

The Results of the Fall (Part 3)

An Examination of the Curse

1. A Look at God's curse on the serpent Genesis 3:14-15.

- a. "On your belly you will go, and dust you will eat"
- b. "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed"
- c. "He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel"

2. A look at God's curse on the woman Genesis 3:16

- a. "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children"
- b. "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you"
Cf. Genesis 4:7 "...you must rule over it."

2.5 A look at 1 Peter 3:1-6 in connection with Genesis 3:16.

Vs. 1-2 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

- a. "In the same way..."
 - Christ set an example (2:21) for us by submitting Himself to suffering on our behalf.
 - Wives will sometimes need to suffer in their submission to husbands, but they have an example to follow in Christ.
 - Praise God for gospel transformation that leads to renewed minds among believing husbands that will serve to increasingly make following them a blessing.
- b. "...you wives, be submissive to your own husbands..."
 - "being submissive" or "subjecting yourselves"
 - To your own (ιδίους) husbands, not just to any man.
- c. "...in order that even if any of them are disobedient to the word..."
 - "disobedient to the word" most likely means that he is an unbeliever.
 - The "even if" or "also" indicates that submission to a believing husband was assumed, but there may have been some question about submission to an unbelieving husband that Peter answers.
 - If a wife should submit to her unbelieving husband, so much more should she submit to her believing husband.
 - In connection with Genesis 3:16, it is the reality of unbelieving husbands whose leadership is difficult to follow that is a product of the curse not the submission itself.
- d. "...they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."
 - This "winning" is likely a winning to Christ. The wife's behavior toward him is evangelistic.
 - The evangelistic nature of her response to him in no way suggests that only women married to unbelieving men are instructed to submit to their own husbands.
 - The "chaste and respectful behavior" is gospel conduct in any circumstance. Cf. Titus 2:4-5 where wives are instructed "to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored." This passage is not addressing women married to unbelievers, yet refusal to be subject to husbands would dishonor the word of God (cf. 1 Tim. 5:14).

Vs. 5-6 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

- a. "...the holy women...hoped in God..."
 - Notice that these women needed to hope in God in their submission, and this is what is commended. Submission to broken husbands, especially unbelieving husbands, will require hopeful trust in the Lord.
- b. "...without being frightened by any fear" (Lit. not being frightened by anything frightening).
 - This is related to their hope in God.
 - Peter is clearly instructing wives to be submissive when there is cause for fear and a need to look to God for hope in the situation.

Other Questions and Considerations

- If wives are not commanded to submit to their husbands, are we not commanded to submit to governing authorities (cf. Romans 13:1 where the same verb -- ὑποτάσσω hypotassō -- is used)?
- Should wives transgress God's law in submission to husbands?
Just as we should not obey governing authorities when they command us to disobey God, so wives should not obey husbands when they are commanded to disobey God (cf. Acts 5:29); but just as we should maintain a disposition of

submission to God-ordained governing authorities even when we cannot obey, so wives should maintain a disposition of submission even when she must disobey.

It should be remembered that God has established spheres of authority with governors in those spheres. These spheres are the family, the Church, and civil government. These authorities only have rightful authority within their spheres, so the husband's authority is within the sphere of the family; and this is where the wife submits to him.

- **What should a wife do if her believing husband is sinning?**

She is not only his wife, but she is also a fellow member of the body of Christ and has a duty to him to lovingly "show him his fault in private." If he refuses to listen to her, she should bring one or two with her and allow the church to help her counsel her husband. Notice that this becomes a tremendous source of protection for her and strongly argues for the need to be in covenant membership with a faithful church.

[Consider 1 Timothy 5:1, cf. also Matthew 7:3-5 and Galatians 6:1.]

- **What if her husband's decisions are not clearly sinful but are terribly imprudent?**

Submission to her husband does not mean silence. The "quietness" of 1 Timothy and 1 Peter is not a verbal silence but a quietness of spirit (cf. 1 Tim. 2:2 or 1 Peter 3:4). Her desire ought to be to love her husband by seeking to respectfully (quietly) persuade him. She may even get help from her church in these matters. But divorce is not open to her nor is a combative, "put my foot down" attitude.

Here again, what a blessing to her if she and her husband are in covenant membership with a faithful church that is able to help them work through difficulties and even admonish him where necessary.

[Consider: it is sometimes implied that a wife is not required to submit if her husband is not leading well, but would we also say that the man need not love (Eph. 5:25) if the wife is not being respectful?]

- **Isn't the submission that both Paul and Peter command voluntary?**

What true/biblical submission would not be voluntary? Submission is not submission if it must be coerced.

3. A look at God's curse on the man Genesis 3:17-19

- a. "Cursed is the ground because of you...both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you"
Romans 8:18-22

What impact does this have upon our world and its sufferings?

- b. "In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life...by the sweat of your face you will eat bread"
Ecclesiastes 1:8

What role does this promise play in our sufferings?

- c. "You are dust, and to dust you shall return"
2 Corinthians 5:1-4

What role does this promise play in our sufferings?