

For the Sake of Others

1 Peter 3:1-7

Before we move on, let's take a look back at what we have covered so far. Under the Roman government, the persecution of Christians had risen to the point where Christians were being forced to leave their homes and flee to other countries. As strangers in a foreign land, they received this letter from Peter. No doubt they would have been eager to hear from an Apostle of Jesus Christ who could give them counsel on what to do in these desperate times.

1. Read the following verses and detail the instructions Peter has provided up to this point.

1:15 _____

Why? (v. 16) _____

1:22 _____

Why? _____

2:2 _____

Why? _____

2:12 _____

Why? _____

2:13 _____

Why? (v. 13, 15) _____

2:18 _____

Why? (v. 21) _____

Peter encouraged these persecuted believers to carry on, conducting themselves in a manner that would simply bring glory to God. Because when God is glorified, people get saved. In every situation, Peter was asking them to be radically different from what would be natural or expected so that some might be saved. In chapter three, Peter will continue to encourage holy living for the sake of others.

Read 1 Peter 3:1-4.

2. Use verse one to answer the following questions:

- a. Whom is Peter addressing? _____
- b. What instruction is given? _____
- c. What reason is given for doing this? _____

d. What attribute of submission will be observed? (v. 2) _____

While Peter addressed the powerful effect that submission (characterized by chaste conduct accompanied by fear) can have on an unbelieving husband, he also touched on aspects that should be present in the lives of all godly women. Let's break the verses apart to give us a clear understanding of this passage and what it means for us as women, whether married or single.

3. Record the positive attributes that should be exemplified in the life of a godly wife/woman.

Conduct and Description of a Godly Woman
v. 1 Godly wives are to be submissive to their own husbands
v. 2
v. 4b

First, we have submission, which pertains to married women. We will circle back to that, but first, let's discuss what can and should be applied to all women regardless of marital status.

Second, godly women are to have chaste conduct accompanied by fear. The Greek word for "*chaste*" is *hagnos*, and it appears eight times in the New Testament. Of the eight times *hagnos* is used, only three are translated as "chaste" (noted in bold below). The word *hagnos* denotes purity and can have three distinct meanings. It can mean pure from carnality, modest (**2 Corinthians 11:2**, **Titus 2:5**), pure from every fault, immaculate (2 Corinthians 7:11, Philippians 4:8, 1 Timothy 5:22, **1 Peter 3:2**, 1 John 3:3), or it can mean clean.

In 1 Peter 3:2, chaste means to be free from every fault, immaculate, which clearly aligns with the holy living for the sake of others that Peter has been addressing in chapters one and two.

Fear – reverence and respect (for authority, rank, dignity, husband)

4. Using the definitions provided, rewrite the phrase "chaste conduct, accompanied by fear" for further clarity of its meaning.

5. Chaste conduct is a high bar and certainly not something we can achieve on our own. Read the following verses and record what you learn about how we can pursue chaste conduct.

Matthew 16:24

John 14:23

Romans 12:1-2

Philippians 1:6

6. According to these verses, what steps will you take to ensure that you are growing in your personal knowledge and understanding of God?

Third, godly women should adorn themselves with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.

Gentle – mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness (controlled strength); a disposition of spirit that accepts God’s dealings with us as good and therefore does not dispute or resist; the opposite of self-assertiveness or self-interest; trust in God’s goodness and control over every situation

Quiet – tranquil, undisturbed, peaceful

7. **THINK:** After reflecting on these definitions, why do you think a gentle and quiet spirit translates into incorruptible beauty to those around us?

8. **THINK HARDER:** How do you think a woman with chaste conduct and a quiet and gentle spirit might influence the people around her, whether they be her husband, family, peers, co-workers, or even a perfect stranger?

9. How can a wife model gentleness (as described above) for her husband?

10. How can a wife model the quietness described in this passage for her husband?

11. What further incentive do we have as women to have a gentle and quiet spirit? (v. 4)

<i>Precious</i> – excellent, of surpassing value, or great price

A woman's true value and strength are expressed in her Christlike choice to apply God's goodness and sovereignty to every situation (Luke 22:42), allowing her to speak and behave in an orderly and peaceful way.

Now, let's circle back to the specific area of conduct Peter mentioned regarding married women.

12. Record the opening statement of 1 Peter 3:1.

Submission is a word most view as negative. The Cambridge dictionary defines it as the act of allowing someone or something to have power over you. Its examples include a country that is bombed into submission and teachers giving in to parents' demands. From weakness to victimhood, the role of submission is rarely something someone grows up wanting to pursue in their own life.

But what is Biblical submission? Submission is one-half of a godly marriage, where loving leadership is the other half, as described by God's design for marriage. Submission is an act of courageous cooperation in which a wife willingly places herself under the loving, godly leadership of her husband. This symbiotic relationship is meant to mirror the sacrificial love and leadership of Jesus Christ and the respectful trust and obedience of His church.

The Greek word translated as "*submissive*" is ***hypotasso***. It is a military term used to describe the arrangement of troops under a leader's command. It describes the voluntary and strategic submission of soldiers for the good of the unit. God's design for husbands and wives is for two individual soldiers with unique God-given strengths to work as an orderly unit to carry out God's will in their marriage.

13. **THINK:** Why do you think a military term is appropriate in the context of marriage? Consider Ephesians 6:12 when answering.

When the power and strength of the wife (or husband) are used contrary to the roles laid out by God for marriage, they become destructive not only to the marriage but also to the family and even to the church. But when a wife voluntarily places herself under the leadership and order God has established, God's order in marriage becomes a powerful weapon against the enemy's attacks.

14. Ephesians 5 is another area of Scripture that discusses the roles of husbands and wives. According to Ephesians 5:1-2, what is the general context of this chapter?

As children of light, what are we called to do? (Eph 5)

v. 8-10 _____

v. 15 _____

v. 18 _____

The spirit-filled believer is described as one who does what?

v. 19 _____

v. 20 _____

v. 21 _____

Submission is part of being a surrendered follower of Jesus Christ, and it is made possible by the power of His Holy Spirit.

15. **THINK:** How do you think having a gentle and quiet spirit relates to submission?

Submission remains the wife's role even when the husband is not fulfilling his Biblical role in the marriage. While this can be difficult, we can trust that God always has a purpose in the way He chooses to do things.

16. Read 1 Peter 3:1 and remind yourself of the powerful effect a submissive wife can have on an unbelieving husband.

This is just one of the benefits of God's order in marriage. It can be life-changing and, in some cases, life-giving! Submission is not a position of weakness; it's choosing to walk in obedience to our all-knowing and trustworthy God, which in turn brings Him glory.

17. Whether you are married, widowed, divorced, or single, how does God's design for leadership and submission in marriage encourage and inspire you in your own marriage, in preparing your heart for a future marriage, or in encouraging someone in their marriage?

Now, let's take a closer look at the things in a woman's life that will not contribute to winning hearts for the Lord.

18. If a husband's heart can be won for the Lord without a word, what opposite reaction can we assume to be true?

19. **THINK:** How might the wife of an unbeliever try to use her words in winning her husband for the Lord?

20. **THINK HARDER:** How could the use of words hinder an unbelieving husband from turning to the Lord for salvation?

Think of the testimony that naturally emanates from a woman whose conduct is not only holy but is also accompanied by reverence and respect, while resting on an unwavering trust in God, meeting every unexpected turn with a sense of tranquil peace.

21. Compare the adornments described in verses 3-4.

Do not let your adornment merely be	Rather	Let your adornment be

Some cultural context here is important to fully understand what Peter was trying to convey. The women of the Roman Empire used their dress, jewelry, and hair to demonstrate their marital status, wealth, and social status. Elaborate hairstyles, accessorized with jeweled pins, gold and silver hairnets, and additional hairpieces, required the daily help of personal hairdressers. In fact, the ways in which the women adorned themselves became so over the top that anti-opulence laws were passed and later repealed when the women took to the streets in protest.

22. **THINK:** What do you think these women hoped to achieve by dressing and adorning themselves in this way?

Read 1 Peter 3:5-6.

23. In contrast, Peter offered up Sarah/Sarai as an example to look to when striving to keep your behavior honorable among unbelievers (1 Peter 2:11). How does Genesis 12:11, 14 describe Sarah's outward appearance?

24. How is God's love and adornment of Israel described in Ezekiel 16:9-14?

25. According to 1 Peter 3:5, how did the holy women of the Old Testament adorn themselves?

26. In what way did Sarah's incorruptible beauty manifest itself?

27. **THINK:** Sarah had a beautiful outward appearance. Abraham sent jewelry as a gift for his future daughter-in-law, Rebekah (Genesis 24:22). The Lord speaks of adorning Israel in jewelry and fine clothing. So, the point of this passage cannot be the forbidding of women to braid their hair and wear jewelry. What do you think Peter hoped to articulate to the women who read his letter about adornment and the beauty of a woman?

Peter sums up this section to wives and godly women with the admonition that we can be like Sarah if we do good (submit, chaste conduct with respect) and do not give way to fear (a quiet and gentle spirit).

Read 1 Peter 3:7.

Again, some cultural context is helpful in fully understanding Peter's point. Men in the Roman Empire had absolute rule over their wives, and the wives bore all responsibility in the marriage. What Peter proposed was indeed radically different from the culture they were living in.

28. Use verse 7 to fill in the chart below.

Two Things Husbands are Called to Do
What Two Truths About Their Wives Should Encourage These Actions
What Would be the Consequence of Not Doing These Things

Peter made it undeniably clear that, unlike men under Roman rule, Christian husbands share in the responsibilities of marriage.

29. **THINK:** What comes to mind when you think of a man dwelling with his wife with understanding and giving her honor?

Godly men are called to recognize and care for the feminine nature of their wives. In addition, they are to remember that while they have been given a place of leadership in the marriage, their wives have spiritual and eternal equality as children of God. Failure to honor God by loving and caring for their wives has very real spiritual consequences (hindered prayers).

A Closer Look at Without a Word

1 Peter 3:1

These opening verses of 1 Peter 3 provide inspiring guidance for women. While directed specifically at wives, the underlying principles are relevant to everyone. The Bible clearly emphasizes the importance of controlling our speech and being mindful of

our words. As 1 Peter 3:1 instructs, individuals who do not follow God's Word are more likely to be influenced by what they witness in our lives than by our spoken words.

30. Read 1 Peter 3:1. What does this verse say about our speech? Think about what is being said and how it can be applied. Consider the definition of *word* (below) when combined with the word *without*.

Word – discourse, instruction

31. Whether you are married, single, divorced, or widowed, the Bible has much to say about our words. What do the following verses teach you about the importance of your words? Be specific about how you can apply these verses to the relationships in your life.

Proverbs 13:3

Proverbs 17:28

Matthew 15:11

Ephesians 4:29

James 1:19, 26

32. Read 1 Peter 3:4. What keyword in this verse relates to *without a word*?

33. How would you rate your ability to be quiet when necessary? How can you do better?

34. If you are married, go back and read Ephesians 4:29. Does your speech build up and minister grace to your husband? Why or why not?

Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few.

- Ecclesiastes 5:2

35. Scripture is clear that our words are to be few, carefully chosen, and edifying to the hearer. How would *without a word* and *a gentle and quiet spirit* be a benefit to a marriage relationship and/or all relationships?

He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.

- Proverbs 17:27-28

36. How can *without a word* and *a gentle and quiet spirit* bring glory to God?
