

1 Peter Chapter 3

X. Living for God (cont.) - 1 Peter 3:1-7

D. In the Home - 1 Peter 3:1-7

1 Peter 3:1-7 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. 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. 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. 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.

The third area in which we are to display our godly character is that of the home. In many respects this is one of the most important and most difficult. It is easy to snow people on the outside who do not know us very well, it is extremely difficult to fool those we are around a lot. In fact, a person's character in the home is one of the requirements of those who wish to serve in the church (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1). A person who fails at home is not to be given spiritual leadership in the church.

As we look at this section we are immediately struck with the apparent disparity between the number of verses given to women (6) and the number given to men (1). The way around this is to look at the context of the passage. Peter is talking about how we as believers are to influence those in close relationships with us evangelistically (1 Peter 2:11-12). We do this by being model citizens, model employees, and now model spouses. The context of this passage is not that of how Christian marriages are to work, but how mixed marriages are to work, one where one spouse is a believer and the other is not. Additionally, the number of verses given to women is greater because of the social structures of those days. In Roman times it was unthinkable for a woman to become a Christian without the permission of her husband. To act independently of her husband as a bold act, and one that often brought shame and reproach on him. The dangers involved in a woman becoming a Christian were great, even to the point of divorce or death. She had little if any recourse under the law. On the other hand, however, whenever a man came to Christ it was almost assumed that his entire family would come to Christ as well. The woman usually followed the dictates of her husband as well as his religion. Therefore, it is very important for Peter to help women understand their response to an unbelieving husband, much more than helping men deal with an unbelieving wife.

1. Unbelieving Husbands - 1 Peter 3:1-6

How are wives to be a testimony and witness to an unbelieving husband?

a. A wife is to be in subjection to her own husband - 1 Peter 3:1

Note that Peter uses the phrase “her own husband.” A wife is always commanded to obey her own husband, not someone else’s. Some would like to assert that women are to constantly be in subjection to all men, but this is not so. In the home a woman is to submit to her husband’s headship, in the Church she is to submit (along with her husband) to the leadership of the Church.

It would be a great temptation for a woman who came to Christ to scorn her husband. Why should she submit to some pagan when there were a lot of other good men to whom she may seek a relationship. This is forbidden. Just because a woman comes to Christ she is not released from her duties as a wife to her husband and family.

- b. A wife is not to nag - 1 Peter 3:1

Secondly, a wife is not to nag her husband into becoming a believer. This does not mean that she does not witness to him, it means that she does not constantly harangue him about becoming a believer.

- c. A wife is to live an exemplary life - 1 Peter 3:1-2

Thirdly, a woman is to live an exemplary life in her chaste (modest) conduct. Her attitudes and responses under her husband’s authority will do more to win him to Christ than any amount of nagging.

Note that her husband will not be saved without THE word, but without A word. The word of God is always necessary in the process of salvation. When the time is right, the word can be used in testimony to her husband. Peter’s point here, however, is that the conduct of the wife will make that opportunity available.

- d. A wife is to be preoccupied with the inner self - not merely the external - 1 Peter 3:3-4

It is natural for a woman to be overly concerned about the external. If a woman is to reach her husband for Christ, she must concentrate on the inner character of life that a man will find irresistible, and not merely the external that fades. No amount of external beauty will make up for a rotten attitude and character.

Peter contrasts hairdos, jewelry, and clothing with a meek and quiet spirit. He is not saying that a woman should not do her hair, wear jewelry, or wear pretty clothes. He is saying that if that is the preoccupation then the inner self will be neglected. The most costly thing in God’s book is the attitude of the heart.

- e. A wife to pattern her life after Sarah and other holy women - 1 Peter 3:5-6

In order to lend weight to his argument, Peter looks at the godly women of old, including Sarah. His point is that just as Sarah obeyed Abraham and exhibited her respect for him, so should they do the same to their unbelieving husbands. Moreover, by doing so they place themselves under God’s protection and need not be unduly concerned about retaliation from their husbands.

2. Unbelieving Wives - 1 Peter 3:7

How are husbands to be a testimony and witness to their unbelieving wife?

a. Dwell with them according to knowledge - 1 Peter 3:7

A husband who is married to an unbelieving wife needs to dwell with her according to understanding. In other words, he is to understand where she is coming from and the things that may be bothering her. It is not right for him to force her into becoming a believer, but he must be patient with her while God does a work in her heart.

b. Honor them as a weaker vessel - 1 Peter 3:7

Secondly, he is to recognize her as the weaker vessel, himself being the weak vessel. He does this by honoring her. This has the idea of respect, consideration, loving attention and care. These qualities were usually not part of the first-century male psyche, which often viewed women as property or objects. A man who becomes a believer and immediately treats his wife with respect and dignity will have a powerful witness.

c. Treat them as a fellowheirs of the grace of life - 1 Peter 3:7

Thirdly, a believing husband is to treat his wife as a fellowheir. In other words, she is not to be his footstool or be treated as property, but she is to be given respect and love.

3. The Incentive

Why should believing wives treat their unbelieving husbands as outlined in verses 1-6 and believing husbands treat their unbelieving wives as outlined in verse 7? It is so their prayers be not hindered. What prayer would that be? In context it would be the prayer of salvation for their spouses. A lousy character lends little support to a Christian testimony. Only by being model spouses will the unbelieving spouse be drawn to Christ.

XII. The Good Life - 1 Peter 3:8-17

Many would like to live a full and rewarding life. In this section, Peter gives us instructions as to how to do that.

The following outline is taken from John F. MacArthur's series on 1 Peter, tapes GC60-32 to 60-35.

A. Living the Good Life - 1 Peter 3:8-12

1. The Right Attitudes - 1 Peter 3:8

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

a. Be of one mind (*homophrones*)

The concept here is one of harmony, an harmonious mindset. Division and conflict should be completely foreign to the believer (unless of course some issue of doctrine or holiness is involved).

When the world sees Christians as constantly bickering and fighting among themselves they take great delight in pointing out the hypocrisy.

Philippians 2:2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

b. Have compassion (*sumpatheis*)

Secondly we are to be compassionate for one another. This word in the original is a compound one consisting of *sun* (together) and *patheo* (to suffer). We are compassionate with one another when we feel the hurts and pains of others.

Philippians 2:1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

c. Love as brothers (*philadelphoi*)

We are to exhibit love to other believers just as we would our own flesh and blood. In Christ, we are all part of the same family.

d. Be pitiful (*eusplagchnoi*)

This word is interesting. It has as part of it the word for bowels. It means "to feel in the bowels with." The emotions of compassion, care, and concern and felt in the bowels. As believers, are to weep with those that weep and rejoice with those that rejoice.

Philippians 2:1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

e. Be courteous (*tapenophrones*)

The idea behind this word is that we are not to be haughty over others. We are not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought, but be courteous and condescending to all men.

Philippians 2:3-4 (Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

2. The Right Responses - 1 Peter 3:9

1 Peter 3:9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

a. Do not retaliate

One of the greatest virtues is to avoid retaliation for evil. In fact, a man is most like God when he chooses to forgive rather than retaliate.

Romans 12:17-19 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

b. Do not revile

This refers to our speech. When men speak (*loidorian*) all manner of evil against us we are not to return angry words back at them. The supreme model of this is Christ, who when he was taunted sought the Father's forgiveness for his tormentors rather than vengeance.

1 Peter 2:23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

c. Render blessing

Instead of retaliation and angry words we are to bless (*eulogia*) those who persecute us. This has the idea of forgiving, praying for, and thanking God for those who bring us pain.

Matthew 5:11-12 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Matthew 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Romans 12:14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

3. The Right Reason - 1 Peter 3:10-11

*1 Peter 3:10 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:
1 Peter 3:11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.*

Why are we to exhibit the above responses? It is because of the injunction of Scripture which commands us to act that way. Peter quotes two passages from the OT to support this, Psalm 34:12-14 and Psalm 37:27. As believers we are to hate evil and love good.

Psalms 34:12-14 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.

Psalms 37:27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.

4. The Right Incentive - 1 Peter 3:12

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.

What incentive do we have to do good, hate evil, and hunt peace? It is because of the fear of the Lord. The phrase “eyes of the Lord” is often used to refer to his watchcare over his people. God is constantly watching his own in order to preserve and care for them. The “face of the Lord” on the other hand refers to his judgment, his displeasure. When we obey the word of God by doing good and hating evil we invite God’s careful watch over us. When we disobey we open ourselves up to his displeasure and chastening.

Psalms 34:15-16 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.

B. Securities in a Hostile World - 1 Peter 3:13-17

1. Security #1 - A Passion for Goodness - 1 Peter 3:13

1 Peter 3:13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

Our first security in a hostile world is that of a godly lifestyle. Those who have a passion for goodness as outlined in the previous verses will preserve themselves from the scorn of others. Note that this is not a blanket promise, but a general axiom. Those men who live good and honest lives do not become the object, generally, of the wrath of society.

2. Security #2 - A Willingness to Suffer - 1 Peter 3:14

1 Peter 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness's sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

A second security is that when we suffer, and it is assumed that we will, we can rest assured in that God is with us through that suffering and is using it to work a far better and eternal weight of glory for us. As believers persecution and suffering should be a normal part of life. We are strangers and aliens in this world, and as such often find ourselves subject to the world’s ridicule and scorn. When we do, we can take joy in suffering along with Christ. We need not be afraid of the world or troubled since we have the peace of God in our hearts.

3. Security #3 - A Devotion to Christ - 1 Peter 3:15a

1 Peter 3:15a But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts...

Thirdly, we are to sanctify (set apart, exalt, glorify) the Lord God (Christ) in our sufferings. Behind every trial we face should be the knowledge that the Lord is in control and is working all things out according to his master plan. We need not be afraid when we have God on our side.

4. Security #4 - A Ready Answer - 1 Peter 3:15b

1 Peter 3:15b ...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:

Fourthly, we are to have a ready answer. The idea here is that when we find ourselves subject to persecution and questioning by unbelievers, we are to have an answer (*apologia*) for the hope that is in us. Our answer also needs to be given with the right attitude, meekness and fear (respect). Loud, angry answers and disrespect will cloud the truth of the message of Christ to the unbelieving world.

5. Security #5 - A Pure Conscience - 1 Peter 3:16-17

1 Peter 3:16-17 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, 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.

Finally, we are to have a pure conscience, devoid of accusation. Often when we are reviled or accused we find that the accusation is just or founded in truth. We need to live our lives in such a way that when we are accused, we can find no element of truth in that. A pure conscience is a strong defense against the accusations of ungodly men.

Acts 23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

Acts 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

1 Timothy 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

XIII. Christ's Triumph in Suffering - 1 Peter 3:18-22

Peter not only wants us to pattern our suffering after Christ (1 Peter 2:21ff.) but to also realize that Christ triumphed in his suffering as we can do as well. We don't have to face our suffering with a "stiff upper lip", we can actually triumph.

A. Christ's Suffering Was Ultimate - 1 Peter 3:18a

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once ...

One of the greatest truths regarding Christ's suffering is its finality. His suffering was the most intense, yet it was final in the sense that it need never be repeated. The word "also" points back to the reality of our suffering in verses 13ff. Just as we suffer, so Christ also suffered. The difference at this point is that Christ paid the ultimate price, his own life.

B. Christ's Suffering Was Undeserved - 1 Peter 3:18b

1 Peter 3:18 ...suffered for sins...

Christ's death (suffering) was also undeserved. He did not sin, nor was he guilty of any offense that required death., yet Christ died for our sins. Contrary to what some may say, Christ did not *become* sin, he *bore* sin. He no more became sin than the sacrifices of the OT became sin when the priests and offerers laid

hands on them. Christ took upon himself the sins of all men, but he never became in essence sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

C. Christ's Suffering Was Vicarious and Substitutionary- 1 Peter 3:18c

1 Peter 3:18 ...the just for the unjust...

Thirdly, Christ's suffering was vicarious in that he took the place of someone else. The cornerstone truth of the Gospel is this exact point. Christ took our place by taking upon himself the wrath of God against sin. By paying the price for our sin, he then can be the justifier of those who believe in him.

Romans 3:25-26 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

D. Christ's Suffering Was Purposeful - 1 Peter 3:18d

1 Peter 3:18 ...that he might bring us to God...

Fourthly, Christ's suffering was purposeful. One of the things we must keep in mind as we suffer for our faith is that there is an ultimate purpose behind it that transcends the suffering. God is doing a work, not only in our own lives, but many times in the lives of others. Christ's death did a great work in that it brought us to God. Without his death on the cross, the way to heaven would be forever barred.

E. Christ's Suffering Was Triumphant - 1 Peter 3:18e-22

1. It was not permanent - 1 Peter 3:18e

1 Peter 3:18e-22 ...being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

The first triumphant fact about Christ's death (suffering) was that it was not permanent. Christ did die in the flesh on the cross, but he did not stay that way. Three days later he rose again from the dead thereby showing all creation that his sacrifice for sin was accepted and that he had fulfilled the Father's plan.

Romans 1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

2. It resulted in triumph over Christ's enemies - 1 Peter 3:19-20

1 Peter 3:19-20 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

Secondly, Christ's suffering resulted in his triumph over his enemies. As we look at these enemies, we can note several in the Scripture. In Hebrews 2:14-15 we are told of Christ's victory over Satan and death. In Colossians 2 we are told of his triumph over Satan and his demons. In this passage, we are told of his triumph over a class of fallen angels known as the "spirits in prison."

The word for preach (*kerusso*) is not the general word used in the context of evangelism, but in the context of an official proclamation. Christ did not attempt to evangelize these spirits, but he proclaimed his victory over them. A comparative passage in Colossians also indicates this as well.

Colossians 2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Who are these spirits? Are they the souls of men, or are they some group of demons?

a. Their identity - 1 Peter 3:19a

These spirits are in prison (*phulaka*). Comparing this passage with 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 1:6 we can make a strong argument for the identity of these spirits being the angels who sinned by cohabitating with the pre-flood women of Genesis 6. Evidently these fallen angels tried to produce an un-redeemable race of people prior to the flood. In fact, one of the reasons God brought the flood was to wipe out this race of "giants" (*nephelim*).

Peter's use of the ark and reference to Noah, as well as verse 22 which states that Christ has been exalted above all angels, principalities, and powers (which always refers to angelic beings in Scripture), lends credence to this identity as well.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

Jude 1:6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Genesis 6:1-4 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

b. Their location - 1 Peter 3:19b

We are told that these spirits were in prison. Comparing this verse with the other two in 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 1:6 we understand this prison to be the abyss (*abussos*) or bottomless pit. Evidently the sin of these angels was so great that it caused them to be consigned to this place of confinement reserved for demons. In Matthew 8 we read

that the demons implored Jesus that he not send them to the abyss. It appears that whenever demons overstep the boundaries God has placed on them they subject themselves to confinement in the abyss.

c. Their crime - 1 Peter 3:20a

From Genesis 6 we read that the crime these angels committed was that of producing a demon-like seed which was unredeemable. God has provided no way of redemption for demons, only men. If Satan was able to so thoroughly mix angels and men, he would succeed in thwarting the redemptive plan of God. He was not successful as the flood demonstrates.

d. Their destiny

The angels that sinned are reserved in chains of darkness until they are judged and sentenced to the Lake of Fire for eternity.

Jude 1:6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

3. It resulted in the salvation of those who believe in Christ - 1 Peter 3:21

1 Peter 3:21 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:

Thirdly, Christ's triumph in suffering results in the salvation of those who believe in him. The metaphor of the flood and the ark in this verse is rich. Just as the ark protected those inside it from the judgment of God, so Christ protects those who identify with him from the wrath of God. The baptism (*baptizo*) Peter is referring to here is not water baptism, but identification with Christ (the word *baptizo* means foremost identification.) Noah and his family were "immersed" in the judgment of God while at the same time being protected from that judgment by the safety of the ark.

Another reason we can give as to why Peter is not referring to water baptism is that he specifically says, "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but the answer of a good conscience toward God." Only those who have been identified with Christ and immersed into him have a good conscience toward God.

4. It resulted in Christ's exaltation to God's right hand - 1 Peter 3:22

1 Peter 3:22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

Christ's final triumph in his suffering is that of exaltation. Because Christ suffered the most, God will honor him the most. The term "right hand of God" refers to the place of honor. Whenever someone sat on the right hand of a king, they were seen as being in the place of great honor and power. Christ has been exalted over all creation, and over every created angelic being, because of his triumph through his suffering.

Hebrews 10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Philippians 2:9-11 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.