



SILVERDALE BAPTIST

VICTORY IN RELATIONSHIPS ~ MARRIAGE ~ 1 PETER 2:18-3:9

04/22-23/2023

Big Idea

Marriage is God's idea. He created it, designed it, knows how it works, and what causes it to break.

Getting Started

If you are married, what is the best part of marriage for you?

What advice would you give to someone about to get married?

In this world, marriages seem to be coming apart at an alarming rate. Some estimates are that almost half of all marriages end in divorce. Imagine what the numbers would be if we included people who are living together and then broke up! Of course, we can't call it divorce, but the pain of rejection is the same.

Is there hope? Yes! The God who designed marriage wants our marriages to work. So today, let's look at some biblical principles to help marriages work the way God created them to.

Learn

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 PETER 2:18-3:9. Ask the class to listen for a repeated word or idea.

What word or idea did you hear repeated in this passage? (*be subject to and likewise*)

What is the main point of these verses?

What does the phrase *likewise* mean in this passage?

Likewise, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands (1 Pet 3:1)

Likewise, husbands live with your wives in an understanding way (1 Pet 3:7)

In the second half of chapter 2, Peter uses Jesus as the example of how we should live. As always, Pastor Tony's outline will help us walk through this passage and apply its truths to marriage.

1. Serve each other like Jesus.

- **Wives - Give Your Husbands Your Support**

With Jesus as the example, how are wives to act toward their husbands?

Peter said wives are to *submit* themselves to their husbands. Therefore, by following Christ's example of serving, wives should be supportive of their husbands instead of demanding their own rights.

- **Husbands - Give Your Wives Your Attention**

With Jesus as the example, how are husbands to act toward their wives?

What does Peter mean when he tells us to live with our wives in “an understanding way”?

Peter tells the husbands to live with their wives in an understanding way. By following Christ's example of serving, men should help their wives by giving them their attention and responding appropriately.

2. Do Good To Each Other, Even When Wronged

**In the text, what is Jesus' example of how to respond when someone wrongs us?
(1 Pet 2:22-23)**

- **Wives - Give Your Husband Respect.**

Wives, how does Jesus' example help you show respect for your husbands?

- Husbands - Show Your Wife Honor

What does it look like for a husband to honor (unconditionally) his wife? (3:7)

3. Trust God To Make Things Right

When He was wronged, Jesus entrusted Himself to God.

- Wives - Believe God Is Bigger

How would you paraphrase 3:5-6?

How would you describe the relationship between not fearing anything that is frightening and believing God is bigger?

- Husbands – Know God Will Repay You

What is the promise for husbands in 3:7?

What is the reverse implication? In other words, what will happen if I do not show honor to and live with my wife in an understanding way?

Marriage, as God designed it, is a tender relationship between two people who consider each other as more important than themselves. Marriage is the ultimate tool to teach us to deny ourselves, lay down our rights, and serve someone else. In other words, marriage is not about you having your needs met. It is about you meeting someone else's needs.

Apply

What is the Lord showing you about your own marriage?

Wives, what are ways you can be supportive of your husband this week?

Husbands, what do you need to do to give your wife the attention and care she needs this week?

Men, what have you done to make it hard for your wife to respect you? How can you change course?

How is God using marriage to teach you to trust in Him?

If you are single, how do these ideas apply to your relationships with people around you?

Pray

Father, marriage is so close to Your heart that You used it to describe the relationship between Jesus and His followers. Therefore, in Jesus' name, we ask that our marriages glorify Your name and that You will be pleased with how we treat each other. Amen.

Dig Deeper

For Our Own Sake (1 Peter 2:18–25)

In this paragraph Peter addressed the Christian slaves in the congregations, and again he stressed the importance of submission. Some newly converted slaves thought that their spiritual freedom also guaranteed personal and political freedom, and they created problems for themselves and the churches. Paul dealt with this problem in 1 Corinthians 7:20–24, and also touched on it in his letter to his friend Philemon. The Gospel eventually overthrew the Roman Empire and the terrible institution of slavery, even though the early church did not preach against either one.

There are no Christian slaves today, at least in the New Testament sense; but what Peter wrote does have application to employees. We are to be submissive to those who are over us, whether they are kind or unkind to us. Christian employees must never take advantage of Christian employers. Each worker should do a good day's work and honestly earn his pay.

Sometimes a Christian employee may be wronged by an unbelieving coworker or supervisor. For conscience' sake, he must "take it" even though he is not in the wrong. A Christian's relationship to God is far more important than his relationship to men. "For this is grace [thankworthy]" to bear reproach when you are innocent (see Matt. 5:10–12). Anybody, including an unbeliever, can "take it patiently" when he is in the wrong! It takes a dedicated Christian to "take it" when he is in the right. "This is grace [acceptable] with God." God can give us the grace to submit and "take it" and in this way glorify God.

Of course, the human tendency is to fight back and to demand our rights. But that is the natural response of the unsaved person, and we must do much more than they do (Luke 6:32–34). Anybody can fight back; it takes a Spirit-filled Christian to submit and let God fight his battles (Rom. 12:16–21).

In the Bible, duty is always connected with doctrine. When Paul wrote to the slaves, he related his admonitions to the doctrine of the grace of God (Titus 2:9–15). Peter connected his counsels to the example of Jesus Christ, God's "Suffering Servant" (1 Peter 2:21–25; see Isa. 52:13–53:12). Peter had learned in his own experience that God's people *serve through suffering*. At first, Peter had opposed Christ's suffering on the cross (Matt. 16:21ff); but then he learned the important lesson that we lead by serving and serve by suffering. He also learned that this kind of suffering always leads to glory!

Peter encouraged these suffering slaves by presenting three "pictures" of Jesus Christ.

He is our Example in His life (vv. 21–23). All that Jesus did on earth, as recorded in the four Gospels, is a perfect example for us to follow. But He is especially our example in the way He responded to suffering. In spite of the fact that He was sinless in both word and deed, He suffered at the hands of the authorities. This connects, of course, to Peter's words in 1 Peter 2:19–20. We wonder how he would have responded in the same circumstances! The fact that Peter used his sword in the Garden suggests that he might have fought rather than submitted to the will of God.

Jesus proved that a person could be in the will of God, be greatly loved by God, and still suffer unjustly. There is a shallow brand of popular theology today that claims that Christians will *not* suffer if they are in the will of God. Those who promote such ideas have not meditated much on the Cross.

Our Lord's humility and submission were not an evidence of weakness, but of power. Jesus could have summoned the armies of heaven to rescue Him! His words to Pilate in John 18:33–38 are proof that

He was in complete command of the situation. It was Pilate who was on trial, not Jesus! Jesus had committed Himself to the Father, and the Father always judges righteously.

We are not saved by following Christ's example, because each of us would stumble over 1 Peter 2:22: "who did no sin." Sinners need a Saviour, not an Example. But after a person is saved, he will want to "follow closely upon His steps" (literal translation) and imitate the example of Christ.

He is our Substitute in His death (v. 24). He died as the sinner's Substitute. This entire section reflects that great "Servant Chapter," Isaiah 53, especially Isaiah 53:5–7, but also verses 9 and 12. Jesus did not die as a martyr; He died as a Saviour, a sinless Substitute. The word translated "bare" means "to carry as a sacrifice." The Jewish people did not crucify criminals; they stoned them to death. But if the victim was especially evil, his dead body was hung on a tree until evening, as a mark of shame (Deut. 21:23). Jesus died on a tree—a cross—and bore the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13).

The paradoxes of the cross never cease to amaze us. Christ was wounded that we might be healed. He died that we might live. We died with Him, and thus we are "dead to sin" (Rom. 6) so that we might "live unto righteousness." The healing Peter mentioned in 1 Peter 2:24 is not physical healing, but rather the spiritual healing of the soul (Ps. 103:3). One day, when we have glorified bodies, all sicknesses will be gone; but meanwhile, even some of God's choicest servants may have physical afflictions (see Phil. 2:25–30; 2 Cor. 12:1ff).

It is not Jesus the Example or the Teacher who saves us, but Jesus the spotless Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

He is our Watchful Shepherd in heaven (v. 25). In the Old Testament, the sheep died for the shepherd; but at Calvary, the Shepherd died for the sheep (John 10). Every lost sinner is like a sheep gone astray: ignorant, lost, wandering, in danger, away from the place of safety, and unable to help himself. The Shepherd went out to search for the lost sheep (Luke 15:1–7). He died for the sheep!

Now that we have been returned to the fold and are safely in His care, He watches over us lest we stray and get into sin. The word *bishop* simply means "one who watches over, who oversees." Just as the elder-bishop oversees the flock of God, the local church (1 Peter 5:2), so the Saviour in glory watches over His sheep to protect them and perfect them (Heb. 13:20–21).

Here, then, is the wonderful truth Peter wanted to share: as we live godly lives and submit in times of suffering, we are following Christ's example *and becoming more like Him*. We submit and obey, not only for the sake of lost souls and for the Lord's sake, but also for our own sake, that we might grow spiritually and become more like Christ.

The unsaved world is watching us, but the Shepherd in heaven is also watching over us; so we have nothing to fear. We can submit to Him and know that He will work everything together for our good and His glory.

WEDLOCK OR DEADLOCK?

1 Peter 3:1–7

A strange situation exists in society today. We have more readily available information about sex and marriage than ever before; yet we have more marital problems and divorces. Obviously something is wrong. It is not sufficient to say that God is needed in these homes, because even many *Christian* marriages are falling apart.

The fact that a man and a woman are both saved is no guarantee that their marriage will succeed. Marriage is something that we have to work at; success is not automatic. And when one marriage partner is not a Christian, that can make matters even more difficult. Peter addressed this section of his letter to

Christian wives who had unsaved husbands, telling them how to win their mates to Christ. Then he added some important admonitions for Christian husbands.

No matter what your marital status may be, you can learn from Peter the essentials for a happy and successful marriage.

The Example of Christ (1 Peter 3:1a, 7a)

The phrases “in the same manner” and “in like manner” refer us back to Peter’s discussion of the example of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:21–25). Just as Jesus was submissive and obedient to God’s will, so a Christian husband and wife should follow His example.

Much of our learning in life comes by way of imitation. Grandparents have a delightful time watching their grandchildren “pick up” new skills and words as they grow up. If we imitate the best models, we will become better people and better achievers; but if we imitate the wrong models, it will cripple our lives and possibly ruin our characters. The “role models” that we follow influence us in every area of life.

While standing in the checkout line in a supermarket, I overheard two women discussing the latest Hollywood scandal that was featured on the front page of a newspaper displayed on the counter. As I listened (and I could not *help* but hear them!), I thought: “How foolish to worry about the sinful lives of matinee idols. Why clutter up your mind with such trash? Why not get acquainted with decent people and learn from their lives?” A few days later, I overheard a conversation about the marital problems on a certain television “soap serial,” and the same thoughts came to me.

When Christian couples try to imitate the world and get their standards from Hollywood instead of from heaven, there will be trouble in the home. But if both partners will imitate Jesus Christ in His submission and obedience, and His desire to serve others, then there will be triumph and joy in the home. A psychiatrist friend of mine states that the best thing a Christian husband can do is pattern himself after Jesus Christ. In Christ we see a beautiful blending of strength and tenderness, and that is what it takes to be a successful husband.

Peter also pointed to Sarah as a model for Christian wives to follow. To be sure, Sarah was not perfect; but she proved to be a good helpmeet to Abraham, and she is one of the few women named in Hebrews 11. I once made a pastoral visit to a woman who said she had marital problems, and I noticed a number of “movie fan club magazines” in the magazine rack. After listening to the woman’s problems, I concluded that she needed to follow some Bible examples and models and get her mind off of the worldly examples.

We cannot follow Christ’s example unless we first know Him as our Saviour, and then submit to Him as our Lord. We must spend time with Him each day, meditating on the Word and praying; and a Christian husband and wife must pray together and seek to encourage each other in the faith.

Submission (1 Peter 3:1–6)

Twice in this paragraph Peter reminded Christian wives that they were to be submissive to their husbands (1 Peter 3:1, 5). The word translated “subjection” is a military term that means “to place under rank.” God has a place for everything; He has ordained various levels of authority (see 1 Peter 2:13–14). He has ordained that the husband be the head of the home (Eph. 5:21ff) and that, as he submits to Christ, his wife should submit to him. Headship is not dictatorship, but the loving exercise of divine authority under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Peter gave three reasons why a Christian wife should submit to her husband, even if the husband (as in this case) is not saved.

Submission is an obligation (v. 1a). God has commanded it because, in His wisdom, He knows that this is the best arrangement for a happy, fulfilling marriage. Subjection does not mean that the wife is inferior to the husband. In fact, in 1 Peter 3:7, Peter made it clear that the husband and wife are “heirs together.” The man and woman are made by the same Creator out of the same basic material, and both are made in God’s image. God gave dominion to both Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:28), and in Jesus Christ Christian mates are one (Gal. 3:28).

Submission has to do with order and authority, not evaluation. For example, the slaves in the average Roman household were superior in many ways to their masters, but they still had to be under authority. The buck private in the army may be a better person than the five-star general, but he is still a buck private. Even Christ Himself became a servant and submitted to God’s will. There is nothing degrading about submitting to authority or accepting God’s order. If anything, it is the first step toward fulfillment. And Ephesians 5:21 makes it clear that *both* husband and wife must first be submitted to Jesus Christ.

Husbands and wives must be partners, not competitors. After a wedding ceremony, I often privately say to the bride and groom, “Now, remember, from now on it’s no longer *mine* or *yours*, but *ours*.” This explains why Christians must always marry other Christians, for a believer cannot enter into any kind of deep “oneness” with an unbeliever (2 Cor. 6:14–18).

Submission is an opportunity (vv. 1b–2). An opportunity for what? To win an unsaved husband to Christ. God not only *commands* submission, but He *uses* it as a powerful spiritual influence in a home. This does not mean that a Christian wife “gives in” to her unsaved husband in order to subtly manipulate him and get him to do what she desires. This kind of selfish psychological persuasion ought never to be found in a Christian’s heart or home.

An unsaved husband will not be converted by preaching or nagging in the home. The phrase “without the word” does not mean “without the Word of God,” because salvation comes through the Word (John 5:24). It means “without talk, without a lot of speaking.” Christian wives who preach at their husbands only drive them farther from the Lord. I know one zealous wife who used to keep religious radio programs on all evening, usually very loud, so that her unsaved husband would “hear the truth.” She only made it easier for him to leave home and spend his evenings with his friends.

It is the character and conduct of the wife that will win the lost husband—not arguments, but such attitudes as submission, understanding, love, kindness, patience. These qualities are not manufactured; they are the fruit of the Spirit that come when we are submitted to Christ and to one another. A Christian wife with “purity and reverence” will reveal in her life “the praises” of God (1 Peter 2:9) and influence her husband to trust Christ.

One of the greatest examples of a godly wife and mother in church history is Monica, the mother of the famous St. Augustine. God used Monica’s witness and prayers to win both her son and her husband to Christ, though her husband was not converted until shortly before his death. Augustine wrote in his *Confessions*, “She served him as her lord; and did her diligence to win him unto Thee ... preaching Thee unto him by her conversation [behavior]; by which Thou ornamentest her, making her reverently amiable unto her husband.”

In a Christian home, we must minister to each other. A Christian husband must minister to his wife and help to “beautify her” in the Lord (Eph. 5:25–30). A Christian wife must encourage her husband and help him grow strong in the Lord. Parents and children must share burdens and blessings and seek to maintain an atmosphere of spiritual excitement and growth in the home. If there are unsaved people in the home, they will be won to Christ more by what they see in our lives and relationships than by what they hear in our witness.

Submission is an ornament (vv. 3–6). The word translated “adorning” is *kosmos* in the Greek, and gives us our English words “cosmos” (the ordered universe) and “cosmetic.” It is the opposite of *chaos*.

Peter warned the Christian wife not to major on external decorations but on internal character. Roman women were captivated by the latest fashions of the day, and competed with each other in dress and hairdos. It was not unusual for the women to have elaborate *coiffures*, studded with gold and silver combs and even jewels. They wore elaborate and expensive garments, all for the purpose of impressing each other.

A Christian wife with an unsaved husband might think that she must imitate the world if she is going to win her mate; but just the opposite is true. Glamour is artificial and external; true beauty is real and internal. Glamour is something a person can put on and take off, but true beauty is always present. Glamour is corruptible; it decays and fades. True beauty from the heart grows more wonderful as the years pass. A Christian woman who cultivates the beauty of the inner person will not have to depend on cheap externals. God is concerned about values, not prices.

Of course, this does not mean that a wife should neglect herself and not try to be up-to-date in her apparel. It simply means that she is not *majoring* on being a “fashion plate” just to “keep up with the crowd.” Any husband is proud of a wife who is attractive, but that beauty must come from the heart, not the store. We are not *of* this world, but we must not look as though we came from *out of* this world!

Peter did not forbid the wearing of jewelry any more than the wearing of apparel. The word “wearing” in 1 Peter 3:3 means “the putting around,” and refers to a gaudy display of jewelry. It is possible to wear jewelry and still honor God, and we must not judge one another in this matter.

Peter closed this section by pointing to Sarah as an example of a godly, submissive wife. Read Genesis 18 for the background. Christian wives today would probably embarrass their husbands if they called them “lord,” but their attitudes ought to be such that they could call them “lord” and people would believe it. The believing wife who submits to Christ and to her husband, and who cultivates a “meek and quiet spirit” will never have to be afraid. (The “fear” in this verse means “terror,” while in 1 Peter 3:2 it means “reverence.”) God will watch over her even when her unsaved mate creates problems and difficulties for her.

Consideration (1 Peter 3:7)

Why did Peter devote more space to instructing the wives than the husbands? Because the Christian wives were experiencing a whole new situation and needed guidance. In general, women were kept down in the Roman Empire, and their new freedom in Christ created new problems and challenges. Furthermore, many of them had unsaved husbands and needed extra encouragement and enlightenment.

As Peter wrote to the Christian husbands, he reminded them of four areas of responsibility in their relationship with their mates.

Physical—“dwell with them.” This implies much more than sharing the same address. Marriage is fundamentally a physical relationship: “They two shall be one flesh” (Eph. 5:31). Of course, Christian mates enjoy a deeper spiritual relationship, but the two go together (1 Cor. 7:1–5). A truly spiritual husband will fulfill his marital duties and love his wife.

The husband must make time to be home with his wife. Christian workers and church officers who get too busy running around solving other people’s problems, may end up creating problems of their own at home. One survey revealed that the average husband and wife had thirty-seven minutes a week together in actual communication! Is it any wonder that marriages fall apart after the children grow up and leave home? The husband and wife are left alone—to live with strangers!

“Dwell with them” also suggests that the husband provide for the physical and material needs of the home. While it is not wrong for a wife to have a job or career, her first responsibility is to care for the home (Titus 2:4–5). It is the husband who should provide (1 Tim. 5:8).

Intellectual—“according to knowledge.” Somebody asked Mrs. Albert Einstein if she understood Dr. Einstein’s theory of relativity, and she replied, “No, but I understand the Doctor.” In my premarital counseling as a pastor, I often gave the couple pads of paper and asked them to write down the three things each one thinks the other enjoys doing the most. Usually, the prospective bride made her list immediately; the man would sit and ponder. And usually the girl was right but the man wrong! What a beginning for a marriage!

It is amazing that two married people can live together and not really know each other! Ignorance is dangerous in any area of life, but it is especially dangerous in marriage. A Christian husband needs to know his wife’s moods, feelings, needs, fears, and hopes. He needs to “listen with his heart” and share meaningful communication with her. There must be in the home such a protective atmosphere of love and submission that the husband and wife can disagree and still be happy together.

“Speaking the truth in love” is the solution to the communications problem (Eph. 4:15). It has well been said that love without truth is hypocrisy, and truth without love is brutality. We need both truth and love if we are to grow in our understanding of one another. How can a husband show consideration for his wife if he does not understand her needs or problems? To say, “I never knew you felt that way!” is to confess that, at some point, one mate excommunicated the other. When either mate is afraid to be open and honest about a matter, then he or she is building walls and not bridges.

Emotional—“giving honor unto the wife.” Chivalry may be dead, but every husband must be a “knight in shining armor” who treats his wife like a princess. (By the way, the name Sarah means “princess.”) Peter did not suggest that a wife is “the weaker vessel” mentally, morally, or spiritually, but rather physically. There are exceptions, of course, but generally speaking, the man is the stronger of the two when it comes to physical accomplishments. The husband should treat his wife like an expensive, beautiful, fragile vase, in which is a precious treasure.

When a young couple starts dating, the boy is courteous and thoughtful. After they get engaged, he shows even more courtesy and always acts like a gentleman. Sad to say, soon after they get married, many a husband forgets to be kind and gentlemanly and starts taking his wife for granted. He forgets that happiness in a home is made up of many *little* things, including the small courtesies of life.

Big resentments often grow out of small hurts. Husbands and wives need to be honest with each other, admit hurts, and seek for forgiveness and healing. “Giving honor unto the wife” does not mean “giving in to the wife.” A husband can disagree with his wife and still respect and honor her. As the spiritual leader in the home, the husband must sometimes make decisions that are not popular; but he can still act with courtesy and respect.

“Giving honor” means that the husband respects his wife’s feelings, thinking, and desires. He may not agree with her ideas, but he respects them. Often God balances a marriage so that the husband needs what the wife has in her personality, and she likewise needs his good qualities. An impulsive husband often has a patient wife, and this helps to keep him out of trouble!

The husband must be the “thermostat” in the home, setting the emotional and spiritual temperature. The wife often is the “thermometer,” letting him know what that temperature is! Both are necessary. The husband who is sensitive to his wife’s feelings will not only make her happy, but will also grow himself and help his children live in a home that honors God.

Spiritual—“that your prayers be not hindered.” Peter assumed that husbands and wives would pray together. Often, they do not; and this is the reason for much failure and unhappiness. If unconverted people can have happy homes *without prayer* (and they do), how much happier Christian homes would

be *with prayer!* In fact, it is the prayer life of a couple that indicates how things are going in the home. If something is wrong, their prayers will be hindered.

A husband and wife need to have their own private, individual prayer time each day. They also need to pray together and to have a time of “family devotion.” How this is organized will change from home to home, and even from time to time as the children grow up and schedules change. The Word of God and prayer are basic to a happy, holy home (Acts 6:4).

A husband and wife are “heirs together.” If the wife shows submission and the husband consideration, and if both submit to Christ and follow His example, then they will have an enriching experience in their marriage. If not, they will miss God’s best and rob each other of blessing and growth. “The grace of life” may refer to children, who certainly are a heritage from God (Ps. 127:3); but even childless couples can enjoy spiritual riches if they will obey Peter’s admonitions.

It might be good if husbands and wives occasionally took inventory of their marriages. Here are some questions, based on what Peter wrote.

1. Are we partners or competitors?
 2. Are we helping each other become more spiritual?
 3. Are we depending on the externals or the eternal? The artificial or the real?
 4. Do we understand each other better?
 5. Are we sensitive to each other’s feelings and ideas, or taking each other for granted?
 6. Are we seeing God answer our prayers?
 7. Are we enriched because of our marriage, or robbing each other of God’s blessing?
- Honest answers to these questions might make a difference!¹

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, [*The Bible Exposition Commentary*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 406–411.