

“What If My Husband Does Not Lead Well?”

I Peter 3:1 “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;”

Plenty of us wives struggle with the first part of the verse – subjection. But what about those who believe they are ready to follow – if only their husband would lead well!

First of all, what not to do.

This passage on winning over a husband first speaks of the negative, what not to do - “*without the word.*” A wife, in her earnest desire to 'help' her husband be what she believes he ought to be, often uses words – both hers and the Bible's. And yet that same Bible says that if he's not listening, it is time to stop using 'the word.' This leads us to consider the very real possibility that we may be short-circuiting the exact thing we want. Are you, by your words, contributing to the problem?

-Don't nag him about being a leader. How is he leading if he does it to obey your command to lead? “Hey, you! Do what I say, and lead already!” Our passage says “without the word.” If you're loudly preaching a sermon to him on the subject, he'll have a hard time hearing the still small voice of the Holy Spirit.

-Don't treat him or refer to him as another child. If you prove to him that you can't trust him to do such simple things as choose his own food, why would he presume to try to lead the whole household? “Are you sure you need that much salt?”

-Choose your humor wisely, never cutting or tearing down. Humor such as, “You know how men are! What would they do without us women?” is unwise. As Proverbs 14:1 says, “Every wise woman buildeth her house.”

-Don't criticize or second-guess when he does make the attempt. “Well, it would work better if we took this route instead.” The goal isn't so much shaving three minutes off the car trip as it is giving a budding leader grace and space to try and perhaps fail. Although when I began to implement these things in my own heart and life, how many times did I mentally say, 'Yeah, sure, go for it! When we fail spectacularly, at least I can say I did the right thing in submitting!' As it would happen, God turned that thing around in ways I could have never have guessed, way better than my plans. My husband would be ...right! But even if your husband does fail, he's learned valuable lessons in a safe and loving environment, and he'll do better next time. Leaders have to learn somehow! I know I don't want to be one of those who dragged poor Herman around by the nose all our married life, only to wonder when I'm old and frail where's the strong man to take care of me. He's still in my shadow waiting for me to tell him what to do next. Or worse, I could by my continual contentions drive away a strong leader and wonder why I'm suddenly sitting home alone.

Now, what to do:

After our passage tells us to stop talking, we are then told by God what to do - “by the *conversation* of the wives.” And that word 'conversation' simply means your lifestyle, your actions. In the same book, Peter makes this clear when he says, “Having **your conversation** honest among the Gentiles: that, ...they may by **your good works**, which they shall behold, glorify God... .” (I Peter 2:12) In short, stop nagging and start behaving. Become the kind of follower God intends for you to be, the kind of follower every good leader wants. (As you do this, you may be surprised at the amount of rebellion still lurking in your own heart.)

-Don't make decisions assuming what his positions and desires are. Instead ask, “What would you prefer to be done here?” This puts him clearly in charge.

-**No subtle 'leading,'** such as “Don't you think it would be best if...?” Avoid hidden agendas, ulterior motives, and subtle manipulation like the plague. Be upfront. If you want to make a suggestion or

share an opinion, do so clearly, and also let him know that whatever he decides will be fine with you.

-Ask him spiritual questions. I Corinthians 14:35a says, "And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home."

-As often as you can, when he does ask your opinion say, "I don't care, whatever you decide is fine." - and mean it. It's good practice, both for you and your developing leader. Where you eat out today won't matter that much ten years from now, but the steady pattern of your submission giving him opportunity to exercise decision-making skills will pay eternal dividends.

-If your husband is not fulfilling one of his God-given roles, leave a blank in the home and let it go undone, rather than fill in for jobs that are his alone. And I don't mean grass-cutting or screw-tightening. In the specific roles God has given the man, leave it to him to do it. Don't be the income-earner, the spiritual head, the decision-maker. If you're already doing it, why should he? Men are born problem-solvers. When the need becomes apparent to them, God has put in them the drive to fix it. And the Holy Spirit is much more effective at making the need apparent than a nagging wife is.

-Consider the fact that he might be leading in a different way than what you're used to. Don't presume how he must lead. Are you sure he's not leading, just with a different style? Perhaps your dad was a loud and overtly-strong leader. Perhaps your husband makes occasional soft suggestions that you've railroaded over. He *is* leading, but in a way you weren't used to. Adjust accordingly. God, no doubt, has a perfect reason for creating and nurturing this man with this way of leading.

-Also, pray! God can do wonderful things in the heart of a husband whose submissive wife prays! Trust your husband and God's plan for his life. Ultimately trust God. Doing things His way always yields the best possible results.

So, God has given us an elegantly simple solution to what can seem like an overwhelming problem. And the answer is: Be what *you're* supposed to be, and cast the rest on Him. He does care for you. Take heart, and take action!