

# Identifying with The Sarah Heart Club

1 Peter 3:6, *Are you Passionate about Identifying with Godly Women?*

A Sermon by Chris Mueller

Have you ever been a part of a club or group that you loved? One group I enjoyed was the unofficial Nacho Boys in college. We formed a club that centered around playing Frisbee, eating the newly developed Frito-Lay Nacho cheese chips and drinking Dr. Pepper. One of the highlights, of course, was getting dusted--which meant that we would finish the bag of Nachos by pouring the remaining chip parts and MSG dust into our mouths directly from the bag. We even made our own T-shirts that had a flying Frisbee and a Dr. Pepper bottle on them. Of course at Biola, our club conversations centered around girls, theology and the Bible--in that order. But we had a blast together, occasionally pulling a prank, never getting caught, but also loving God and enjoying each other's company. And the coolest part was, everyone knew we belonged to this club, and every guy on campus who loved the Word, theology, and had an interest in girls, wanted to be a part.

All of us identify with certain groups--it is natural. Sometimes it is a school, or a sport, or a talent, or a family, or a neighborhood, a career, a background, or a college you graduated from. As a Christian, you hope stronger than all other identifications is the Church that together loves the Savior and His Word.

There are many who say they belong to a group, but get this--you are only a part of the club when everyone knows it. You don't have to ask, even those not a part know you are part of that particular group, because the group is in you--you talk about it, think about it, give yourself to it, it is part of your identity. There are people who say FBC is their church home, but no one knows it. They pop in now and then, but there is no ministry, no long-term interaction, no permanent relationships, no talk, no heart.

When you are truly a part of a club, everyone knows. You are identified with this group, you are there, you're involved, you talk about it, it's in your heart and everyone knows it. Open your Bible to 1 Peter 3:6 for the final verse for women, and take your outline and follow along, as Peter wants to know if you ladies, young and old, identify with and belong to this group of Godly women from the past.

In verse 5, God described the Godly supermodels of the past, "*For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands.*" Peter now asks if you identify with that group of people. Is this the club everyone knows you belong to? Does everyone know that this group makes your heart beat fast? Is this the group that supersedes all other groups you participate in? Is this group the one you want to excel in more than your sport, more than cheer squad, drill team, getting grades, becoming famous, getting a scholarship, getting married, having babies, or serving in ministry--more than any other identity?

Peter says it this way in verse 6, "*Just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children* [part of Sarah's club] *if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.*" Are you a child of Sarah? Are you in The Sarah Heart Club? Is your life so defined by God's priorities that everyone knows? Is it obvious to all that you want what God wants for women? Does anyone have to guess that you want to be a Godly woman? Is it "in your face" to others that you want to live out verses 1 to 6?

Peter isn't playing around as he wraps up his challenge to you ladies. It's one thing to say, "Yeah, I want to live these verses." But it's quite another to give your heart away to them so they're your passion. So why don't some believing women actually pass Peter's test? Why do a few of FBC females appear not to belong to Sarah's women-only heart-for-God Club? Let me share the top reasons.

1 You've compartmentalized, wrongly thinking that being a Godly woman is what you do at church, or when with your family. But being a Godly woman, according to these verses, is 24/7, in the center of every activity, every relationship, every moment--at home, at school, with friends, at work and with the kids.

2 You've age-graded, wrongly thinking that being a Godly woman is when I get older. But God's Word is not age-graded. Once you are truly His child, you will want what He wants, pursue what He commands, and verses 1 to 6 are what God commands, whether you're 8 or 80.

3 You're not married, wrongly thinking that being a Godly woman is only for a wife, when all women have a role to pursue. Plus, you don't automatically become a Godly wife the day you get married--it starts now as a single, and only happens to those singles who pursue undistracted devotion to Christ.

4 You've deceived yourself into thinking that it is okay to affirm these truths, but not live them--or worse, it is okay to agree with these truths, but not pursue them with all your heart. And that deception may expose your lack of genuine salvation.

Peter now asks, "Ladies, is this your heart 24/7? Do you want what Sarah demonstrated, which is what God designed, which is what all Godly women want?" Do you? So, what is it that all Godly women pursue? Have you been with us? Look at verses 1 and 2, *"In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."*

A Godly woman will be submissive the same way Christ was submissive, and she will submit even to an unsaved, unfair husband primarily through her behavior, particularly through purity and respecting her husband, in order to win him to Christ if he is unsaved, and please Christ if he is saved. She follows her husband's authority.

Look at verses 3 and 4, *"Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God."* Though a Godly woman dresses attractively, she does not make her external clothes her priority, but gives her life to pursuing internal character. She passionately desires that which God values highest of all, a gracious way of dealing with others--gentleness and internal tranquility, even in the midst of strife, a quiet spirit.

Now look at verses 5 and 6, *"For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear."* A Godly woman is one who puts all her hope and reliance upon God Himself--it shows in how she submits, and now verse 6 demonstrates just how much she identifies with other Godly women.

It really isn't rocket science--you can easily tell who wants to be a Godly woman in this room. You can determine who is pursuing becoming a Godly woman more than anything else. You can ascertain who wants to be a part of The Sarah Heart Club. How? Not today, nor this week, but when a lady has forgotten this message, ask her three things--save these questions.

#1 Who are your heroes--from the past and today, who do you esteem more than anyone? Who do you most want to be like?

#2 What do you read? The Bible, books on Godly women, solid Biblical books, or only fictional junk, TV, movies, or gossip rags?

#3 Who are your friends? Who do you want to spend time with when you get the opportunity--other Godly women and solid guys, or mainly others who are not really pursuing Christ? Oh sure, they are nice Christian people, but not pursuing Christ. Just because they go to church, attend student group, say they love Christ does not mean they are pursuing Christ.

The women who are truly Godly will want to have the same heart that Sarah had--they will want to pursue her example, they will want to imitate her lifestyle--are you a Godly woman? Let's find out--when verse 6 says, "just as Sarah obeyed Abraham," it reveals . . .

## **#1 The heart of submission**

Just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, Sarah knew how to put on the right make up--she knew what it took to be attractive to God and to impact her husband. Her first action was a heart of submission, seen in the way she obeyed her husband. The verb "obeyed" tells us that Sarah literally heard her husband's will and followed what she heard--she came under the hearing of her husband. She acted--active voice, she chose to do so, no one forced her since submission through obedience was a quality of her life. She was known for obeying her husband as part of her submissive heart. To obey her husband was to listen to him, then follow what he said. Submission includes obedience. Do you do what your husband says--if not sin, it is what Christ wants.

This tells us that submission here is not passive but active. It is waging war for the soul of another. Make sure you get this. Do you want to impact your husband for Christ? Do you want to live for God's glory? Then submit to your husband, and you will impact Him for Christ, whether he is saved or unsaved. Many wives, when they hear the word submit, think of themselves as being ground under the heel of their husbands. Nothing could be further from the picture that Peter gave to us. But remember, submission is not a tactic--it is a manifestation of a right inward attitude, mentioned in verses 1 to 4. And submission is not a gimmick to win an unsaved husband. It is inner beauty and good deeds that grow out of trust and hope in God that leave fear behind.

Women who have the wrong agenda must first see that to submit demands a change of heart, a different outlook and attitude. For that to happen, a woman must repent of self-will, her rights, the idol of her feelings and lack of obedience to God's Word. Then a woman must grab hold of what God says He has designed for all women in His Word. Then through Spirit-filled dependence, obey God's Word--hear it and follow it, which includes obeying your husband in everything but sin. Again, a genuinely Godly woman is not only going to want God's plan for women, but she will actually go after it. She will join Sarah's Heart Club of Biblical Babes.

Next Peter shares with us what Sarah did which doesn't work in our culture, but the principle does. Verse 6 says, "Just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." The Bible does not demand that you call your husband "lord". But what Sarah is really exposing here is . . .

## **#2 The heart of respect**

Calling him lord--the fact that Sarah called her husband lord reveals volumes about their relationship. It shows that she respected him, was attentive to his needs, cooperated with his wishes, and adapted herself to his desires. Is that you? That's respect. In our culture, no married woman calls her husband master--if she did, she and her husband would be mocked, and Christ and the Gospel would be maligned. Plus I would feel real funny--wouldn't you? Master, Lord!

But you all know that some cultures even in the US have customs that are similar to what Peter is describing here. In the south a son respectfully addresses his father as sir, and his mother as ma'am. He will answer his father's questions with a polite, "Yes, sir" or "No, sir." It is an indicator of respect, showing deference, not slavish abuse. In her time and in her culture, Sarah called her man lord, because it revealed a heart of respect.

Respect can be the most difficult choice a wife has to make. If a husband is unsaved, she is going to see and experience overt anti-Christian actions, God-hating attitudes, blasphemous statements and yet still be asked by God to continually respect her husband--not his actions, but her husband (as her authority and her God-appointed head).

And because of the nature of marriage, which is living with another redeemed sinner in the closest possible way, it will cause a believing wife to see her believing husband in an accurate way--still at times selfish, hurtful, reactionary, not trusting, not loving, not giving, lazy, unmotivated, not protective, proud and wicked. Yet God is still requiring you believing wives to continually respect your husband like Sarah did, actively calling Abraham lord--and not just on his good days but also on his bad days.

Well Chris, you don't know my husband, he has done some things that have caused me to lose all respect for him--they can't be undone. It is now impossible to get those events out of my head. Well, see if this would hurt you . . . because you are such a hottie, an ultimate babe and supermodel of your day, your husband tells you to lie about yourself, and say you are not married to him, so that other powerful men won't kill him, and they will pursue you as available.

That is what Abraham did to Sarah. Read it in Genesis 12:11 to 13, "*It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, 'See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; 12 and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you.'*" I think you would all agree, that is not the way to treat your wife.

Okay, you say, that is pretty bad, but at least he stopped--I mean, I could get over my husband's faults if he would just stop repeating his unloving actions. I could get beyond my hurts if I thought my husband had learned his lesson. If that's you, remember that Abraham did this same horrible thing to Sarah again. Genesis 20:2, "*Abraham said of Sarah his wife, 'She is my sister.'* So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah." Yet the Bible says Sarah

continually called Abraham lord, demonstrating genuine respect for her husband--ongoing respect. (Calling is present tense, which means continually.)

Just like a husband is to unconditionally love his wife, a wife is to unconditionally respect her husband, even if he is a beast--even if he doesn't love you unconditionally. Your job, your command is to continually respect your husband. Ephesians 5:33, "*Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.*" The principle here is respect, and the application for Sarah was calling Abraham lord--what is the application for you?

Let me ask you ladies--are you patterning yourself after Sarah's role model? If you do, it will affect where you place your attention, where you spend your time, what the focus of your prayer life is. It will not be directed more at your children, it will be focused more at your husband. Is your husband at the top of your list, like Abraham was for Sarah? Do you have a heart of respect?

Peter next uses a very unusual phrase in verse 6--do you see it? "*And you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.*" This exposes Peter's point, which is . . .

### **#3 The heart of assurance**

And you have become her children--just as Abraham is spoken of as the father of believers, so believing women are characterized as being the daughters of Sarah. Once you are genuinely saved by faith and implanted into the family of God, you have a spiritual likeness to Sarah, and are described as her spiritual children. That's right, Sarah is the spiritual mother of all Christian women, just as Abraham is the father of all believers.

You know what the Bible says about Abraham in Romans 4:11, "*So that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them.*" And Galatians 3:7, "*Be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.*" And Peter is stating a fact with the phrase, "you have become her children." Christian wives ARE, not shall become, but ARE (as a fact) daughters of Sarah.

Like most of us here today, like Peter's readers were, Gentiles--but they literally had become Sarah's daughters when they turned from their sin and gave their lives to Christ in salvation. When you become a genuine Christian, you don't become perfect, but you do become obedient, and Sarah is the mother of all obedient female believers. Just like Sarah was obedient to Abraham, all truly saved women will be obedient to their husbands, doing all God's Word commands.

And Peter is affirming with a passive voice that salvation must happen to you. God is the one who must make you Sarah's child, since the only way to be Sarah's child is to be God's child by faith in Christ alone. Are you truly God's children--do you have Biblical assurance? And Peter is declaring like mother/like daughter--if you are truly in Sarah's Heart club, if you truly want to become a Godly woman, then you will live a certain way. You will show certain qualities. In fact, two actions must be true of you in order for you to know you are truly saved--these two actions are evidence of genuine regeneration. What are they? Doing what is right, and not giving into fear. Look at the end of verse 6, "*If you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.*"

## **First A passion to move forward with service**

If you do what is right:

What are you doing to win your unsaved husband?

What are you doing to grow in your relationship with your husband?

What are you doing to become more submissive, respectful, pure, quiet and gentle?

What are you doing to serve your husband and others?

Listen ladies, it is not what you used to do, but what you are doing right now, and continue to do in service. Both doing what is right and not giving into fear are present participles, indicating a pattern of life continued over a period of time. Because you have been transformed and given a new nature with the indwelling Holy Spirit, you are now going to be characterized by a life of doing good. Peter here is describing your conduct of life, how you live.

The Greek phrase, “If you do what is right” is literally doing good. Doing good is not the cause of your salvation, since good minus God equals zero. But doing good is the evidence of salvation. Christian women do good, Christian wives do good, and Christian wives do good toward their husbands--they work at doing good for their husbands. So what good are you doing for your husband?

I know you ladies do good for your children. But many of you are consumed with your children to the point that you have stopped doing good toward your husband first. Some men move on to focus on their careers, and many women move on to focus on their children--and God is not pleased with either! There is no place in all of this for a wife to say, “Well, but if you had a husband like mine--or I’d do what God wants and my hope would fly high if only my husband were to . . .” No, she should hope and do good, regardless of what her husband does or doesn’t do. Your responses do not depend on his actions. Most wives who do good will have little to fear--but even if they do, they should not fear, and should continue to do good.

Peter uses the phrase “do what is right” in two other places:

1 Peter 2:14 *“or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.”*

1 Peter 2:20 *“For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.”*

Doing right and doing good are to be seen, shown, displayed as evidence that Christ is alive, Christ is real. They see Jesus through you, and ladies, this must be done toward your husband first. If you do what is right, you are worthy to stand next to Sarah and be identified as a part of her club--the godly heart club, the woman of God club, the transformed by Christ group.

What is the next action that is evidence of true regeneration? Doing what is right and not giving in to fear--verse 6, *"If you do what is right without being frightened by any fear."*

## **Second A passion to not retreat in fear**

Without being frightened by any fear--now Peter moves from a wife's conduct of doing good, to her inner feelings. God actually says that a Godly woman will not persist in a continual, fearful feeling or attitude of fear, or remaining afraid, nor being frightened. A woman with a gentle and quiet spirit, who continues hoping in God, will not be terrified by the circumstances created by an unbelieving husband or a disobedient husband. The Greek word frightened is only used here in the New Testament, and is describing continual terror, ongoing terror that leads to a life of fear. The word describes someone experiencing an ongoing terrifying action, intimidation, or the subjective feeling of fear.

As Godly believers, wives should not allow any event designed to terrify them to get a grip upon them. This could come from the attitudes of a society preparing to persecute Christians, from hostile neighbors who hate Christ, or even from an unbelieving husband who threatens his wife because she has abandoned the worship of the household gods or the worship of the emperor as God. Or worse yet, possibly the husband who is livid because he was forced to leave Rome because of his wife's faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Peter says, "Without being frightened by ANY fear"--meaning not one such occurrence . . . no occasion. No experience is a justifiable cause for nervous terror or fear. Those women who are developing a gentle and quiet spirit do not give into weakness, irresolution or cowardice. A godly woman does not allow the threats of others, or an unbelieving husband to scare her out of her Christian faith. She wears "No Fear" T-shirts, because it demonstrates her heart. Threats do not cause her to become discouraged so that she loses hope in God, or ceases to do the good things God requires of her.

Even when he screams at her, throws things, ignores her in silence, sulks, constantly complains or withholds love, a wife's response to intimidation ought always be increased hope in God, and increased effort to do God's will. Peter is saying that threats should never be used as an excuse to lose faith and hope, or to slacken in one's efforts to please God. A genuine Christian woman will put her hope in God confidently and calmly--she will meet fear and disaster with a quiet and gentle spirit. If an unbelieving husband treats her poorly, she will look to her Savior for love, wisdom and protection. Let's conclude by asking some pointed questions from the text.

### **1 Who are your friends?**

Your friends tell you where your heart really is. Your friends are true indicators of what you really value. Nice Christians don't cut it--mere church attendees are not what Peter is calling for in verse 6. You will be friends with those who are on fire for Christ, when you're on fire for Christ. You will want to spend time with marginal, casual, convenient Christians when you are the same. Your friends, or those you want to be friends with, tell you about your heart. Would you truly want to be a friend of Sarah? You'll know by who you are friends with today.

### **2 What do your children want?**

As your children get older, they will reveal their hearts. You will begin to discover their motivation, their drives, and their wants. And as they get older, the key is not control, but

example and exhortation concerning their heart. Help them see what they really want. Help them understand that their desires reveal who they really are. And if they don't want to pursue Christ and show it with their lifestyle choices, then help them see where they are spiritually. Help them see that they may not know Christ. Do they want what Sarah wanted? If they know Christ, they will want what she pursued. If not, help them see their heart.

### **3 As single men and women, what are you pursuing?**

If you're pursuing a mate, you have missed God's will for your life, and you will make a terrible spouse. The greatest husband or wife is the one who pursues Christ with all their heart--that relationship is what spills all over a marriage partner, giving them unending blessing and showering you with the grace of life. But you don't automatically become a Godly man or woman, so while you are single, your main purpose is described at the end of 1 Corinthians 7:35, "*and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.*" Do not miss your calling as a single. And know you will be the greatest catch to your future spouse if you do.

### **4 As a married woman, are these qualities your passion?**

Ladies, do you acknowledge these qualities, or pursue them? Do you attend church and forget what God's Word has to say, or are you begging the Lord to work these qualities into your life? If you have been with us these last nine weeks, and you are not more like Sarah and the Old Testament supermodels, then something is wrong, and you are not pursuing Christ, but something else--which leads us to . . .

### **5 When Christ is your life, you won't have other idols**

If you are not becoming more like Sarah, more submissive, growing in your hope in God, becoming gentler and quiet in spirit, then Christ is not your life, something else is. But if Christ is your first love, then you will want His Word to work its way into your life--memorizing the Word, reviewing the sermons, praying, being accountable, going after this with all your dependent heart for His glory. Do you know Christ?