

1 Peter 3

“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; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.”

I. Context - “Likewise”

A. Chapter 2

1. These believers were encouraged that by doing good in all areas of their life they could “*put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*” - 1 Pe. 2:15
2. Servants urged to obey their masters, even the cantankerous ones
 - a) “*But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God*” 1 Peter 2:20
 - b) Acceptable - *charis* - Grace; From God’s perspective this is what grace is all about
3. Instead of retaliating for the unfair suffering being inflicted upon him by men, Christ trusted in the Father’s will and righteous judgment

B. This section on marriage is not divorced from the larger context

II. Marriage

A. God’s plan - It was “*very good*”!

1. “*And the LORD God said, [It is] not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. ... And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This [is] now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*” - Gen. 2:18, 22-24
2. “*And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, [it was] very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*” - Gen. 1:31

B. The Fall - Sin created a problem

1. “*Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed [is] the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat [of] it all the days of thy life;*” - Gen. 3:16-17
 - a) Consequences of the Curse:
 - (1) Man would have the rule over the wife
 - (2) The wife’s desire would be contrary to the husband’s role
2. “*But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.*” - 1 Cor. 7:28

C. Carnality results in strained marital relationships

1. Events and circumstances can lead to believers being distracted from living the Christian life in their marriage
2. Carnality will result in believers resisting their God given roles in marriage - Ro. 8:5-6
3. The only way believers can find the type of satisfaction in marriage that God intended for husbands and wives is in they allow themselves to be filled by the Spirit - Eph. 5:18, 22, 25
4. The persecution and the personal upheaval experienced by the letter’s audience had resulted in marital discord - Peter instructed the wives and the husbands how they ought to relate to one another when the other spouse was not living as they should

III. Be in subjection - *hypotasso*

- A. “This word was a Greek military term meaning “to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader’. In non-military use, it was ‘a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden.” - Outline of Biblical Usage
- B. Considering how God has established roles in marriage, it is fitting that Peter used a military term which describes the arrangement of troops under a leader
- C. Important distinction: Role does not equal worth - Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11

IV. To your own husbands - this responsibility to submit does not extend to other men besides the husband

V. If any obey not the word -

- A. First class condition - since - Peter assuming this was true in some cases
- B. Obey - *apeitheo* - “to refuse to be persuaded, disobedient” - Vine’s; includes idea of “positive antagonism” - Cambridge Bible
- C. These husbands (both saved and unsaved) were being unpersuaded by the Word (both initial salvation and Christian living)

VI. The also may be won without the word by the conversation of their wives

- A. Won - *kerdaino* - “to gain something; to win someone” - Vine’s
- B. Peter states that the wives have the potential to “win over” their husbands without speaking a word - How? - their routine manner of life - Really!?!
 - 1. Powerful impact of the life of a spiritual believer
 - 2. Recurring theme in Peter
 - a) 1 Pe. 2:9 - the believer can shew forth the praises of him
 - b) 1 Pe. 2:12 - when Gentiles speak evil of you they may behold your good works
 - c) 1 Pe. 2:15 - by doing well believers have the ability to put to silence ignorant false narratives
 - d) 1 Pe. 2:22 - when Christ was reviled, he reviled not; when Christ was abused, he threatened not

VII. While they behold - “witnessing as a spectator” - Vine’s

- A. The husbands have a front row seat at the 50 yard line to see the reality of the Christian life in action

VIII. Chaste conversation - *hagnos* - a lifestyle that is set apart from those things that are lacking in character

IX. With fear - this is not slavish fear but reverential awe

- A. “*Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord*” - Eph. 5:22
 - 1. Submit yourselves - Middle voice - meaning, “do this for your own good, benefit”
 - 2. Wives are to recognize that God has established their marital roles, not because they are somehow inferior in worth, but because its for their greatest good
- B. “...and the wife see that she reverence her husband” - Eph. 5:33

“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of the plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

- X. Whose adorning - *kosmos* - how the wife arranges herself (“puts herself together”)
 - A. Peter is not prohibiting women from getting all “dolled up”
 - B. Corruptible - something that can decay; will not last
 - C. Peter IS stating that arranging oneself with the intention of drawing other’s attention to a temporary outward beauty versus an inner beauty is to be avoided
- XI. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit
 - A. The wife’s focus ought to be that her inner beauty should be what draws attention to herself and not name brand clothing or jewelry
 - B. Meek - “gentleness of spirit; Gentleness or meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest. It stems from trust in God’s goodness and control over the situation. The gentle person is not occupied with self at all. This is a work of the Holy Spirit...” - Outline of Biblical Usage
 - C. Quiet - “‘tranquility arising from within,’ causing no disturbance to others” - Vine’s
 - D. The world system places a great deal of value on that which is temporal - beauty, style, wealth, popularity, career - it is easy for a woman to seek her worth in these things
 - E. Peter states that God values the inner attitudes and life of the woman instead

“For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.”

XII. Sara’s example

- A. Sara lived prior to the law of Moses - her submission to Abraham was not based on a commandment but she was one, *“who trusted in God”*
 - 1. Abraham’s failures - Gen. 12:10-13; Gen. 20:1-5 -
 - 2. Sara - what happened the one time we have recorded that she did demand Abraham to do something? - Gen. 16:1—6
 - 3. Was Abraham the perfect example of a husband? No! - If the wife focuses on the husband’s worthiness it is easy to justify not submitting to God’s plan but if the wife focuses on the goodness and faithfulness of the One who established this plan then submission can be a step of faith

XIII. Not afraid with any amazement - “do not fear anything that is frightening”

- A. Is it possible that when a husband is “unpersuaded by the word” he could be making choices that are frightening to the wife?
- B. What temptation exists for a wife when she foresees “frightening” events brought about by husband’s carnality?
- C. The wife can be free from fearing events and circumstances that are “frightening” by trusting in the person and faithfulness of God

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

XIV. Likewise, ye husbands

- A. In the same exact manner that wives were to follow the example of Christ in response to their “*disobedient*” husbands, Peter called on the husbands to respond in like manner
 - 1. Their response is somewhat different considering their God-given role in marriage and the sin nature’s tendencies within males
 - 2. Due to the sin nature (post-Fall), men have a temptation to shirk the God-given responsibility of leadership and sacrificial love for their brides
- B. God has called believing husbands to lovingly lead their wives in the same manner that Christ lovingly leads and heads up the Church - Eph. 5:24-25
 - 1. This is an impossible task for our flesh - Jo. 15
 - 2. It is only possible to love in this manner if one is allowing himself to be filled by the Spirit - Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:22-23

XV. Dwell with them according to knowledge

- A. Dwell - the use of the prefix *syn-* indicates an intimate dwelling together
 - 1. This is not living life “like two ships passing in the night” - rather it is God’s desire that husband and wife have an intellectual, emotional, and physical closeness
 - a) The temptation for men when their wives are carnal is to detach, to seek refuge in a literal “man cave” or a figurative “fortress of solitude”
 - b) Husbands instructed to not be bitter toward their wives - Col. 3:19
 - 2. Peter states that the believing husband’s response to their wife, regardless of her behavior, is to dwell intimately together with her according to an experiential knowledge

XVI. Giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel

- A. There can be a male tendency to look down upon those things that are considered weak - certainly our world doesn’t value the weak things
 - 1. Peter says to esteem the wife even with honor and esteem even though they have been created with certain weaknesses - think Ming vase
 - 2. These weaknesses do not diminish a woman’s worth or value

XVII. As being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered

- A. In a Greco-Roman society in which women had few if any personal and economic rights, Peter stated that the believing wife is an equal heir with her husband of the “grace of life”
 - 1. Husbands and wives are co-recipients of all the provisions of grace and are therefore both equally capable of living the Christian life and have equal standing before the Father in Christ - “We’re in this together!” - Gal. 3:26-28
 - 2. The husbands needed to be reminded that their role of headship within the marriage did not mean that they were superior in God’s eyes - all are heirs! - Acts 20:32; Eph. 1:11-14
- B. A husband’s communication with God could be hindered by an inappropriate attitude toward his wife

“Finally be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing:”

XVIII. Finally be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous

- A. Peter moves from specific instructions to these believers about their relationship to government, employers, and spouses to their relationships to other believers in general
 - 1. One mind - have the same perspective on things
 - 2. Having compassion - feel the same thing towards each other; empathy
 - 3. Love as brethren - “brotherly fondness”; like being with someone
 - 4. Be pitiful - “Good love”; a combination of pity and affection
 - 5. Be courteous - “humble mindedness”; not more important than other believers - “I’m not that big of a deal”
- B. All of this is based upon what Peter stated as being true in chapter 2
 - 1. Lively stones being built up together
 - 2. Chosen generation
 - 3. Royal priesthood
 - 4. Peculiar people

XIX. Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing

- A. Not rendering evil for evil...
 - 1. Peter recognized that these believers were struggling with the Christian life in the midst of dealing with difficult circumstances related to their persecution
 - 2. When believers are distracted from “the grace of life” by their spiritual enemies the result is inevitably carnality
- B. Peter warns them not to reply in kind when verbally assaulted by other believers
 - 1. Why? There can be a tendency for self-justified revenge when verbally attacked - become just as carnal as the original offender and sometimes even worse
 - 2. Consider the context of how Christ responded to his tormentors

“...but contrawise blessing: knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.”

XX. Contrariwise blessing - on the contrary find something good to say in response

- A. Knowing that ye are thereunto called - believers have been summoned to a this kind of life, a life of extending God’s grace to others (especially when it’s so undeserving)
- B. Blessing - there is a blessing associated with responding with this kind of attitude - an intimate knowledge of who God is

XXI. For he that will love life - the one desiring to love life

- A. If you want to thoroughly appreciate life, guard your responses to even the most offensive and inappropriate remarks
- B. Turn away from behavior this is not what it ought to be - lacking Grace
- C. Run in hot pursuit of peace with other believers

“For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ear are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;”

XXII. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous

- A. His providential care is directed at those He has declared to be righteous
- B. This statement limits God’s care to His children - not the world! (They’re not His kids)

XXIII. But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil - Punitive - “God resisteth the proud”

XXIV. And who is he that will harm you....

- A. Peter has demonstrated through his writings that he is a “Big God’er”
- B. Because God’s eyes are upon you and His ears are open to your requests, you are not alone in this

XXV. But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake...

- A. But and if - 4th class condition - undetermined with less likelihood
- B. “But even if...” - not guaranteed to happen but it might
- C. Suffering for practicing what is in line with God’s character results in happiness - Acts 5:27-42

XXVI. Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled

- A. “The terror which they, your enemies and persecutors, cause”
- B. Don’t allow their attempts to strike fear in your heart and rob you of your joy in Christ
- C. INSTEAD...

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, that they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:”

XXVII. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts

- A. Sanctify - set apart
- B. Set apart Christ in your heart (mind, soul, will) - Committed to Him and His purposes for your life
 - 1. Remember the life that God has summoned you to - responding to evil with goodness (Grace)
 - 2. Takes an awareness of the spiritual realities as the situation unfolds

XXVIII. Be ready always to give an answer to every man

- A. Throughout Peter’s writing he has advocated holding one’s tongue and instead allowing the spiritual life to do one’s talking - see previous statement
- B. Once again Peter instructs these believers to be on the lookout for opportunities that their grace-filled life will present them
 - 1. Certain individuals will be so moved by the obvious difference in the believer’s lives that they will question them as to where their confidence comes from
 - 2. These are the Divine-appointments that God has provided them to share defense of their faith in Christ

- C. The defense should be meek and not defiant - “put them in their place!”
 1. Meek - above the fray; don’t get brought down to their level
 2. Fear - “the spirit of reverential awe towards God was the best safeguard”

XXIX. Whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers - false narrative of the world

XXX. They may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ - Genuine Christ-like manner of living will debunk false narratives about believers

- A. Believers are not called to defend themselves with convincing verbal arguments
- B. Rather believers are called to live a life that is consistent with what they know about the grace of God

XXXI. For it is better, if the will of God be so...

- A. Why? - Because it is better
- B. If the will of God be so - 1st class condition - Since
- C. It is God’s desirous will that any suffering we experience should be because we have done that which is inherently beneficial rather than doing that which is lacking in character

XXXII. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins...

- A. Why? - Because our Savior unfairly suffered on behalf of sinners There was a point to Christ’s suffering - the Father’s will was accomplished - His Grace demonstrated
 1. Bring us to God
 2. Our suffering, with the proper attitude, has the potential to draw some to God

“By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him.”

XXXIII. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison

- A. By the Spirit Christ preached unto the spirits under guard who had been stubbornly disobedient
 1. Not all spirit beings are in Hell - Ma. 8:29; 2 Pe. 2:4; Jude 6
 2. These spirit beings had done something significant enough to be imprisoned before “the judgment”
 3. These spirit beings were disobedient around the time period of Noah’s preparation
- B. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us
 1. Baptism does not save from sin - “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh”
 2. Baptism is a first step in one’s spiritual maturity (present tense salvation) - “but the answer of a good conscience toward God”
- C. Jesus Christ: who is gone into heaven
 1. The One who graciously responded to ill-treatment and wicked abuse so that sinners might be brought near to God is now exalted in heaven