

BIG IDEA

Nothing more positively influences your home than Godly character.

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO KNOW?

What is your experience with submission? Who do you submit to, if anyone? How does submission tend to work in the context of your relationships?

Read 1 Peter 3:1-7. What do you know (or remember) about the social status of women during the time of Peter? How does your understanding help you to process this passage?

Women in Peter's time were not considered equal to men. Their testimonies were not valid in court, they had little to no rights, and were divorceable for any reason. Most girls were not allowed to go to school and women who did not have a husband or son (those who were divorced, widowed, barren, etc.) were often forced into poverty or prostitution.

How is 1 Peter 3:1-7 good news to the women who would have received Peter's letter? That Peter is empowering women to influence their families toward faith is an extremely countercultural step toward equality. In a society which diminishes women and their voice, Peter is encouraging women to work within the limitations of their society in order to influence their families in a kingdom way.

Read Philippians 2:1-11. What elements of submission can you identify within this passage? How does Jesus model submission for us?

Jesus did not use his privilege to dominate or subject. Rather, he submitted and humbled himself on our behalf. The Creator entered into creation in the form of a helpless baby to set us free and bring us salvation through his death. We are called to imitate him by submitting to one another through self-sacrificial love. Submission looks like valuing others above yourself—not doing anything out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

How is Godly character seen in submission? What other character issues are being addressed in Philippians 2:1-11?

WHAT IS MY INITIAL REACTION?

What are some unhealthy ways that "submission" has been used in your context? Compare these situations to the way the Bible talks about submission.

Read 1 Peter 3:7-8. What expectations does Peter have for men regarding Godly character? How are they similar to his expectations for women? How are they different?

The phrase "in the same way" can be found at each transition from 1 Peter 3:1 and 7. This phrase is a good reminder that God is calling all people-- slave or free, male or female-- to Godly character which is expressed in the form of submission. Peter describes submission for women through the lens of purity, reverence and inner beauty. Peter describes submission for





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men through the lens of consideration, respect, and acknowledgement of the woman's equal status as heirs of the kingdom.

Consider the following quote. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

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." - Andy Stanley

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

Re-read 1 Peter 3: 1-4. How do the women in your life demonstrate this kind of character?

Reflect on the relationships in your life where you have great influence. How is God leading you to value others above yourself?

What fears do you need to confront in order to live in mutual submission in your relationships? There are many legitimate fears that people may have regarding submission—especially those who have experienced spiritual, emotional or physical abuse. Some may be afraid that submission will be perceived as weakness. Others may fear that the person they submit to may not truly have their best interest in mind.

Be respectful as your group processes this question and refrain from trying to “solve” the problems that may come up. Ultimately, God is the one who can heal our wounds and free us from the fears that keep us from living fully into the lives he has called us to.

