

Good morning! The Lord bless you and give you peace! We are continuing our consideration of this section of husband wife relationships and if you remember we have taken pains to show that none of this makes sense outside of the knowledge that the Christian life is a response to the reality of God. In fact, it also reminds us that a Christian is most concerned with the fulfillment of God's desires above all. Remember Luke's recounting of Christ's interaction with the crowds that followed Him. ^{ESV} Luke 14:33, "So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." A true Christian, a true disciple of Christ, is a person who has been confronted by the reality of Christ's presence, His preaching, and finds more value in that than ANYTHING else in this world. We just happen to be looking at what that looks like in a married relationship, and as the text has been speaking to women at this point, we have been considering Peter's admonition of what it means to be a Christian wife.

Last week we finished with a consideration of what Peter means when he tells Christian wives that they are to respect, or revere, their husbands. **Revering one's husband is a disposition that holds one's husband up in an honorable light as much as is possible.** There are applicable points to be made for both men and women from this charge, but since we spent our time there last week I will encourage you to go back and read or listen to that sermon on our website.

This week I want to begin by considering the second part of this charge, that of a pure conduct.

3:2 Purity. In some translations it is translated as being **chaste**. It is a Greek word that is used to describe an attribute of divinity. Hold that thought in your mind and then consider the word in Greek. It is the word **ἄγνός**, agnos. It is the word from which we derive the word agnostic. Agnos means pure or innocent, the lexical development of this word includes the idea of "not knowing." Of course, that is the idea that was adopted the idea of being agnostic. Those who are agnostic say they can't know if there is a God or not. **But the word really has the sense of moral innocence, or as the word gives the sense, not knowing through experience what is immoral.** That is why it is used to describe attributes of divinity. God is holy. He has never sinned, nor will He ever sin. There, of course, is the implication. Wives, God wants you to display moral purity, uprightness within your marriage. But consider the context. From this charge Peter immediately goes into a discussion about external beauty and how the ultimate commitment of a Christian woman is internal, spiritual beauty. *Peter is pitting the ability to pursue this kind of purity against a primary commitment to personal beauty. Here is the biblical principle, when the external is more important than the internal, there will be moral failure.* And therein is the application to both men and women. Why would there be moral failure? Well, consider the phrase that Peter introduces in **verse 4**, "which in God's site is very precious." **The beauty that draws God's attention is internal.** It is a desire for moral uprightness and a life that reflects that **that draws Gods attention.** A commitment to the external beauty over the internal beauty draws the attention of others and seeks their praise and admiration.

Think about it in the context of a wedding. Why do people normally dress up for their weddings? In a healthy relationship, it isn't just that a man or woman wants to look nice for everyone, it is that above all they want to **look beautiful for their spouse to be!** So, in relationship to what Peter is saying, **are you living for the gaze of God?** This principle certainly apply to each gender, and it applies in this way way, if we are not living for the approving and joyful gaze of God, for whom are we living?

In **John 12** we read of Jesus having a confrontation with the religious leaders. You may recall that Jesus often rebuffed the religiosity of the religious leaders because it was external. He called them whitewashed walls with rotteness inside. He rebuked them for their desire to be seen by men and praised by them, and unfortunately, so did many people in Jesus time, as we in our own. Consider ^{ESV} John 12:42-43, "⁴² Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ **for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.**"

You see, loved ones, often times we see moral failure in a sexual context, or we may even apply this to impropriety with resources or those under us. ***What the Bible is making clear is that those are expressions of a moral failure that has already happened and poisoned our souls, and that is that we worship the approval of men more than the approval of God.*** Now remember that Peter is saying that a woman that lives this way will effectively lead her husband to Christ if he is not a believer. Now think about this. We've already seen that Peter has underscored the idea of submission, but he has also made clear that submission goes no further than that which is honorable. This call to moral purity underscores this. It tells the husband that a woman is under the authority and mandate of God first. She is not only not to surrender to any moral impropriety, but her ultimate responsibility is not to her husband, but to God. She lives for the approval of God first. She lives for the attention of God because of her commitment to internal beauty.

I don't think we readily grasp how scandalized the culture of the day would have been with such a statement. Many commentators bring out that in that time the social structures and religious affiliations of the husband were to be embraced exclusively by the wife. Peter is underscoring a moral ethic but is saying that a Christian woman's relationship is first with God and then with her family.

Now before we get into any application, let's just consider **3:3-4** for a moment.

3:3-4 do not let your ...but the hidden person of the heart. Again, the key to this aspect of the exhortation is really that last phrase of this section, "**which in God's sight is very precious.**" It places our focus on God's gaze directed towards us for good. But to be clear, Peter is not saying that it is wrong to attend to one's person with an eye towards beauty. **Herein lies another principle of interpretation, and that is that we allow the context to determine the interpretation.** So, let's look at the immediate context.

"Do not let your adorning be external – the braiding of hair, the wearing of gold, or the putting on of clothing." If we say that the bible teaches that women are not to do their hair in pretty ways, or wear jewelry, or wear nice clothing, and we use this verse to try and prove that, not only would we be misusing this verse and misunderstand the teaching, but we will have a big problem when we try to apply that to the next phrase, "**the putting on of clothing.**" **Peter is obviously not teaching that nakedness is the model for godliness.** As we said earlier, Peter is teaching us that **the primary passion of a Christian women, and this would certainly apply to men, is that their inner person would reflect the beauty that would honor our Creator.**

So, loved ones, who are you living for? Whose attention are you seeking? Earlier we considered the idea of purity. Remember the word was "**agnos**" in Greek. It has the idea of innocence, lack of knowledge with regard to what is morally corrupt. Here is the amazing thing. When we consider Jesus, who is the template of our success, we immediately see that Jesus was concerned with God the Father's joy. Jesus wanted to please the Father above all else. And the most incredible act of beautification that Jesus participated in was in redeeming those who were born sinners. You and I left to ourselves are experts in sin and cannot live in purity. So Jesus, the one who knew no sin, the one who was **agnov**, was made sin. God placed our sins upon Jesus Christ so that Jesus might eradicate sin on the cross, and then God could take Christ's purity, rightness, beauty, and place it upon us.

ESV 2 Corinthians 5:20b-21, "We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Ladies and gentlemen, Jesus Christ shows us how a commitment to purity can be redemptive. The beauty is this, that Jesus has taken that load of paying for unrighteousness. Ours is only now to reflect His grace and mercy that leads to salvation. We are the light of the world, says Jesus, but the light in us is the light of Christ. That light is most powerfully reflected in us when we live for the beautification of the soul.

Peter completes his exhortation to married ladies in this last section by reminding us that there have been examples laid up for us from biblical role models.

3:5-6 ^{ESV} ⁵ For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, ⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

Unfortunately, the ESV translates this last phrase by making this a conditional clause “if” which brings quite a bit of confusion, in my opinion. The Greek literally reads, “you are her children, doing good and not fearing anything frightening.” Clowney gives a smoother translation, “of whom you have become children, doing good and not being afraid of any terror.” (Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter*, IVP 1988, pg 133)

One commentator encapsulates what is being communicated here with this thought, “There are potential fears for a Christian woman who sets out to be submissive to her unsaved husband, as to where such submission might lead. But Peter’s instruction to the wife is not to be intimidated or fearful, but as a principle, she is to submit to her husband. This precludes any coercion to sin, disobedience to God’s word, or imposition of physical harm.” (Grace To You Study Bible Application, [1 Peter 3:6](#))

Ladies, as I’ve said before in these sermons I say again, God has designed you in a distinguished way that uniquely reveals something of His glory, and that in a way that no man could ever distinguish. You are valued. You are prized. You are necessary. And for all Christians I close with the reminder of what Paul exhorts in ^{ESV} [Philippians 4:8](#) ⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure (*agnos*), whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Amen