

# 1 Peter

## Week 6: Christlike Conduct in Relationships -- 1 Peter 3:1–7

Some of the loudest sermons ever preached were never spoken aloud. A husband watches his wife absorb a harsh word with quiet grace, and something in him softens. A wife watches her husband lay down his own preferences to care for her, and her trust grows another inch. Children watch their parents forgive each other and learn, without a single lecture, what love looks like. The home is the place where our faith is tested most honestly, because it is the place where the people who know us best can see whether what we say on Sunday is real on Tuesday night.

Peter has been teaching his readers how to live as Christians in a watching world: among neighbors, under government, even under unjust masters. Now he brings that same Christlike conduct home, into the most intimate relationship of all, marriage. He has just held up Jesus, who did not revile when reviled but entrusted Himself to God. Now he says, in effect, that the same Christlike spirit belongs in the bedroom and at the kitchen table. The way a husband and wife treat each other is not a separate, private matter from their discipleship. It is their discipleship, lived out where it counts most.

Peter writes first to wives, many of whom were married to husbands who did not yet believe. In a world where a wife was expected to adopt her husband's religion, these women had taken the costly step of following Christ, and now they wondered how to win their husbands without nagging or preaching at them. Peter's answer is striking: live such a beautiful, respectful, godly life that your husband may be won "without a word," by your conduct. He points them away from the world's obsession with outward appearance toward "the hidden person of the heart," a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in God's sight.

Then Peter turns to husbands, and though he says less, he asks much. Husbands are to live with their wives "in an understanding way," showing honor, treating them as fellow heirs of the grace of life. A Christian husband is not a petty tyrant but a man who studies his wife, protects her, and honors her, knowing that how he treats her affects his very prayers. So read this passage carefully, whether you are married or not, because it is finally about something every Christian is called to: letting the character of Christ reshape the way we treat the people closest to us.

**Group Discussion:** Peter tells wives that an unbelieving husband may be won "without a word" by his wife's respectful and pure conduct (vv. 1–2). Why is a consistent, godly life often more persuasive than any argument, especially with the people who know us best? Where have you seen conduct speak louder than words?

**Personal Reflection:** Peter points away from outward adornment to "the hidden person of the heart" with its "imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit," which is precious to God (vv.

3–4). Where do you spend more energy, on the outward self that everyone sees, or the hidden self that God sees? What would it look like to invest more in the inner person this week?

*Read 1 Peter 3:1–7*

## **Study Questions**

1. Peter calls wives to “be subject to your own husbands,” even husbands who “do not obey the word,” so they may be won by conduct (vv. 1–2). What does biblical submission in marriage actually mean and not mean, and how does it fit with the equal worth of husband and wife before God?
2. Peter says an unbelieving or disobedient husband may be won “without a word” by his wife’s conduct (v. 1). Where in your relationships are you tempted to win people by nagging, lecturing, or arguing rather than by Christlike conduct? What might change if you trusted your life to do the persuading?
3. Peter contrasts external adornment, “braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry,” with “the hidden person of the heart” and “the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit,” which “in God’s sight is very precious” (vv. 3–4). What does this teach about where true beauty and worth are found, and is Peter forbidding all attention to appearance?
4. Peter prizes “a gentle and quiet spirit” as precious to God (v. 4). In a culture that rewards loud self-promotion, where is your spirit more anxious, harsh, or self-assertive than gentle and settled? What in your inner life most needs the calm that comes from trusting God?
5. Peter points to “the holy women who hoped in God” and to Sarah as examples of inner beauty and trust, saying believing women “are her children” if they do good and “do not fear anything that is frightening” (vv. 5–6). How does hope in God free a person from fear, and how is this kind of fearless trust connected to godly conduct?
6. Peter says godly women do good and “do not fear anything that is frightening” (v. 6). Fear drives much of our sin: we control, manipulate, lash out, or shrink back because we are afraid. What frightens you most right now, and how is that fear shaping the way you treat the people closest to you?
7. Peter commands husbands to “live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman,” treating her as “the weaker vessel” yet a fellow heir “of the grace of life” (v. 7). What does this teach about a husband’s God-given responsibility, and how does “fellow heir” affirm the equal standing of wives before God?
8. Peter warns husbands that mistreating their wives can hinder their prayers (v. 7). Whether you are a husband or not, where is a broken or neglected relationship quietly hindering your walk with God? What step toward understanding, honor, or reconciliation is God asking of you?
9. Throughout this passage Peter assumes that men and women, though equal in worth and fellow heirs of grace, are given different and complementary roles in marriage and in the Lord’s church. How does Scripture hold together the full equality of men and women before

God with their distinct God-given roles, and why is this a matter of God's wise design rather than human worth?

10. Look back over the whole passage. Peter brings Christlike conduct into the home: respectful, winsome, inwardly beautiful, fearless, understanding, and honoring. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through these verses, in marriage or in any close relationship. What is the single truth from 1 Peter 3:1–7 you most need to carry into this week?

### **Now or Later**

Reflect on these passages: Ephesians 5:22–33, the mutual calling of wives and husbands as a picture of Christ and the church; Genesis 2:18–24, the creation of man and woman for one another; Proverbs 31:30, beauty that is fleeting and the fear of the Lord that is praised; 1 Timothy 2:8–15, godly conduct and roles in the assembly; Colossians 3:18–19, wives and husbands in the Lord