

## Sunday Morning Message

November 1, 2020

*1 Peter 3:1 – 12 – Maintaining Good Relationships by the Grace of God*

Series – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter - *Experiencing God's Grace In the Midst of Suffering*

Text – 1 Peter 3:1 - 12

Congregational Reading – 1 Peter 3:10 - 12

### Introduction

We have been taking our time examining this first epistle of Peter, which was originally written to “strangers” in what was known in Bible days as “Asia,” but today is within the borders of present-day Turkey. These believers were called strangers because they were believers who knew that their home was in Heaven, and that they were only sojourning here on the earth for a short time. They were suffering intense persecution, and often were living “on the run” trying to escape from their civil and religious tormenters. This was the time of Emperor Nero, and under his reign Christians were being slaughtered by the thousands.

Peter’s letter was intended to comfort these afflicted saints of the Lord and encourage them to remain faithful, even as they were going through extraordinary trials and great affliction.

We, too, are going through difficult times. People are suffering, though our trials seem to pale in comparison to what we know happened to the Christians in the first century. It is, however, the times are becoming increasingly difficult for believers in our culture; and, unless a national revival is sent from heaven, things likely will only get worse.

Though this epistle specifically addresses the unique difficulties of these persecuted Christians within the Roman Empire in the first century, the Holy Spirit of God intended that the timeless principles contained within this portion of Scripture be applicable to believers today as we *Experience God's Grace in the Midst of Our Own Suffering*.

So far in these series of messages from 1 Peter, we have learned:

- We can trust in God’s grace in the midst of our suffering (1 Peter 1:1 – 5).
- Our faith can be strengthened through seasons of suffering (1 Peter 1:6 – 12).
- What we can do when we are going through periods of suffering (1 Peter 1:13 – 25).
- We are a purchased possession by the grace of God (1 Peter 2:1 – 12).
- We can follow in Christ’s steps by the grace of God (1 Peter 2:11 – 25).

## Transition

This morning, as we move into chapter three, we see that Peter continues to give very practical and helpful instruction to believers regarding their relationships with each other. In this section, wives will learn what is expected of them regarding their relationship with their husbands; husbands will see what God expects of them regarding their wives; and then, all believers will see the ingredients that God gives for loving life and experiencing good days, even in the midst of intense persecution and suffering.

Church – even though things are getting very strange here in our world, we can still love life and experience good days while serving the Lord.

This morning, we will learn from 1 Peter 3 about: *Maintaining Good Relationships by the Grace of God.*

The word, “likewise” (ὁμοίως – *homoiōs*), indicates that this new discussion in chapter three, is along the same line of thought as what was said in chapter two. You will recall that Peter concluded chapter two with practical principles for citizens, servants, and sufferers. Peter begins this section by giving instructions to wives.

- I. **Instructions for Wives (1 Peter 3:1 – 6)**
  - A. **He discusses their conversation. (vs. 1 – 2)**

*"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." (1 Peter 3:1-2)*

The first thing that I would like to observe here is that the instruction given here is particularly given to wives, and may or may not be applicable to all women.

God says that the wife is to be “in subjection” (ὑποτασσόμεναι), meaning that she is to be submissive to her husband’s authority. In the home, God established a hierarchy: God first, the husband next, the wife next, and then the children. This concept is certainly not popular in our modern world, but it is still the clear teaching of the Word of God.

Note – God is not politically correct.

Paul discusses this hierarchy in 1 Corinthians 11 with the illustration of head covering. In the first century, a wife was instructed to have her head covered as a sign of her recognition that she had an authority figure over her, between her and God, and that

was her husband. The man's head was to be uncovered recognizing that God was over him. Today, most wives do not practice head covering and they don't have to, but they should practice the underlying principle that supported the practice of head covering, which is recognizing the husband's authority within the home.

Paul also taught this principle to the Ephesians:

*"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."* (Ephesians 5:22-24)

Submission does not infer inferiority. Wives are, in fact, much superior to their husbands in many areas. Wives are also completely equal as far as value is concerned in the sight of God.

Notice also that wives are to be in subjection to their own husbands, not other men. In fact, in our world today, women have been given positions where they are in authority over men, and those men are the ones who need to be submissive. Again, you cannot necessarily apply these principles given specifically to wives and husbands to any other man-woman relationship.

Illustration – when I worked at Super One Foods, my immediate supervisor was Paula Ford. She was an assistant store manager while I was a grocery department manager. She was a great boss. I was submissive to her in all areas regarding the supermarket.

Notice also that God expected these wives to be submissive even to lost husbands. It is difficult enough to yield to somebody who is Christlike at least some of the time, but to be submissive to a man who does not have the Holy Spirit within him, has to be much harder.

Notice the reasoning that Peter gives for this – that they may be “won” (κερδηθήσονται) by the conversation of the wives. The word “won,” means “to gain.” The word, “conversation” (ἀναστροφῆς), means manner of life, conduct, or behavior. The word, “chaste” (ἀγνήν), means “pure from carnality,” or “modest.” The idea is that by being a faithful and submissive wife, and by maintaining a good testimony, a wife may be able to win over her unsaved husband for the Lord.

The wife's faith in Christ is to be on display in front of the husband. She is to preach Christ to him, not merely through words, but through her life. Notice that Peter doesn't tell her to be obedient to the church or to the pastor, but to her husband. Wives who are married to lost husbands sometimes find sanctuary in the church, and that is not necessarily wrong, but they must not run from their primary responsibility, which is in their home, and to their husband.

Notice also that the wife's behavior needs to be "coupled" with fear. This probably means that the wife needs to have reverence and respect for her husband because she has reverence and respect for God; but, the phrase "couple with fear," could also indicate that the submissiveness and godly behavior of the wife will cause the husband to fear God.

Submissive and chaste conversation + the fear of God = a powerful testimony.

## **B. He directs a contrast. (vs. 3 – 4)**

*"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of 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." (1 Peter 3:3-4)*

Notice the phrase in verse three – "let it not be," and then – "let it be" in verse four. That indicates a contrast between two conflicting concepts.

### **1. "Let it not be glamour"**

Let's break the verse down:

The word, "adorning" (κόσμος), means arrangement, ornament or decoration. Interestingly, this word is the same word that is translated "world" 186 times in the New Testament.

The word, "plaiting" (έμπλοκῆς), means interweaving or braiding.

So, wives are not to be decorated or adorned with outward things, meaning that is not where their focus should be. It is not wrong or sinful to braid your hair or wear gold, just as it is not wrong to put on clothing. God certainly encourages both women and men to wear clothing; but that is not to be the focus. That is not supposed to be what the wife is noticed for.

Too much glitz and glamour; lots of make-up, etc. will attract attention, but it is a fleshly attraction. Wives - do you really want to attract that kind of attention?

## 2. "Let it be godliness"

Verse 3 told us what it shouldn't be, so let's now look at what should be.

*"... the hidden man of the heart..."* – I find it interesting the "it" is not the hidden "woman" of the heart; but I believe the reason is that the reference here is to the Holy Spirit. At minimum, this is a reference to the spiritual part of you, which is focused on that which is eternal. Thus the phrase, *"not corruptible."*

Notice what God states is of great price concerning the wife – a meek and quiet spirit. "Meek" (πραῖος) means "soft, gentle: not easily provoked or irritated." "Quiet" means "peaceful or tranquil."

Again, there is nothing in the world wrong with looking your best, but the goal should be godliness, not glamour.

Paul addresses this same subject in his first letter to Timothy:

*"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."* (1 Timothy 2:9-10)

As far as ladies' dress is concerned, the Bible never specifically states "dresses." The two principles for ladies clothing should be modesty and femininity (Deuteronomy 22:5). Christian ladies, you do not want men to be attracted to you solely because of your appearance, and you do not want men to lust after your body. This is especially true for married women.

### C. He demonstrates with a case from the Old Testament. (vs. 5 – 6)

*"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."* (1 Peter 3:5-6)

Peter states that the women that he was writing to could look back to Old Testament ladies as an example. The specific illustration of Sarah comes from Genesis 18:12. The context of that passage was when God reminded Abraham of His promise to give him a

son. When Sarah heard it, she laughed, because both she and her husband were very old. She said (to herself):

*“After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?”* (Genesis 18:11-12)

The lord in that context was Abraham.

Keep in mind that Sarah was not saying that her husband was God, but she recognized his authority over her as the head of the home.

Peter goes on to say that the women of his day were like Sarah if they:

1. Were submissive to their husbands.
2. They [did] well.
3. They were not obedient for the wrong reasons (*“not afraid with any amazement”* [terror]). Wives should fear (reverence) their husbands, but they should not be afraid of their husbands.

Husbands – Your wives should not be afraid of you. Just because God gives you some authority within the home, it does not give you the right to be a tyrant. Your wife is not a doormat; she is not a slave. She is your partner; your completer.

## II. Instruction for Husbands (1 Peter 3:7)

In our text, Peter gives only one verse of instruction to the husbands, but there are plenty of other portions of Scripture that we can look at.

*“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”* (1 Peter 3:7)

Notice again the word, “likewise.” We are continuing along on the same theme – relationships.

### A. First, Peter tells them what to do

Husbands, we are instructed to:

1. Dwell (συνουκοῦντες) with our wives according to knowledge (γνῶσιν).

The word, “knowledge” has to do with knowing God; knowing biblical principle; knowing women in general; knowing your wife in particular.

Illustrate – *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman – (your wife may look at things a little differently than you do. She receives love a little differently than you do. (The five – Words of Affirmation; Quality Time; Receiving Gifts; Acts of Service; Physical Touch)

2. Give honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel

The word, “honour” (τιμήν), has to do with value. A husband needs to place a high value on his wife. The idea here is that we love and take care of things that we value. We especially need to love and care for our wives. (Illustrate – Pastor Clark – “If you want to be the king of your castle, you’d better treat your wife like a queen.”)

### **B. Then, Peter tells them why they should do this.**

1. Because the husband and wife are heirs together of the grace of life.

The husband and wife are together heirs of salvation – or eternal life, but they are also heirs together of the blessings and favour that God bestows on believers in this life. The husband and wife are one flesh; they are partners; they share equally.

2. Because if the husband / wife relationship is not right, their prayers will be hindered.

*"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:"* (Psalm 66:18)

My relationship with the Lord will not be right if my relationship with my wife is not right.

Paul speaks of the husband / wife relationship in Ephesians 5, where he devotes far more attention to the husband’s love than he does to the wife’s submission:

*"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother,*

*and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." (Ephesians 5:21-33)*

### III. Instructions for All (1 Peter 3:8 – 11)

Now God will give instructions for all of us.

*"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: but contrariwise 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." (1 Peter 3:8-11)*

#### A. What We Should Be (vs. 8 – 9)

In verses 8 and 9, God gives us characteristics that need to be part of our lives if we are going to get along as Christians. Remember, we are talking about relationships.

- *"be ye all of one mind"* (ὁμόφρονες) – likeminded, willing to agree
- *"having compassion"* (συμπαθεῖς) – suffering with someone (notice the Greek transliteration - sympathize)
- *"love as brethren"* (φιλάδελφοι) – fraternal affection
- *"be pitiful"* (εὐσπλαγχνοι) – tenderhearted
- *"be courteous"* (φιλόφρονες) – friendly or kind
- *"not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing"* The word, "rendering" (ἀποδιδόντες), means "to pay back;" The word, "railing" (λοιδορίαν) means "slander," or "reproachful speech." God says that when someone gives us evil or speaks evil against us, we are to give back blessing. The word, "blessing" (εὐλογία) is the same word as eulogy. When a person gives a eulogy at a funeral they speak nice things about the person. Peter is saying here that when someone is speaking bad to you or about you, you are to speak kindly back to them.

Jesus said the same thing in the *Sermon on the Mount*:

*"But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." (Luke 6:27-28)*



Paul gave similar instruction to the church at Ephesus:

*"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* (Ephesians 4:29-32)

Notice at the end of verse nine that we are “called” to do these things. We have been given so many unmerited blessings by God, so God has called us to give unmerited blessings back to others. This is huge! God gives grace – unmerited favour – to us, and we certainly do not deserve it. Now God wants us to do the same for others who don’t deserve it, either. And, by God’s grace, we can do it.

If we do this, God will give us greater blessings:

Warren Wiersbe had some great comments on this verse:

We must always be reminded of our *calling* as Christians, for this will help us love our enemies and do them good when they treat us badly. We are called to “inherit a blessing.” The persecutions we experience on earth today only add to our blessed inheritance of glory in heaven someday (Matt. 5:10–12). But we also inherit a blessing *today* when we treat our enemies with love and mercy. By sharing a blessing with them, we receive a blessing ourselves! Persecution can be a time of spiritual enrichment for a believer. The saints and martyrs in church history all bear witness to this fact.<sup>1</sup>

## **B. What We Should Do (vs. 10 – 11)**

Beginning in verse 10, Peter quotes from Psalm 34:12 – 16:

*"What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."* (Psalm 34:12-16)

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 412.

There is a perfect little three-point outline found in verses 10 and 11:

### **1. Refrain – Watch Your Tongue**

*"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."* (James 3:6-8)

*"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."* (Ephesians 4:29)

### **2. Eschew – Watch Your Testimony**

Eschew means to turn away from or to shun. It has the idea of being repulsed by something. God wants us not just to reject evil; He wants us to be repulsed by it. To hate it like He hates it.

### **3. Ensue – Work for Tranquility**

Ensue means to chase after. What are you chasing after? Peter says that we are to chase after peace – harmony, tranquility, a lack of discord. There is so much discord in this world. Our nation is literally being ripped apart. Christians should not be part of the problem; we should be working toward peace. You can do that by not saying things that are going to add to the division.

### **Conclusion (1 Peter 3:12)**

*"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."* (1 Peter 3:12)

God rewards those who obey him and follow His instructions. He says:

#### **A. God is watching out for you.**

*"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."* (Proverbs 15:3)

#### **B. God is listening to you.**

#### **C. God is against those who would hurt you.**