

## **People Under Pressure**

### Experiencing the Good Life

1 Peter 3:1-12

We might think “The Good Life” means easy living, comfort, and all good circumstances. The problem is, that description is probably not typical for most of us. In fact we were never promised things would be like that on this side of heaven.

But here’s what I know — it’s good to be saved!

Knowing Christ provides us with True Life!

So what is “the good life” for people under pressure like us, and like those Peter was writing to?

Peter is writing this letter to a chosen people in exile, the people of God spread across the Roman empire, who are facing persecution. He is encouraging and challenging Christians, even and especially during hardships, to live in such a way as to prove the power and the truth of the Gospel.

### **The Gospel changes things. Life in Christ changes everything!**

Today we’re going to see what that looks like in two important contexts.

*“Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's*

*sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” **1 Peter 3:1-12***

**Main Idea:** People under Pressure can experience the Good Life when the Gospel Impacts our Relationships.

### *Two critical relationships impacted by the Gospel in 1 Peter 3:1-12*

#### **1. The Gospel Impact in our Marriage (1-7)**

Apart from our relationship with God, the most intimate relationship we have is that of marriage.

**Marriage is a gift** from God - God designed marriage for a man and a woman to be joined as one and to experience life together as a support, encouragement, and help. As one, a married couple can push one another towards the Lord and be able to find joy and blessing in Him in the middle of whatever circumstances they face.

Not everyone in here is married, and that's fine! In the scripture, Paul affirms that singleness can be God's plan for many and that is a good thing too.

God made us to be relational beings. Extroverts or Introverts, it doesn't matter. To some degree, we need each other. We need relationships and community. So stick with me and find the truths that apply to other home relationships.

In this passage, Peter is specifically speaking on marriage.

Divorce rates are far too high and it often has a devastating impact on homes. Even within the church!  
So why can't we find the good life in marriage? What does that look like? Peter gives some insight for success in this area.

*"Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands..."*

This may automatically put some on your guard as **many throughout history have abused this passage** for their own gain or control and we'll see where they went wrong. But first **take a breath and understand that we are looking at God's design for**

**a marriage relationship that thrives.** We're looking to experience the Good Life in our marriages.

Peter begins with the word "Likewise." He's continuing the conversation he's already begun with submitting to authority for the sake of pointing people to the Lordship of Jesus. Now he's bringing up a different context that allows that same testimony to shine through in a powerful way.

He starts with the wives, and says to be subject to your own husbands.

If you take this out of context, it can sound harsh, but in reality, it's a beautiful design that God created. God created three Institutions in the world: **Family, Government, and the Church.** Therefore, he has the right to assign leadership roles and structures. When it comes to marriage, Warren Wiersbe describes the roles this way:

*"He has ordained that the husband be the head of the home 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."* **Warren Wiersbe**

The apostle Paul teaches this too:

*"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior."*

**Ephesians 5:22-23**

Two things we need to confront right now are:

- 1) **Men** - If you hear this and are thinking, *well it's about time somebody said it*, then you're starting out with the wrong attitude and have set yourself up for failure. I'm going to talk more specifically to you and me about this shortly, but if this is you, you can begin by asking God to show you what your role is meant to be, by His design, in **a gospel impacted marriage**.
- 2) **Wives** - if you hear this and say that's irrelevant, outdated, and sexist.
  - **First** - God is the designer who gets to define how His creation works best, and this is what He's shown to be the case.
  - **Second** - It is not a distinction of value or worth, but of Roles in the household.
  - **Lastly** - It is a call to be Christlike, as Jesus submitted Himself to the will of the Father even to the point of a disgraceful death on the cross. SO, if a call to submission means to be devalued in any way, then we must devalue Jesus, which will never be the case.

There might be some wives, thinking, "But my husband isn't a Christian. Does this still apply to me?" Yes! Peter writes:.

*"Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won*

*without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct."* **1 Peter 3:1-2**

### **This is a missional assignment!**

Every follower of Christ is called to be an ambassador for Him in every context He places us.

*"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."* **2 Corinthians 5:20**

Some have been praying fervently for your husband to come to faith in Jesus. Some have preached the gospel to them passionately time and time again. Those are valuable and necessary.

**But** here God is showing you that you have the opportunity to speak the gospel powerfully as you **show** Christ at work in your life by how you live your life "*when they see your respectful and pure conduct.*"

For clarity - as with the government - that call to purity and the command in verse 6 to do good, means that **you are not to submit to the point of sinful behavior**.

When that is not the case, your respectful and God-honoring life gives evidence to the truth and power of the gospel message with a testimony that is beyond words.

Wives, God will use you in the life of your husband, and He may lead that man to Christ by your faithfulness and through your conduct toward your husband.

Verses 3-6 show how beautifully the gospel is displayed through your life:

*“but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.” 1 Peter 3:4*

This is not a condemnation of jewelry or physical adornment **BUT** - the priority is on the inside. The heart - who you are. Your godly character is “very precious” to God.

*“...walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” Colossians 1:10*

Wives, I believe you want the “Good Life” in your house. **It doesn't mean** that you'll be wealthy and that circumstances will always be smooth sailing, but as you let Jesus take the lead in your relationship with your husband you can see the impact that gospel has on your marriage.

**Is your husband a believer?** Let your marriage relationship proclaim the gospel to the world around you.

**Is he not there yet?** Then let your conduct towards Him point him to Jesus!

### — Husbands —

Experiencing the Good Life that is found in Christ, is about allowing the Gospel to have **a full impact** — in other words, it means you are responsible for modeling the Gospel in your marriage. The gospel is a victorious message of love and self-sacrifice, and you are meant to display this in your home.

**You set the tone for your household.**

“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.” **Warren Werisbe**

If there is conflict in your home, you'd better not ignore it. Figure it out. If there is unhappiness in your marriage. It's time to work! **Your wife and your family will let you know one way or another if there is something unhealthy, and God has entrusted you with the responsibility of submitting to Christ and leading on His behalf.** So take it seriously! We must love and lead our families.

**It's a biblical mandate!**

Paul wrote it this way:

*“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” Ephesians 5:25*

Peter shares the same truth and instruction to us here:

**“Live with your wives in an understanding way”**

It's a common joke that it's impossible to understand women. Men and women are very different in many ways, but it's ultimately not true. In your marriage relationship, guys, you are called to know and understand her, **so that you can love her well**. We have to be sensitive and discerning to know how our wives and our families are doing emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

We're not given authority to wield like a weapon, or to serve our own purposes. We're entrusted with authority to understand our wives and to love her **as the daughter of the King that she is**.

#### **"Showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel"**

Once again, some may cringe at the phrasing here. Peter is acknowledging that in many if not most cases in a marriage that men are physically bigger than the women. He is calling husbands to honor their wives and never be oppressive or abusive or seeking an advantage over her in any way. You are one, and she is a gift to cherish and care for at all times, selflessly, like Christ does for the church.

#### **"Since they are heirs with you of the grace of life"**

Here it is: If any of you hear this conversation as a distinction of value and not just defining roles, this is meant to clear that up for you. **In Christ, it's all about Him and we are all inheriting the same life, receiving the same grace. We share in the beauty of our salvation together because of what Christ has done for us!**

Lastly, husbands, here is what's on the line:

**"So that your prayers may not be hindered"**

Let's not take this lightly! We are entrusted with the role of cherishing, protecting, caring for, and respecting our wives well. And if we're not, our prayers may be hindered!

**Husbands:** When you love your wife well, you are displaying the good life you have in Christ within your marriage. This is so important to God that if you come to Him with other concerns while things are not good with you and your wife, He says hold on a minute! We have to work out this other stuff first! Then we can talk about the rest of what's on your mind.

The truth is, when the husband leads well, the family thrives! Guys, love your wives like she's more important than yourself. Pray together (even when that feels challenging or embarrassing).

Let God's good life shine through your home as together you submit to His design for your marriage.

## **2. The Gospel Impact in our Church (8-12)**

*Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."*

**1 Peter 3:8-12**

“Finally, all of you” — Peter shifts gears to all the believers that will be reading this letter. He is saying **your relationships with one another will show off what life in Christ truly looks like.**

Peter is sharing what he learned directly from Jesus.

When the body of Christ loves and serves like Jesus, the world will recognize a difference and know who we are! Jesus said:

*“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

**John 13:34-35**

**Peter emphasizes this for a people facing persecution, a group of people feeling the pressure.** Our struggles are different but we live as people under pressure today, don’t we?

**The commandment is the same too!** Let the gospel impact our relationships here in the body of Christ — the church. Then share the message as a watching world tries to figure out how we got this way!

The Good Life we're talking about is not about ease and comfort, but instead it is about enjoying the blessings of a life committed to loving God and loving people. Letting Him have His way in us **and being near to Him!**

That life and that love is on display in how we treat one another within the body of Christ.

*“And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” **Colossians 3:14***

Peter outlines how we should treat one another, specifically in our **actions towards others** and our **reactions to how we are treated**. Allow the love of God to take over in us!

**Finally, all of you have... Unity of Mind:** What binds us together as brothers and sisters in Christ: our love for God and our shared faith in Jesus.

This overrules other defining traits that might divide us.

We are by no means **uniform** (we are beautifully different from one person to the next - like brush strokes of a painting), **BUT** we are **unified** as one family in Christ.

*“I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.” **1 Corinthians 1:10***

**Sympathy:** As people under pressure, we don’t have to go through struggles alone! We share in our sufferings and burdens. As the body of Christ, we are blessed with one another to bear one another's burdens to remind us we are not alone.

*“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. **Romans 12:15***

- *Look for ways to care for each other.*

- *AND be bold enough to open up and share when you are struggling and have burdens/needs that others can be blessed to carry with you!*

**Brotherly Love:** our love for one another is a distinguishing mark as a follower of Christ.

*“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection.” Romans 12:9,10a*

- “Alright, I’ll love them but I don’t have to like them.”  
A call to “brotherly affection” makes that a tough argument. You definitely don’t need to be best friends with everyone, but if there is someone you struggle with, pray for them. It’s hard to dislike someone who you are regularly praying God’s best for!
- Choose to love people not because of who they are, but because of who Christ is and how He loves that person.
- That shows the miraculous love of Jesus!

**Tender Heart:** Our hearts must be tender to those around us, being ready (even eager) to extend mercy, grace, and forgiveness, because of what we have received in Christ.

*“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32*

**Humble Mind:** As believers, we strive to put others above ourselves, putting their needs and desires above our own, because that is what Jesus did for us.

*“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” Philippians 2:3*

- Jesus deserved all glory, but allowed Himself to be shamed and disgraced for the good of others. He set the tone and calls us to follow His example.

As we live this out every day at Salem, the community around us will see a testimony of who God is and they will want to be part of it, because this is so different! Many of you are here because of that very reason.

Next he addresses our reactions. You’ve probably heard it said: you can’t control what other people do to you, but you can control how you respond.

Peter focuses on that aspect of the Good Life impacting our relationships. As people under pressure, we **will** have moments of conflict with one another, inside and outside the church family.

How will we respond?

*“Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.” 1 Peter 3:9*

Is it an unbeliever that has wronged you?

*“But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” Luke 6:27-28*

Is it a follower of Christ? A member of the family of God?

*“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”*

**Galatians 6:9-10**

Be patient and gracious with each other.

**With the amount of grace that we have received from God, we should excel at extending grace to one another.**

How we respond to conflict within our family and with those around us will be an incredible opportunity for the gospel to be on display, because people are always watching. And we'll be blessed to be part of that work!

**Main Idea:** People under Pressure can experience the Good Life when the Gospel Impacts our Relationships.

The final verses that Peter writes are quoted from Psalm 34  
Together with the psalmist he asks you, do you want to love life?  
Do you want to see good days? Are you looking for the good life in the middle of being a people under pressure?

**Believers:** Live your life God's way. Let Him live through you!  
Let the gospel impact every relationship, the words you say, and the works that you do!

Even in Psalm 34 you see that “good days” are not all problem-free. It tells of fears, troubles, afflictions, and even heartbreak. Warren Wiersbe puts it perfectly:

“A ‘good day’ for the believer who ‘loves life’ is not one in which he is pampered and sheltered, but one in which he experiences God's help and blessing *because of* life's problems and trials. It is a day in which he magnifies the Lord, experiences answers to prayer, tastes the goodness of God, and senses the nearness of God.” **Warren Wiersbe**

We may be people under pressure, but we stand up under the pressure by the power of Christ. We stand and experience the good life with the gift of relationships that are impacted by the gospel.

Are you searching as well? Look no further than Christ himself.

*“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6*

True life is found in the finished work of Jesus Christ, turn from your sins and place your faith in Jesus today and watch what He will do in you and through for His name's sake!



**Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:**

- *The Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *ESV Study Bible* – Crossway (2008)
- *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* – Walvoord & Zuck (1983)