

• *Real womanly attractiveness – shines from within*

#### 4. Peter appeals to tradition

• *Throughout history, women have undoubtedly been treated badly*

• *The Christian faith is the only movement that has done much to change this*

• *Feminism has not produced far-reaching happiness – it has gone too far*

• *The Bible is clear – correct injustice and provide opportunity for self-fulfilment*

• *Where gentleness of spirit – is followed it generally leads to peace and harmony*

#### 5. Peter appeals to the example of Sarah

• *Cultural and possibly humorous aspects can be left aside*

• *Yet the underlying principle still stands*

• *The one exception – the*

Real womanly attractiveness, says Peter, shines from within. An unsaved husband is likely to be won, not by hairdos, jewelry or clothes, so much as quietness of spirit shining through in words and deeds.

4. **Peter appeals to tradition**<sup>□1</sup>. Not all tradition is bad. There is a tradition among the people of God – a tradition of wifely compliance with a husband's leadership. *'So once the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves and were submissive to their husbands (3:5), as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him "lord"! And you are now her children if you do what is right and let nothing terrify you'*<sup>□2</sup>.

Throughout world history, women have undoubtedly been treated badly. Even today there are places where young widows are burned to death, or where the population of women is lower than it ought to be because of the number of girl-children who are murdered, or where a woman will be discarded if she produces no sons.

The Christian faith is the only movement that has done much to change this. Generally within Christian circles, women have been well treated, and their dignity has risen. 'Feminism' arose in 'Christian' nations and then spread to other parts of the world. Today 'feminism' has tried to argue that the differences between men and women are a matter of development. (The truth seems to be that the differences are a matter of biology and psychology.) Attempts to open up every area of life to women have helped a little but have not produced far-reaching happiness. Attempts to downgrade the value of marriage have not brought benefit to anyone.

The Bible is clear. Christians should favour attempts to correct injustice and to provide opportunity for self-fulfilment – but modern feminism despite its origins in 'Christian' nations has now obviously gone much too far. The Christian church has a different tradition, revealed by God, followed by Christian women who revere God's word. It is with a gentle spirit that 'the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves and were submissive to their husbands'. Where the tradition is followed it generally leads to peace and harmony. When Christian women are taught to be 'tough' or to throw off 'male dominance' – it seems not to lead to any happiness for anyone.

5. **Peter appeals to the example of Sarah**<sup>□1</sup>. Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him 'lord! Perhaps there is a touch of humour here; Sarah was laughing at the time referred to<sup>□2</sup>. Peter refers to the way in which womanly submission is culturally expressed when Sarah (maybe speaking with humour) said 'Now that I am past the age of childbearing, and "my lord" is an old man, is pleasure to come my way again?'

Although the cultural and possibly humorous aspects of the matter can be left aside (Christian wives do not have to call their husbands 'my lord!') – yet the underlying principle still stands. Even if Sarah was being somewhat humorous in her words, yet what gave rise to the humour was the fact that she recognised Abraham as having authority over her.

Of course there was one occasion when Sarah aggressively took the leadership in Abraham's life. 'Listen now!' she said to her husband and aggressively told Abraham to get a child through Hagar the servant-girl. 'And Abraham took Sarai's advice'<sup>□1</sup>. Most of the time, it seems, Sarah

□1 3:5

□2 3:6

□1 3:6

□2 see Genesis 18:12

□1 Genesis 16:2

*Hagar incident – led to disaster*

• *There should be no fear in wifely submission. It is not timidity and fearfulness*

• *Bold, confident, happy, devoted loyalty*

**6. Peter adds a balancing word to husbands**

• *Men and women are different!*

• *Live with understanding – accepting that the wife has different needs from his own*

• *'The weaker sex'*

• *A spirit of care and protection*

• *If the husband and wife live as they ought to live, they will experience the grace of God in a greater way*

• *Now!*

treated Abraham as the head of the home and even as her 'lord'. The one exception – the Hagar incident – led to disaster. Following Sarah's one piece of feminism led Abraham into one of the biggest mistakes of his life! Instead of correcting her, he took her advice, and Ishmael was born.

However, Peter ignores Sarah's one mistake in this matter and focuses on her general life of womanly submission to Abraham. Christian women are to follow her example and avoid her mistake: '*And you are now her children if you do what is right and let nothing terrify you*'<sup>1</sup>. He adds the phrase 'and let nothing terrify you'. This lets us know that there should be no fear in wifely submission. It is not timidity and fearfulness; it is bold, confident, happy, devoted loyalty. Nothing need make any woman fear – who is boldly and confidently obeying God in this matter

**6. Peter adds a balancing word to husbands.** There is one supreme command for them also. '*Likewise you husbands, live with your wives with understanding, bestowing honour on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered*'<sup>1</sup>. Men and women are different! A husband has to learn how different his wife is from what he expects – and then live 'with understanding', accepting the fact that his wife has different needs from his own. He must remember that she is 'the weaker sex'. What does Peter mean by this phrase? Obviously it does not refer to weakness of spirituality or intelligence – or anything like that. It refers surely to 'weakness' in physical strength (we don't ask women to fight in the army). And it refers to status; all over the world women are **in point of fact** accorded a lesser status. The Christian therefore gives special honour to the one who is 'weaker' in this sense. It forbids harshness in the husbands. It condemns domineering. It encourages a spirit of care and protection.

Husbands and wives are 'heirs together of the grace of life'. An 'heir' is a person lined up for inheritance, a person about to get a gracious reward. The phrase 'grace of life', means something like 'living grace' or 'lively grace'. So it means that if the husband and wife live as they ought to live, they will experience the grace of God in a greater way than ever. It is not simply something in heaven; the reward starts even now! And if the husbands will obey this command, their prayers are more likely to be heard.

1 3:6

1 3:7

 <p>slices.org.uk</p>	<p><b>Dr Michael Eaton</b> is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
<p><i>These specially reformatted chapters "Slices of Bread" produced by Sovereign World Trust are available in three categories as set out below</i></p>		
<p><b>Slices for the Nations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For pastors, libraries and colleges in those parts of the world <b>where resources are scarce and unaffordable</b></li> <li>In the fullness of time the whole series will be made available <b>free of charge</b></li> <li>Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or available to download from the <i>Slices</i> web site</li> </ul>	<p><b>Slices for Sponsors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For those in more prosperous circumstances who <b>can afford to contribute to the development</b> of this material and its distribution with a <b>small monthly donation</b></li> <li>The same material as <b>Slices for the Nations</b></li> <li>Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or by download from the <i>Slices</i> web site</li> </ul>	<p><b>Slices for Everyone / Slice of the Week</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For those who wish to <b>sample</b> the material or dip into it from time to time, a <b>proportion</b> of the PTTB series is available <b>free of charge</b></li> <li><b>Slices for Everyone</b> (as a download) or <b>Slice of the Week</b> (attached to a weekly email)</li> <li>The remainder of the PTTB material is available to Sponsors and those eligible to receive <b>Slices for the Nations</b></li> </ul>
<p>To subscribe please contact: <a href="mailto:slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk">slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk</a> stating which category fits your situation. Further details are at <a href="http://www.slices.org.uk">www.slices.org.uk</a>          Details of the availability of <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> books and how they may be purchased can be found on <a href="http://www.ibtr.org.uk">www.ibtr.org.uk</a></p>		