

Connection to 1 Peter 3:1-12

It is important not to overlook the connection Peter makes between these verses and the overall message of his letter so far. The immediate context is the submission of slaves to masters who cause them to suffer (1 Pet. 2:18-20), as well as the submission of Christ to suffering death on a cross (1 Pet. 2:21-25). Now Peter raised the issue of wives' submitting to their husbands as a good, beautiful, and godly disposition. Similarly, husbands are called to treat their wives with understanding and honor as "coheirs of the grace of life" (v. 7).

Introduction/Opening

Peter highlighted God's design for a well-ordered and flourishing home, as does Paul elsewhere (Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18-19). While cultural trends are moving away from the traditional interpretation of gender roles, as well as the traditional definition of marriage, Peter reminds us again of the beauty of God's design for marriage between a man and a woman.

Outline

- I. Wife, Submit to Your Husband (1 Pet. 3:1-6)
 - a. Submit in order to win your unbelieving husband to Christ (vv. 1-2). Believing wives have an opportunity to win over their unbelieving husbands by the way they live pure, reverent lives. Since marriage is designed to be a picture of Christ and His bride, the Church (Eph. 5:22-33), Peter encouraged wives to live out the gospel before their husbands with humility and submission in the hopes that their husbands might fulfill their part of God's design.
 - b. Submit in order to display your true beauty in Christ (vv. 3-6). Peter argued that submission of wives to their husbands is a beautiful thing. It reflects "a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very valuable in God's eyes." There's no need to focus on outward beauty, since the inward beauty of a submissive wife is of greater quality.
- II. Husband, Understand and Honor Your Wife (1 Pet. 3:7)
 - a. Live with understanding toward your wife. Peter characterized wives as having a "weaker nature," which some have taken wrongly to mean "inferior" or "of lesser status." But that's not his point; rather, Peter exhorted husbands to consider their wives of such value that they care for them sympathetically.
 - b. Honor your wife. Remember that she is created equally in God's image, as you are (Gen. 1-2). Peter also reminded husbands that their wives are "coheirs of the grace of life" and belong to the bride of Christ, for whom He laid down His life. There is never a case in which a husband should treat his wife any less than he would any fellow believer. His marital love and commitment should display high honor for his wife, a sign of great favor in God's sight (Prov. 18:22).

- III. Believer, Be a Blessing to Others (1 Pet. 3:8-12)
- a. Note that Peter described how believers are to live among one another: “like-minded and sympathetic.” Just as there is submission and sympathy in the marital relationship, so also should we submit to one another (Eph. 5:21) and have sympathy toward each other.
 - b. The actions of believers should be what you’d expect from those who’ve been transformed by the gospel—loving, compassionate, humble, and forgiving. Peter confidently declares, “You were called for this, so that you can inherit a blessing” (v. 9).
 - c. God is paying attention to how we speak and how we act, and He will judge accordingly. Quoting Psalm 34:12-16, Peter reminded his readers that the Lord is watching over the righteous, but His face is set against those who do evil.

Conclusion

Jesus has always called His people to live counter-culturally. This world is fallen and does not honor God, nor does it live according to His ways. But believers are different, and that’s why even our marriages must display the gospel and the glory of God in startling ways to the eyes of a culture that has abandoned God’s good design. Unlike the self-centered, self-protective, self-advancing disposition of the spirit of this age, believers must walk in love, humility, sacrifice, and service to one another—living out a focus on others that follows in the steps of Jesus.

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