



HOW TO:

# Change Your Husband *by Faith*

DR. JAMES MACDONALD



Walk in the Word

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Walk <sup>in</sup> the Word

P.O. Box 5368, Elgin, IL 60121

1.888.581.WORD [www.WalkintheWord.com](http://www.WalkintheWord.com)

*Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.*

*1 Peter 3:1-6*

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# Change Your Husband *by Faith*

**H***usbands need to be changed and their wives know it.*

I don't think anyone can dispute that point. Husbands need to be changed and their wives know it. In fact, most men don't mind admitting that they have room to grow, that we need to change in lots of areas. See if you recognize some of these husbands. Maybe you live with him (or maybe you *are* him.) I wrote down some; I see myself certainly on this list.

## **Preoccupied Pete**

Pete sits reading the paper while his wife says, "Don't you agree? Isn't that right, Pete." "Huh? Sure—I'm right with you on that. Absolutely, I agree."

"You're not even listening, are you? You don't even know what I just said."

"Yeah I know what you just said."

"Well, say it back to me."

"Were you talking to me?"

Pete just has some other things on his mind.

## **Hobby Hank**

Hank is a big kid. He works all week so that he can be consumed all weekend with his toys. Model cars or planes, golf clubs or basketballs. His wife has this secret fantasy of smashing his plane to bits, but she doesn't have the heart to do it because it's everything to him.

## **Firecracker Frank**

Watch out! Frank could go off for any reason. When he does, he makes a very loud bang. Those who live with him don't know what will set him off and they don't know when it'll happen. But it has happened enough that they know it will happen again.

## **Neglectful Nick**

Nick spends a lot of time working and then on sports and with his friends. Then there's that whole category of mystery time where nobody knows exactly what he is doing. All Nick's wife knows is that he's not spending the time with his family.

Any of those sound familiar? On top of that, some men also carry the load of financial problems, substance addiction, pressures at work, and feelings of being under-appreciated. I don't need to say anymore because we as men know it is absolutely true. Husbands need to be changed and their wives know it. And that's the place where the hurt starts—our wives know it. They see it. They know it very well. They could make a list right now.

But ladies, don't miss this: no matter how well-meaning you are, the natural way a woman goes about seeking to change a man is very, very destructive. The

way you go about wanting to create good is, in fact, the very path of destruction to your marriage. What you choose to do at the moment when you are faced with your husband's need to change is absolutely critical to the future of your marital happiness.

So we must look to God's Word for instruction. Right in 1 Peter 3: We see here right away some approaches that we might be tempted to take as wives that don't work. Let me say this first:

### **WORDS DON'T WORK.**

Women have incredible influence in the home. You may say, "My husband is the one who controls the destiny of our home." Not so. Though a wife cannot guarantee that the home will go as it should, she can guarantee that it *won't*. I am reminded of the very graphic picture in Proverbs 14:1, "*Every wise woman builds her house but the foolish woman is pulling it down with her own hands.*"

"Well, what would I do to pull it down with my own hands?" It might be some things you say. First Peter 3:1 says,

*"Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives."*

The *word*, in that phrase, "*even if some do not obey the word,*" is euphemistic for the gospel, the good news about Jesus. This implies that the man who does not obey the Word means literally that he is not persuaded. He is unsaved. The first and most important change that needs to happen is that the husband needs to come to know Christ. He needs to tune into the fact that God is trying to change him. That is the

ultimate thing that a wife desires, above and beyond any other thing, because all other changes follow after that.

Even where the most dramatic change is needed, the wife impacts her husband without a word. Far more than a promise that a husband can be changed by the example of his wife, it is a strong injunctive, ladies. Your silent witness has tremendous power. Certainly this is not saying that a wife shouldn't communicate with her husband. But your impact is best made by your actions, not your words. Words don't work.

Proverbs 9:13 says, "*A foolish woman is clamorous.*" Clamorous: like pots and pans banging together. A foolish woman makes a lot of noise. But the rest of the verse says "*She is simple and knows nothing.*"

She doesn't know how to change her husband. She doesn't realize that her words are the very thing that hinders what she really desires. Need more Scripture on that?

Proverbs 21:9 says, "*Better to dwell in the corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.*"

If a woman is contentious, what usually is the subject on the table? #1 answer: the stuff their husbands need to change—what he needs to be; what he should work on; what our life could be if he would only . . . It is better to move into the attic, men. It gets worse. Ten verses later in Proverbs 21:19, "*It is better to dwell in the wilderness . . .*" So if you can still hear her in the attic, Proverbs 25:24 repeats, "*It is better to dwell in the corner of a housetop than in a*

*house shared with a contentious woman.*" Proverbs 27:15 says, "A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike." Proverbs 30:21 says, "For three things the earth is perturbed" or to paraphrase, "Three things really tick this world off." Then there is the list—one, two, and the third thing is "A hateful woman when she is married."

Words don't work. There is something in a woman's sinfulness that provokes her to nag just like there is something in a man's sinfulness that provokes him to neglect. This is not a chicken-and-the-egg thing or the I-don't-know-which-one-came-first. All I know is they are both deeply rooted in the curse from the Garden of Eden itself. Men tend to neglect. Women tend to seek to control with words. It destroys the very thing they are trying to establish.

I am amazed at Proverbs 12:4. "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who causes shame is like rottenness in his bones." As sensitively and as lovingly as I can tell you ladies, there is nothing that will destroy the fabric of your marriage faster than shaming your husband. Nothing is so destructive to your marriage as the things you say that pull him down and cause him to see that you don't respect him and you don't think highly of his strengths and instead that you are focused on his weaknesses. You tear him apart when you shame him. You may love your husband but your fleshly attempts to change him are shaming him and it is like rottenness in his bones.

"But I try to communicate with him, I try to understand him, but he doesn't talk to me." So the wife confronts him with, "You never pay any attention to me." And he thinks to himself, 'Never?' And she's back with,

“You always ignore me!” And he thinks, ‘*Always?*’ So she fires this great idea, “Well, Pastor Rick and Lynn have a date night every week. Why can’t we go on some dates?” And he thinks to himself, ‘You should have married Pastor Rick.’

“Is that what you think of me? You want me to be married to someone else?” The poor wife is trying so hard to tell him that all she wants is just more time with him. And he thinks and says, “this is how you show it? This makes me want to be with you *less* and not more.”

So as lovingly as I know how, let me tell you that words don’t work.

## Beauty Won't Last

***“Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart with incorruptible beauty.” v.3***

If you want to influence your husband, beauty is not the lasting solution. The word *adorning* is the Greek word *cosmos* from where we get our word cosmetics. Some translations insert the word “merely.” In other words, don't let the thing that makes you beautiful be external. Don't let your crowning feature, your outstanding beauty mark, be something that can be seen on the outside. Don't make that your major thing.

Scripture then gives examples:

Arranging the hair (i.e., perms, color changes, curling irons and the latest cut.)

Don't let it be wearing gold or jewels or bracelets or rings or broaches.

Don't let it be putting on fine apparel.

Ladies, don't let these be the thing that makes you beautiful. None of them are wrong but they are not the enduring way to your husband's heart.

Neither are you helping your marriage by neglecting yourself. Dowdy is never in and it's certainly not godly. Look your best but don't let your external

beauty be your focus. Be careful when people who speak of you compliment only your external beauty.

This is so important because as verse 4 implies, external beauty is corruptible. If you are counting on beauty to influence your husband, ladies, sometime down the calendar that influence will fade. You will no longer be able to impact him in any significant way by your external beauty. If you have not built something else, your influence is gone.

I've stood at the front of churches and I have had the privilege to marry a lot of couples. When I see the couple has a really hot thing going on, their physical attractiveness is at level 10, I think she better have something else to add to her beauty. How I praise God that I can look into my wife's eyes and say, "You are more beautiful today than the day I met you. You really are." Ladies, put your focus on inner beauty because he needs to be influenced. He needs to be changed but your words don't work and your beauty won't last.

## The Good News

So at this point you're probably ready for the good news. Hear this: *Changed women* help God change husbands. You can see it here right in His Word. What we have here in 1 Peter 3:1-6 is four descriptions of the changed woman and how she is a powerful instrument for change in her husband's life.

### **THE CHANGED WOMAN IS SUBMISSIVE TO HER HUSBAND.**

*"Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husband."*  
1 Peter 3:1

The Greek word for submissive, *hupotassō*, means to be subject or subordinate, to literally place under. I'll spare you a lot of the details—what it really means is that it is the wife's personal choice. Submission can never be forced. Submission is her choice to willingly place herself under the authority of her own husband.

The best illustration of this comes from traffic. When you see the "merge" sign, you know that someone has to go first and someone has to go behind. Too often the I'm-going-to-go-first battle causes frustration. Everyone knows that sooner or later there is only going to be place for one, so someone has to be in front and someone has to be behind.

This idea of submission is simply that someone has to lead. God Almighty Himself is the leader of the universe. Elders are the leaders of the church. Husbands are the leaders of the home. That clear biblical teaching has been understood and accepted in the church for two thousand years until recently. Let me only say that co-headship is a collision. Two heads is a monster. Don't go to either extreme. Submission has *nothing* to do with equality. The Son is not pouting around heaven going, "Why can't I be the Father?" The Son is in submission to the Father, and the Spirit to the Father and the Son. Yet Scripture teaches they are equal. Headship has nothing to do with equality. Men and women are equal under God in every way.

Submission also has *nothing* to do with worth. I love Proverbs 31:10, "*Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies.*" It's not about gifts. In certain areas, my wife has gifts that far exceed mine. It's about God's design for the order in the home.

Changed women help God change husbands by being submissive to her own husband.

### **THE CHANGED WOMAN IS CHASTE IN HER CONDUCT.**

Your husband is going to be "*impacted when he observes your chaste conduct accompanied by fear*" v.2. The word *conduct* means behavior or actions.

This describes what you do in the kitchen, the car, the backyard, and in the bedroom—every activity in every place. *Chaste* means holy, righteous, or pure.

Chaste means having godly responses to conflict, being pure in your dress, your language, your choices of entertainment and being righteous in decisions.

Chaste does not mean self-righteous or judgmental;

not uppity or prudish. Just pure. The pure woman is a powerful tool for change in the life of her husband.

### **THE CHANGED WOMAN HAS A GENTLE AND QUIET SPIRIT.**

Her attitude is gentle—that is, she’s considerate, unassuming, not pushy or demanding, not unnecessarily rigorous. The opposite of gentle spirit would be combative. She’s not loud-mouthed, not known for speaking her mind. She’s not overpowering or blunt in her words or actions. She is soft-spoken and calm. Calmly, she bears the disturbances created by others and does not herself cause or contribute to disturbances. We all know from experience and from observation, that there is a woman who stirs the pot and there is a woman who stills the storm. The godly wife is pure and has a quiet, calming spirit.

“Well, God didn’t make me like that.” Then like your husband, you need to be changed. God is not trying to give you a different personality. He loves the one that He gave you, but He wants godliness to be expressed through it.

## Inner Beauty

The four characteristics that God gave us in 1 Peter 3 can be a powerful tool in God's hand to change your husband. A summary term for the godliness of a wife's changed life is inner beauty.

### **INNER BEAUTY IS PERSUASIVE.**

1 Peter 3:1 actually says that the husband can be won—or more specifically, *won over*. Matthew 18 teaches that if two people are at odds with one another, they are supposed to tell the other of the fault between you and him. If he hears you, you've gained your brother. That's the same word, *gained*, used here in 1 Peter where it is translated, **“you can win your husband.”** You can be reconciled to a deeper intimacy with your husband. He can be persuaded. He can see that you have something going with God that he doesn't have. He can be drawn to have it by what he sees in you.

Inner beauty communicates that message better than any finger-waving warning or hands-on-hips harangue. It really communicates. However, this is not a guarantee. Some of the most godly women that I know have lived thirty years with an unsaved husband or a man that needs substantive change. I've also known some pretty average Christian women who have seen God do some incredible things in their husbands through their example. There can be no guarantee because every person chooses their own course in life.

Here is the point, ladies. God is trying to change your husband. You are either helping Him or you're hindering Him. You are either on God's program or you're in the way. Which is it?

### **INNER BEAUTY IS PERMANENT.**

Peter is making a contrast here that while outward beauty is fading, inward beauty can be flourishing. Don't you love that, ladies? If I was a lady, I would love that. What 'the hidden person of the heart' means is that there is a part of you that people see and there is that part that no one can see. Is your hidden person beautiful? Is she pretty? If she is, then she is a powerful tool in God's hands to change her husband.

You can't buy this kind of beauty. You can't get together with a bunch of ladies and have an inner beauty party. You can't get it surgically. It doesn't hide imperfections, it removes them. Every brick you allow God to build in your character will last forever as a powerful impact upon your life first and then upon your husband's.

Proverbs 11:22 says, *"As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a lovely woman who lacks discretion."* What an insane picture. Somebody came up with the crazy idea to dress the pig up. "Let's make the pig look better. Let's give it a nose ring." And they didn't just give the pig any nose ring. They spared no expense and gave it a *gold* nose ring. What is the point?

It's this: the pig was still a pig, ugly as ever, nose ring or not. The expensive accessory didn't help. In the same way, a woman can be blessed with incredible, physical beauty but if she doesn't have that inner

beauty, it is wasted. You will never hear your son say, "Wow, Mom, you are so beautiful. I just want to obey you." It doesn't impact your kids. It doesn't impact your husband in the long-term. Inner beauty is permanent.

Proverbs 31:30 says, "*Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain.*" Charm, or personality, promises more than it delivers. "*But the woman who fears the Lord shall be praised.*" Inner beauty is persuasive and permanent.

### **INNER BEAUTY IS PRECIOUS.**

*"A gentle and quiet spirit which is very precious in the sight of God . . ." v.4.*

What we see in this verse is that a gentle and quiet spirit is possible to attain. The idea here is that God looks down from heaven and sees the women who have a gentle, quiet spirit and He smiles. He says, "They are so precious to Me!"

Think about that for a minute. He doesn't *have* everything; He *made* everything. So it is kind of hard to get something for God that He really values. *Precious* means "very valuable to God." So if God were going to open His little bragging album and bring out some pictures, who would be in there? It would be these ladies with a gentle and quiet spirit. He says, "See her? She's one of Mine! I know her husband and I know what he needs to work on. But she is focused on pleasing Me and being the woman that I want her to be! She is so precious to Me!" Isn't that great? Inner beauty is precious.

## **INNER BEAUTY IS PROVEN.**

"Well if I buy into this inner beauty program, will it work? Will it really change my husband? Will it really have an impact?" This isn't something you have to wonder about. Peter says in verse 5, *"For in this manner in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands."*

Sarah didn't have it easy. Abraham was no prize. Here is the guy who shows up and says, "C'mon. Get packed. We're moving."

"Where are we going?"

"I don't know."

"Okay, well when we get to the edge of town, are we going to turn left or right?"

"Get packed!"

Read through Genesis yourself and see what this lady went through. And to make matters worse, this is the guy who slid under the covers every night and said, "Honey, we're going to have as many kids as the stars of the sky." That's not exactly a sensitive comment to a woman struggling with infertility. Now Sarah made some mistakes; you can read all about them, but be encouraged, ladies. She did not have it all together, but she was mentioned in 1 Peter 3:6 as an example of a woman who influenced her husband and was an instrument in God's hand.

A woman wrote the following letter to Clyde Narramore, a well-known Christian counselor.

"One day I was saved and I began to know what God could do for me. Was love something that you

felt? Was it something that happened to you? Or was it an act of the will? I finally faced the fact that I might not be able to feel love, but what I could do was show forth love. From that moment on, I began to behave as if I did feel love. 'What would I do for my husband today,' I asked myself, 'if I were really in love with him?' Then I proceeded to do these little kindnesses. I studied his likes and dislikes and bought little treats for his lunchbox. I tried to comfort him when he came home from work tired or harassed by a heavy schedule. I met him at the door with a smile. I respected his discipline of the children and worked with him. I tried to speak softly and diplomatically when we had differences. I listened to him. Soon I noticed a marked change in him. He was behaving as though he were living with a woman who loved him. I began to notice a change in my own feelings. He was not at all like I had concluded. He had real depth and I was beginning to fall in love with him. Is this why God admonishes us to show forth love? He has not said to show forth love if you feel love, has He? At the time it seemed to me that Christians did all the giving and none of the getting. But when God told my heart to show forth love, it was really I who was blessed in the end."

Men, you can turn the booklet around now and read your part. In closing, I want to write only to your wives.

Honestly ladies, I know that some long to see changes in your husbands. I know that many of you have been hurt. To stand up here and hear a message that says, "Get your part right" can be like verse 6, "*it can bring fear and terror.*" "What if he doesn't come through? What if I do and he doesn't?" That is why this booklet is called, "How to Change Your Husband by Faith."

Will you do the thing that God has asked you to do and trust God to do the part that only He can do? Lovingly, I exhort you to do your part and trust God.