

“Love wins” is a fairly well-known two-word assertion. And if anyone can readily agree with it, it’s Christians. After all, God’s love won our hearts, and one-day it will reshape the entire universe. But such wins can’t be reduced to sentiment. It’s not just “be nice and all will be well.” Winning at love is neither easy nor automatic. Even when we’re trying to love the people we love the most! Winning at love cost Christ his life, and it costs a similar surrendering of our wills and wants as well. But the victory is worth it. Hoisting that trophy; saying “his banner over me is love” (Song of Songs 2:4); letting the world know we really are Christ’s disciples (John 13:35) Nobody can ever take that away from us!

Read 1 Peter 3:1-12, then discuss:

1. What kind of a home did you grow up in? In what ways did you see this text lived out?
2. To what degree do you struggle with instructions like, “wives be subject to your own husbands,” or “husbands, honor the woman as the weaker vessel”? Why do you think these things are often so hard to accept?
3. Pull on the prayer “thread” that runs through this passage (especially verses 7 and 12).
 - Have you ever felt your prayers being hindered? How did that feel?
 - Do you think God ever closes his ears to our prayers? Why?
 - How would you explain the interplay between our human relationships and our heavenly one?
4. Think about the call to bless in order to obtain a blessing (v. 9).
 - Isn’t that selfish?
 - Why do you think God chooses to motivate us like this?
5. *For wives and women:* What are one or two ways you can apply 3:1-6 to your life? How might these words lead to a practical shift in your attitude or conduct?
6. *For husbands and men:* What are one or two ways you can apply 3:7 to your life? How might this verse lead to a practical shift in your attitude or conduct?
7. *For everyone:* What are one or two ways you can apply 3:8-12 to your life?
 - How can we together embody the gentle but large-hearted life described here?
 - What’s one shift we can all make?
 - How do we keep this from degenerating into “works-righteousness,” into earning our blessings?