

1 Peter 3

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Introduction:

We are in a section of 1 Peter that teaches submission as part of Christian living.

1). Peter, speaking for the Lord, requires submission to the very government that was persecuting the believers.

2). Servants are to be submissive to their masters. Now to the third group.

(1) In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over (2) by observing your pure and reverent lives.

A. The Role of Wives

- **In the same way** refers back to 2:13 where believers are to submit to the government.
- Submitting to her husband's **authority** does not indicate that women are inferior to men. The genders are different by God's design. God simply tells wives to rank themselves under their husbands.
- In the Garden of Eden event, Eve was more aggressive than Adam and ate the forbidden fruit. One part of her punishment was that Adam would rule over her. That became God's chain of **authority**.
- **James Smith** says it very well:

The woman should select as her mate a man to whom she can and will submit as the spiritual leader of the home. Within the sphere of the home she is to function as wife, mother, hostess, etc.

Just as every team must have a captain, so every home must have a head. The husband is to be the spiritual overseer of the home.

B. The Remarkable Power of a Wife

- Peter has introduced another method to **win** husbands to Christ and that is if they have **wives** who perform ideally. They may be convinced about Christ by their **wife's pure** and respectful behavior. A man may compare the conduct of his believing **wife** with the conduct of unbelieving women and realize she has a way of living that he needs.
- **Bruce Oberst** amplifies this instruction:

Rather than trying to argue, contend, or out-talk one's husband on religious issues, the Apostle would instruct the wives to let their consecrated lives, their humble subjection, their meek and quiet spirit, to be of such a nature that it would stand out in bold relief against his ungodliness and rebellion. Peter knew, this would do ten times as much good as a trainload of sermons from her lips.

C. WHY?

Why is a believer married to non-believer in the first place? Perhaps the **wife** turned to Christ after marriage. Or she may have disregarded the admonition to not be bound with unbelievers. 2 Corinthians 6:14. Though married, she has chosen to go through life spiritually single.

(3) Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. (4) You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.

A. Don't Be Concerned

Peter is not saying a wife should not look nice, but it must not be a time consuming, thought consuming activity for her. How she looks on the **outside** cannot be her main concern.

B. Do Be Concerned

The believing wife has a new standard for appearance because she dresses her heart for God.

Her **beauty** must go beyond how she appears to others. Her heart must be adorned with **a gentle and quiet spirit**. She is not a nagger, not a whiner, not a boss. Being a pretty, well-dressed, nagger is not the same as submission to a husband.

This quality of submission is imperishable; not subject to style change. The sentence is saying that the believer must focus on her internal beauty which is **precious to God**.

This **beauty** does not fade away with the passage of the decades.

(5) This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands. (6) For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.

A. The Believing Ladies' Heritage

Peter uses Old Testament women, notably **Sarah**, as an example of this obedience. She called **Abraham** “master,” a term of respect.

So she laughed silently to herself and said, "How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?" Genesis 18:12

She did not call him “The old man.” That has a ring of disrespect.

Sarah had listened to **Abraham** and what he told her about moving and becoming a great nation. There was no written Scripture for **Sarah** to consider, just what **Abraham** had told her that God was going to do for them. She respected her husband's decisions.

B. How To Follow Sarah's Example

Christian ladies can become daughters of **Sarah** if they will model her submission to her husband instead of being afraid

of something. This teaching strikes terror in the heart of a dedicated feminist.

(7) In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.

A. Husbands Must Honor Their Wives

- Implied is that **husbands** must submit to the Lord in living with their **wives**. A husband must be just as considerate and careful to maintain his God-given relationship to his **wife** as she is in maintaining her rightful relationship with him.
- **Husbands** must be sensitive to her feelings and be considerate of her needs. She is an **equal partner** in this **new life**, not merely a housekeeper, bed partner and servant.
- Treat her as someone **weaker** (not that she is weaker). Treat her that way because she is a woman, the very pinnacle of God's creation. God has never created anything finer. A wife is like very expensive fine china.
- Show her **honor**. She goes to the same heaven you do. Otherwise you will be cut off from the great source of power: answered **prayer**.

(8) Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude.

The local church is the fourth and final group that Peter addresses about submission.

A. Be In Harmony

Be of one mind. Find ways to get along. When two tuning forks are set on a table across from the other, the one is plucked and the other vibrates as well. Paul makes the same point in Philippians 2:2:

Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.

B. Be Sympathetic

Share the sufferings and joys of others. Saying “Oh” is not adequate. Neither is saying “That reminds me of . . .” Enter into the feelings of the other person. **Sympathizing** is defined in this Hebrews passage:

Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies.

Hebrews 13:3

C. Be Brotherly

We are fellow-members of the body of Christ, not debate opponents. This is the second time Peter has made this point:

You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart. 1 Peter 1:22.

D. Be Tenderhearted

We are to be quick to feel concern for the problems of others and showing affection for those who suffer. We don't say, “Just get over it.” King David asks an interesting question about descendants of his deceased hater King Saul:

One day David asked, “Is anyone in Saul's family still alive—anyone to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?” 2 Samuel 9:1

E. Be Humble

Pride is at the root of many church differences even today. The secular world may not prize being **humble**, but it is very

valuable in the life of the Christian and, consequently, the life of the entire church. Humility leads to honor.

Pride ends in humiliation, while humility brings honor. Proverbs 29:23.

(9) Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and He will bless you for it.

A. Skip This Payment

Skipping a money payment may be a relief, but not when we are responding to evil done to us. The skip list includes **evil** done to us and **insults**.

B. Make This Payment

When we are treated evilly, pay with a **blessing**. Here is an amazing illustration of repaying evil with good from the story of the arrest of Jesus in the garden:

And one of them struck at the high priest's slave, slashing off his right ear. But Jesus said, "No more of this." And He touched the man's ear and healed him.

Luke 22:50-51

The result of these payments is that God will **bless** us. There will be extraordinary solutions to our problems of life. We won't think that "the stars are against us," we will know that the Lord is for us.

(10) For the Scriptures say, "If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. (11) Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it.

- Not retaliating is not normal, so Peter documents this from King David in the Psalms in addition to his own authority as an apostle. The Psalm reads:

Does anyone want to live a life that is long and prosperous? Then keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies! Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. Psalm 34:12-14

One who expects a reward from the Lord must watch his (or her) mouth. Avoid deceiving and instead actively seek peace. One who is bitter-tongued will have a miserable life. The Psalmist also said to go beyond turning away from evil. Rather seek **peace** and pursue it.

Anyone skilled at sharp-tongued sarcasm should stop using it. Let the skill wither from non-use.

(12) The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and His ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns His face against those who do evil."

A. Having Prayers Answered

- Peter is continuing to quote from Psalm 34 in this verse showing that this is not something new.
- **The Lord** is pleased with the righteous and unhappy with **those who do evil**. Peter is quoting this in a context of handling problems with our fellowman.
- **Doing right** at this point is connected with God answering the believer's **prayer**, just like treating a wife **right** back in verse 7.

B. Having Prayers Rejected

- The figure of speech that pictures the **Lord turning His face** away from people is from the Psalms. The Jewish portion of the churches would know this from their childhood training:

But the LORD turns His face against those who do evil; He will erase their memory from the earth.

Psalm 34:16

- The Lord doesn't listen to the prayers of those who **do evil**. In this context, **evil** includes those who don't filter their words.

(13) Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? (14) But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats.

- Peter is not saying that **no one will harm** the believers, but that oppressors amount to nothing. Compare Romans 8:31:

What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?

- It is not normal that believers would be harmed for doing **good**, but even if that happens, remember it happened to Jesus. Don't let it bother you. After all, the worst men can do is to send a believer to his reward early. That is a win-win outcome.

(15) Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. (16) But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.

A. Respond By Worshiping

Set **Christ as Lord** in our **lives**, not the fear of men.

B. Respond With Ready Answers

Always being ready stresses the need to express our hope in God on the fly. Prepare ahead of time. Listen. Learn.

- Timely. Avoid saying, "I just can't explain it. Come to church and listen." Instead, work out answers for immediate distribution!
- **Gentle**. Avoid saying "Any dummy should be able to see the truth." Never make the inquirer look bad.

- **Respectful.** Avoid saying, “You aren't looking for the truth about Christ or you would have seen it earlier.” For some people, the spirit in which a statement is made carries more weight than its content.

C. **Your Response Will Shame Critics**

But respond with **gentleness** and **respect**, not arrogance and efforts to show the other person how wrong he is. For some people the spirit in which a statement is made carries more weight than its content.

If we are slandered, be able to think over what is said and know that the accusers are not right.

(17) Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong! (18) Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but He died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but He was raised to life in the Spirit.

A. **Remember A Truth**

- It is **better to suffer for doing good** if **God** wills it, than **for doing wrong**. God may see that it is necessary that His people suffer. There are lessons to be learned that can be learned in no other way. Some of the brightest character traits can only be developed through suffering.

B. **Remember Our Example**

- The supreme example of unjust treatment is **Christ**. He had to suffer unjustly to pay for our sins.
- **This was once for all time.** It is not to be repeated, even symbolically. Jewish readers could remember when the sacrifices were repeated, such as in the yearly Passover lamb.
- Jesus had no sin, but died for ours. This is our route back to God.

For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because

our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God. Romans 5:10-11

- Jesus **suffered physical death**.
- He was **raised to life** by the **Spirit** of God.

The Good News is about His Son. In His earthly life He was born into King David's family line, and He was shown to be the Son of God when He was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 1:3-4

(19) So He went and preached to the spirits in prison – (20) those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in that terrible flood.

A. The Imprisoned Spirits

- Jesus preached **to the spirits** of those who rejected the preaching of Noah. He was proclaiming His triumph over death. This was before His physical resurrection that came three days after His physical death.

B. Noah Is Endorsed

- Peter endorses the story of Noah's Ark. **Noah** preached for 120 years and built the ark to accommodate many people, but the space was not used as envisioned. Only **Noah**, his wife, their sons and their wives were saved. **Noah** and his family were a definite minority, just like the Christians in Asia Minor were a minority. This truth must have been encouraging to believers.

(21) And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

A. Baptism Is Pictured

- Being saved through the **water** forms a picture for Peter. He compares it to **baptism** that **saves** believers now. Not getting the **body** clean, but as a response to God

from a **clean conscience** based on the **resurrection of Jesus. Baptism** is part of the salvation process. Noah was saved from drowning in real water and baptism is in real water.

- It is not optional. The historical picture of being saved through the flood points to the present reality of being **saved by baptism**.
- **Baptism** is by immersion. **Removing dirt from your body** cannot describe the result of pouring or sprinkling water on the head of the candidate.
- Our **conscience** is **cleaned** at **baptism** because it is for the removal of sin. This is **because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ**. Now we have the right to address God. Addressing God is not something that fits with infant baptism. It is the action of a more mature person.



B. Need For Baptism Denied By Many

- Most of the Christian world denies this sentence in God's Word, based on the preconceived notion that we are saved by a narrowly defined faith without anything else. Faith in Christ is required, but there is more. Repentance is required, but there is more. **Baptism** is required, not **baptism** alone, but in conjunction with faith and repentance.
- These requirements were laid down by Peter himself on the Day of Pentecost in Acts, chapter 2. This was after Jesus died on the cross and after the incident with the Thief on the Cross.

(22) Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept His authority.

A. Christ Is Honored In Heaven

The resurrection of **Christ** as seen in baptism has led to His honor. Jesus is now at **God's** right hand. What higher **honor** could be accorded anyone in the entire universe?

B. Christ Now Has Authority in Heaven

Jesus claimed all authority following His resurrection.

Jesus came and told His disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth." Matthew 28:18

He returned to heaven forty days after the resurrection, fulfilling Psalm 110:1:

The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit in the place of honor at My right hand until I humble Your enemies, making them a footstool under Your feet."

This restoration of Christ to **authority** can be seen:

... all the angels and authorities and powers accept His authority.