

Good morning. The Lord bless you and give you peace. We have been picking our way through Peter's exhortation to husbands and wives. As we embark on another pass through this text, let me ask you this. If you were writing a letter to a church in our day, what are the fundamental Christian principles would you highlight, and how would you apply them? Because **Christianity is not meant to me a simple diagram of morality**, Peter underscores his teaching by highlighting the sovereign purpose and work of God the Father, through Jesus Christ, and for our benefit. Once he highlights those things, Peter underscores how we are to respond as those who have now been affected by the provision of salvation through Jesus Christ. So, on the onset, if you are looking into Christianity, please understand that **Christianity is a life pattern of living in response to what we have come to see and know in the person of Jesus Christ**. Everything streams from that understanding. In point of fact, Peter's final written words to the church which are preserved in his second epistle say this:

(^{ESV} 2 Peter 3:18), "But grow in the grace and **knowledge** of the Lord Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and to eternity. Amen"

The Christian is in constant response to the encounter and relationship that we have been brought into by the mercy of Christ! Paul says it like this,

^{ESV} **Ephesians 1:15-19** "15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may **give you the Spirit of wisdom** and of **revelation** in the **knowledge** of him, 18 **having the eyes of your hearts enlightened**, that you may **know** what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe,"

So, in response to our encounter with Christ we find Peter's words now in relationship to marriage, and now we pick up where we left off, which was **3:2 When they see your respectful and pure conduct**. Remember that the primary purpose of the believer is to glorify God in Jesus Christ, and we see that in **2:9** of this text. The greatest glory that God gets through Jesus Christ is through the gospel. The gospel is this, that mankind is born in sin and lives a sinful pattern of life. Evil is here because mankind has chosen to do what is evil. But God sent Jesus Christ to earth to fix our problem of sin by paying dying on our behalf. His death pays for the penalty of our sin before God. Jesus Christ rose from the dead the third day, and because of that, all those who accept Christ's death on their behalf are given the Holy Spirit as a guarantee that God will take us to heaven where we are finally removed from our sinful flesh. That is the gospel. Peter talks about it as being transferred from darkness to light. Here in this marriage covenant, Peter is showing what kind of conduct from a wife will reflect that change of being and cause her husband to embrace the gospel if he is a non-believer.

He highlights two other things; one is through showing respect and one is through being pure in one's conduct.

The word translated "**respect**" is the word **phobos** in Greek. It is the word from which we get the word **phobia**, or fear of something. **It is appropriately translated respect in this context because the word phobos in Greek includes that lexical use, and nowhere in scripture, either through example or direct address, does God demand that a woman be terrified of her husband**. I believe the English translators were trying to get ahead of any cultural and lexical misunderstanding that our perspectives would impose upon this text. The **NIV** translates this word as **reverence**, which poses its own hurdles in our culture as we use that word more to communicate some aspect of worship, but it rightly reaches for the same idea that the **ESV** understands, and that is a **revering of one's own husband**. **Remember that a woman in a married relationship is able to distinguish something of the relationship of the Church to Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ towards God His Father**. There is **never** a time when Jesus is terrified about what the Father would do to Him. Neither should the Church be terrified of what Christ would do to her as if in an abusive relationship. **If it is true in God's relationships, how much more should it be true of we who are created in the image of God?** Any man that applies this passage in such a way as to keep his wife in a terrified state

is undermining the gospel, ignoring the fact that Peter underscores in **3:6** that godly ladies need not fear and ought not live in dread of their husbands, and he is ignoring the very grace of God in their own life. **Abuse is a horrible sin that God neither encourages, exemplifies, or ignores.**

If you are in a place of abuse, please reach out to me or one of the elders. We will be very discrete, and we will strive to bring the healing necessary for recovery and thriving after an experience like that. Please do not stay silent.

But what does this revering disposition look like? Well there are examples given in this section. Sarah, Abraham's wife is set up as a model ***in the way she communicated to her husband***. In her context it was distinguished by calling Abraham lord. It was not a title of worship but one of honoring him, respecting him. We still use this idea in our English language with the word "landlord." We don't worship the owner of the property, but he or she that owns the property is recognized to have a level of authority. Essentially what I believe Peter is underscoring is this, that ***revering one's husband is a disposition that holds one's husband up in an honorable light as much as is possible***. It is that he has your eye and consequent affection or admiration. It requires non-maligning speech when speaking of her husband. It doesn't mean we fail to speak the truth about the person to those people who can help us in difficult times.

Abigail in the O.T. is an excellent example of this. Her husband, Nabal, was a very foolish man that almost cost the lives of his entire family and workforce. You will remember that Nabal refused to help David and his men who had helped Nabal, and David was going to make him pay for it. Abigail went before David before he would act out in sin and acknowledge her husband's foolishness, and then beseeched David to not take vengeance with his own hand and sin against God. She ended up preserving life and restraining more sin through her respectful conduct and judicious speech.

Why would God require this? I have two responses. **One** is as we have been saying, that it is a means of revealing God's order of creation and the understanding of different authority structures within creation. The **other** pertains to just **understanding how guys normally tick**. We've often taken time to consider how natural revelation reveals the biblical revelation. Let's just look for this perspective in nature. We have turkeys that commonly stroll through our property and I chuckle when it is getting close to mating season. Gobblers will strut through the yard oblivious to our watching. Their feathers are flared out and beard perfectly tucked in. In human lingo it is the equivalent of sucking in the gut and pretending to be on the 900th push up. But then comes the inevitable moment when she just ignores that puffed up Tom, and he just withers. One or two feathers will be stuck out like they've been caught in a windstorm, and the rest of him looks like a wet dog that just lost a fight; everything just droops. Let me share a common reality for men. We need to know that of all the women in the world, we have our wife's attention. There are very few things that push a faithful man to just walk away like the knowledge that their wives are thoroughly unimpressed with them – like she really doesn't want him or is even attracted to him, she just has nowhere else to go. If your husband is just a means to an end for you, your marriage is on a road to destruction. Are you showing him the respect you would show someone you really admire? That is what Peter is teaching here. It is a biblical example of what Christ calls us to reflect. Biblical respect for your husband because he is your husband is one of the major tools of redemption within your marriage. ***It means that even though your husband is not the person you want him to be yet, you are given the ability to see him become that person!*** Proverbs 14:1 ***"The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down."***

Ladies, 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 what we have seen in Peter's teaching is this, that if you are in a married relationship, your unignorable beauty and contributions to this world are most clearly seen when you magnify God's created order in marriage. It doesn't mean that you have less to offer if you are not married. If you are not married, you have a freedom that married women and married men do not have. You have different means through which to bring glory to God. We've seen that in previous messages. But

ladies please never forget, that God has designed you. He is your Father. You have purpose. You have necessary value to this world, and on behalf of Christian man here I thank you for your faithful display of God's glory as you allow more and more of your feminine disposition to embrace the pattern of life to which God has called you. Amen.