for them, just as **Abraham** is for all **Believers**. Being a bat (daughter of) or a ben (son of) someone implies having those personal qualities in Hebrew.

***Do not succumb to fear.*** This is a call to give up neurotic anxiety. The anxious feelings may not go away, but one can gain a right perspective on them, not by suppressing them and denying their existence, but by acknowledging them while at the same time experiencing that **God's** peace, His **shalom**, a fruit of the **Ruach**. Seek **God's** rulership instead of dwelling on anxious thoughts and worries.

***<sup>7</sup> You husbands, likewise, conduct your married lives with understanding. Although your wife may be weaker physically, you should respect her as a fellow-heir of the gift of Life. If you don't, your prayers will be blocked.*** ~ 1 Kefa 3:1-7 (CJB).

***Husbands, conduct your married lives*** (the term includes the sexual aspect but is not limited to it) ***with understanding.*** This fits with Co 3:19 ("***Husbands, love your wives, and don't treat them harshly***") and Ep 5:25–33.

***Respect her as a fellow-heir of the gift of life;*** compare Ep 5:21.

***If you don't, your prayers will be blocked.*** This is a portentous warning. A man who does not respect his wife might try to retreat into prayer, but he will be unable to have much of a spiritual life so long as he does not love, understand and honor his wife. Any husband who has attempted to pray privately while amid a fight with his wife should agree.

We will learn about **Doing No Evil** in 1 Kefa 3:8-12 in my next post.