

# Small Group Study

## The Gift of Relationships: Communicating with Understanding II

### Scripture

Have a volunteer read the following:

1 Peter 3:1-7 (NLT):

#### Wives

*1 In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over 2 by observing your pure and reverent lives.*

*3 Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. 4 You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. 5 This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands. 6 For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.*

#### Husbands

*7 In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.*

### Questions

1. God Himself created marriage in such a way, that to follow it brings some of the greatest happiness to us, as well as glory to Him. Christian marriage is to be a work of art which pictures the love relationship between Christ and the church. The submission of Jesus Christ to the Father is our greatest example of holy living. We will consider the Biblical case for submission and authority further as we explore what God says regarding not just Christian *marriages* but all Christian relationships as well. Read 1 Peter 2:21-25 below.

*21 For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps. 22 He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. 23 He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. 24 He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. 25 Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.*

**Ice Breakers:** Use the questions below to help people open up and to focus your meeting. It is very helpful to go around in a circle with the leader going first. (Remember if you have new members or guests you should take time to introduce everyone.)

1. Tell of us of a time when you had to submit to someone's authority, perhaps begrudgingly.
2. Share one highlight from this past Christmas or New Years.
3. Name 2 famous "Peters". Try not to use one already used.

Discuss some of the key words and phrases in the above text, such as "God called you to do good," "you must follow in his steps," "He never sinned," "He did not retaliate," "[He didn't] threaten revenge when he suffered," and "He left his case in the hands of God."

2. Which of these characteristics would apply to the wife? To the husband?

3. We often misunderstand the idea of submission. Submission is not inequality--it's not being less important or less significant. The best example of this is the Holy Trinity. Read the following:

John 1:1 *In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

John 1:14 *So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.*

John 5:17-18 *But Jesus replied, "My Father is always working, and so am I." So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a way to kill him. For he not only broke the Sabbath, he called God his Father, thereby making himself equal with God.*

John 8:53-59 *"Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?" Jesus answered, "If I want glory for myself, it doesn't count. But it is my Father who will glorify me. You say, 'He is our God,' but you don't even know him. I know him. If I said otherwise, I would be as great a liar as you! But I do know him and obey him. Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad." The people said, "You aren't even fifty years old. How can you say you have seen Abraham?" Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I Am!" At that point they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden from them and left the Temple.*

John 10:24-33 *The people surrounded him and asked, "How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus replied, "I have already told you, and you don't believe me. The proof is the work I do in my Father's name. But you don't believe me because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. The Father and I are one." Once again the people picked up stones to kill him. Jesus said, "At my Father's direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?" They replied, "We're stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God."*

Hebrews 1:1-3 *Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe. The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven.*

What was the position of Jesus the Son in comparison to God the Father?

4. Read the following:

Romans 5:8 *But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Philippians 2:5-11 *You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Titus 2:11-15 *For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds. You must teach these things and encourage the believers to do them. You have the authority to correct them when necessary, so don't let anyone disregard what you say.*

1Peter 2:24 *He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.*

If Jesus the Son is equal with God the father, why did He surrender Himself to the will of the Father to the extent He did? How can we, as His followers, do the same?

5. To embrace the principle of authority and submission in life is God's will for us. Read the following:

Proverbs 3:1-8 *My child, never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart. If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying. Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart. Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation. Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil. Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones.*

1 Corinthians 11:3 *But there is one thing I want you to know: The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.*

1 Corinthians 15:28 *Then, when all things are under his authority, the Son will put himself under God's authority, so that God, who gave his Son authority over all things, will be utterly supreme over everything everywhere.*

What can we learn (and apply) from the scriptures above? What take-aways do you have from this study?