
a *Grace Notes* course

First Peter

Lesson 5

1 Peter 2:26 to 3:4

by Dr. Grant C. Richison

1 Peter

Lesson 5

Contents

1 Peter 2:16 to 3:4.....	3
1 Peter 2:16.....	3
1 Peter 2:17.....	3
1 Peter 2:18.....	6
1 Peter 2:19.....	8
1 Peter 2:20.....	9
1 Peter 2:21.....	12
1 Peter 2:22.....	13
1 Peter 2:23.....	14
1 Peter 2:24.....	16
1 Peter 2:25.....	19
1 Peter 3:1.....	19
1 Peter 3:2.....	26
1 Peter 3:3.....	28
1 Peter 3:4.....	29

1 Peter 2:16 to 3:4**1 Peter 2:16**

"As free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God."

As free

Submission to civil law does not cancel our Christian liberty (John 8:32,36; Galatians 5:1,18). The Christian should obey civil law from their freedom, not from fear.

yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice

Some Christians use their Christian liberty for license. The word "cloak" means a covering, a means of hiding. Sometimes we make people think that what we are presenting is something other than what it really is. We do not then know the true nature of the idea. This is a means of hiding or covering up the true nature. In this case, liberty is a pretext or cloak for sin. God does not want us to use our liberty as a cover for sin.

We can twist any doctrine into some excuse for evil. There is no doctrine easier to distort than the doctrine of Christian liberty (Galatians 5:13; 2 Peter 2:19; Jude 4).

but as bondservants of God

The word "bondservant" means slave. Note the contrast to the first statement -- "As free." True freedom, ironically, in Christianity comes when Christians live as slaves of God! The context is referring to political freedom. The Christian citizen is free because he is the slave of God. Submission to civil government is an act of a free person who understands the purpose of civil government.

Note pagan thinkers about this issue:

Seneca: "No one is free who is a slave to his body."

Cicero: "We are the servants of the law that we may be able to be free."

Plutarch: "Every bad man is a slave."

Obedience to God's principles liberates us from slavery to self. God's Word conditions Christian freedom by Christian responsibility. We are free because we are the slave of God. True Christian freedom is not a freedom to do anything we want, rather what we ought. As Christians, we are not free to pursue our base passions.

Principle

Slavery to God is the most complete human freedom.

Application

Freedom without obligation is anarchy. Freedom is the right to choose between alternatives. The reason we dread liberty is because it means responsibility. The greatest liberty for the Christian is fellowship with God and living under His standards. He designed His standards for the welfare of the believer.

God liberates the Christian from sin and Satan (John 8:36). This does not liberate us from civil duty or obedience to the Word of God. It is easy to rationalize our liberty in Christ and say it frees us from responsibility to the state. Christian liberty, however is not license.

1 Peter 2:17

"Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."

Peter concludes this section on the Christian and government with a four-fold summary. Here is the biblical scale of values for the Christian's relation to government. Now that we are Christians, our thinking changes not only about the person but the whole, human race.

Honor all people.

First, Christians are to value all people (Romans 12:10; 13:7). God created each person in His own image. Even the most evil person has some good qualities such as wit or courage.

There were over 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire at this time. The Romans viewed them as things, chattel. They were not people with rights.

Yet these slaves were created in God's image and have certain rights in His eyes.

Principle

God's standard is that we value all people regardless of who they are.

Application

God wants us to honor the entire circle of any relationship we may have. He wants us to respect and give dignity of every person.

Before we became Christians, we had our own do-it-yourself-kit about what is valuable. We had our standards and they were very low. Once we became Christians our standards changed. Our attitude is different. Our outlook is different. We are a new creation and we no longer think as we once thought (Romans 12:1,2).

What value do you put on people? A child of God should see every person as a soul for whom Christ died. They may be red, yellow, black or white. They may be dirty or clean. Yet Christ died for every person everywhere in the world.

We read reports of so many people killed in the Oklahoma bombing. Those numbers roll off us like water. Our estimation of human life has been cheapened. Each person killed had a family. Each one had a funeral and a casket. We become hardened to these reports and hearing them means little to us. We have become so callused that the loss of life becomes common place. When those statistics become our spouse or child, then they mean something to us.

Have you ever noticed that everyone who undergoes surgery has the "best" surgeon in the hospital? Who told them that? The nurse. Do you think that she would say "He is not much of a surgeon but I am sure he will do his best!!"? You would say, "Practice on someone else." When he comes to practice on your spouse you want him to be perfect. Human life becomes valuable if we love the person. God, however, wants us to honor all men.

God loved the world (John 3:16). Christ died for all (2 Corinthians 5:14,15; Hebrews 2:9). If God puts this value on all human beings, should not the Christian also put the proper value on every human being on earth? Do you have the right

estimation of the value of the worth of a human being? Do you pay your taxes? Is your tax report accurate? If not, it is a "cloak for vice." The word "vice" in the Greek is evil.

Love the brotherhood.

The second command of this verse challenges Christians to love the family of God. Christians belong to a fraternity of the redeemed. Christians are a corporate community sharing a common life in Christ together.

This is not the brotherhood of union members or the brotherhood of airline pilots. This is the brotherhood of the born again, male and female, black, white, yellow and brown. Whatever their dialect or the color of their skin, they are family. They have been washed in the blood of Christ. They share a special love for their fellow Christians (Galatians 6:10; Hebrews 13:1).

The biblical word for love here does not mean to gush over people. It is a love free from attitude sins. It means you harbor no bitterness toward others. You are free from vindictiveness or implacability. You are not jealous of others. You can relax around them. Still while you may dislike their personality or dress and you may have no rapport with them, you have a love that can love without reciprocation. This love loves from the capacity of soul.

This is how we can love "all" believers. Our love comes from the filling of the Spirit.

Principle

Outsiders we respect; insiders we love.

Application

To love your mother or father, wife, husband or children does not take much effort. To love all of God's people including the ornery ones who do not cooperate, the ones who are not lovable and the ones who rub you the wrong way is a different story. Everyone in the brotherhood is not lovable. Some of them do not want to be loved. Whether they respond to our love is their business.

As far as we are concerned, we cannot permit anything to enter our lives that will sour our love for them. We must love them even though they are not lovable. God calls upon them to love us also. It

is just as hard for them to love us as it is for us to love them. God calls upon us to exercise genuine, God-donated love (Romans 5:5).

Often, however, we care solely about our little crowd. We couldn't care less about the brotherhood in general. We are not interested in the brotherhood. Some people say that they love the Lord but they do not love the church. They do not love the saints. They feel no need to fellowship with the saints (Hebrews 10:25). They feel they can get along without the encouragement of other saints. They can get along without the church. If all Christians were like that what would happen to the church?

We must respect all people but we must love fellow Christians. "Blood is thicker than water." Relatives are closer than friends. God links Christians together by something thicker than human blood -- the blood of Christ.

Because I love my fellow believers, there are certain restraints that I put upon myself (1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:11,12; Ephesians 2:12).

Fear God.

The third command of this verse is that Christians are to allow the fear of God to come upon them. The Greek indicates that we cannot make God's fear come upon us, we allow God to impact us.

"Fear" here is not the fear of terror but the fear of awe.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7). "Beginning" means the principal part -- it is the very foundation of wisdom. When we give God the principal place in our lives, all other things will take their proper place.

"Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, And the Lord listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the Lord And who meditate on His name" (Malachi 3:16).

"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). That is God.

To fear God is to walk in such a way as to have His smile upon you, to have Him look down on you and be proud of you.

"Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied" (Acts 9:31).

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Principle

Living under the awe of God will produce holiness.

Application

To fear God means to live in such a way that you would be afraid to insult God with your life. To fear God is to demonstrate by your life an awesome respect for the integrity and the holiness of God. A person who fears God has too much respect for Him to live a shabby life. That is the way the bridegroom feels about his bride. He loves her so much and has so much respect for her that he would not do anything that would offend her or hurt her or make her cry.

The child of God does not want to grieve the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we insult Him by the things that we do. Our misconduct is an affront to God who cannot tolerate sin to the slightest degree.

Honor the king

The fourth and last summary of the believer's relationship to government is to honor the king.

"Honor" is the same word as at the beginning of the verse. God wants us to respect those who represent government to us.

Nero was king at the writing of 1 Peter. He became emperor in AD 54. He slaughtered more Christians than any other Caesar. On a human level they could not honor him. He was a beast, a murderer. It is not the person but the office of the king that we are to honor (Romans 13:7).

Principle

If anyone has a reason to be a good citizen, it is the Christian.

Application

What can people say against us if we honor these four injunctions? If anyone should be a patriot and a good citizen, it should be the Christian. We have more reason.

Wherever we live on the face of the Earth this verse reads the same way. It does not matter what form of government we live under; it reads the same way. This verse reads very hard if you live in Red China. We must honor the head of state no matter what he may do on occasion. The issue is his office, not his person.

How would you like to live in a country with no laws, or police force or fire department? God's people should be sold on government. We need government to function properly as a society.

1 Peter 2:18

"Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh."

Servants

"Servants" here is not the normal word for "slaves." This word means a house slave. This person serves in a menial sense, as a house servant. These servants were domestic servants who lived with their masters and served in the house itself. Even though they were domestic servants, many of them were doctors, teachers, musicians, actors and stewards over great estates.

This role was relevant to a large number of Peter's readers. Both servants and slaves made up a significant number of the early church members. During the writing of 1 Peter there were about 60 million slaves. Romans looked upon a slave as a "thing," not a person. However, the lot of these slaves was not always wretched. Many of them were loved and treated as members of the family. Still, they remained "things" with nothing in the world to call their own, including themselves. The Romans thought that because they were the master of the world, they shouldn't have to work; work was for slaves.

Into this situation Christianity came with its message that every person is precious in the sight of God. This was indeed good news. Within the church the social barrier was broken between

slaves and citizens of the Roman Empire. Callistus, one of the earliest bishops of Rome, was a slave. In the church, it was quite possible for a slave to be the chairman of the board and his master a member of the congregation. This was a revolutionary idea.

This gave rise to the danger that the slave might take advantage of his master. He might shirk his work and do as he liked.

Principle

God expects us to do our job not primarily for our employer but for God himself.

Application

The problem of people taking advantage of their employers because they are Christians is still present with us. There are still people who trade on the goodwill of their bosses. Some think that because their bosses are Christians, they have the right to loaf on the job.

God expects Christians to be the best workers they can possibly be. Our Christianity should make us more conscientious than others. God wants us to recognize the authority of our employer. After all, no one forced us to take the job. We took it of our own free will.

be submissive to your masters

The word "submissive" means to be obedient to constituted authority. Industry has authority like any other facet of life.

Some of these servants no doubt thought that their conversion would free them from subjugation. They might have thought that they should be free from their cruel masters. "Submissive" means to do their job honestly and devotedly. Peter asks them to submit to austerity and inconvenience. with all fear

The phrase "with all fear" does not mean in dread of punishment from our employers. God's desire is that these servants submit with a sense of "all respect" for their masters. God wants us to have respect for the system of authority we call employer/employee relations.

Principle

God wants us to respect the constituted authority of our employment.

Application

All of us have had disagreeable bosses. No doubt all of us wanted to buck the tiger at times. There are many ways of doing this. We can sit around and do a sloppy job. We can go to the human resource department and complain. The Word of God advocates none of these.

As a born again believer, our job is full-time Christian service. If we disagree with management, God wants us to do it "with all fear." To respect authority does not mean that we must respect the person. It does mean that we respect the authority that they represent.

Like everything else in life, business runs on authority. Without authority, business would collapse. This is true of the military. This is true of family life. When there are two people or more, there must be some organization. Who has respect for institutions and leaders in institutions today? We are on a toboggan slide toward anarchy. Every person does what his right in his own eyes.

not only to the good and gentle

Many of the masters of the first century were "good and gentle."

The word "gentle" means seemly and, fitting; hence, equitable, fair, moderate, forbearing, not insisting on the letter of the law. There were masters who were equitable and fair. Some were considerate of their servants. They were gracious and forbearing.

"Gentle" here does not mean gentle in our 20th century sense of the word. If a manager or supervisor were gentle today the herd would trample him to death. The idea in this verse is closer to "fair" or "reasonable."

All born again bosses should be both good and fair. Anyone who is in charge of any number of people always finds employees he likes and some he dislikes. However, personal feelings should have nothing to do with how we treat others. Often the nice people do the worst job and the sorriest do the best job. The responsibility of the employer is

to treat employees fairly regardless of how we feel about them. God wants us to treat all people the same.

but also to the harsh

The word "harsh" means bent, curved, not straight. We get our medical term "scoliosis" (curvature of the spine) from this word. Ancient Greek used this word for rivers and roads that wound and twisted through the terrain. Eventually it came to mean perverse as well.

The harsh masters referred to in this verse were unscrupulous and dishonest. They were unfair in their treatment of those under them. No doubt they were crooked. Yet, Peter asks servants to submit themselves to their perverse masters! He challenges the house servants to a new plane of commitment.

All of us face authority all the time. Regardless of what kind of boss we might have, we ought to do our job as unto the Lord. It makes no difference if our boss is unkind or grumpy, we are to do our work as unto the Lord. What kind of personality he has is not the issue. The issue is we are in full-time Christian service.

Having an unfair boss does not give us the right to loaf on the job. It does not give us an excuse for going behind his back and complaining. We represent the Lord Jesus at our job. We might lead that grumpy, surly boss to Christ one day. We will not do it by complaining but by doing our job as unto the Lord.

The fact that an employer sins does not justify the employee sinning. It is normal to "get back at" an unfair employer by whatever means possible -- careless work, loafing, pilfering. This attitude is so widespread today that even when the employer is a good employer, employees tend to get away with everything they can, or by doing as little as possible, or by resorting to petty thievery.

The boss may not always be right but he is always the boss. He may try to give the impression that he is omniscient but he does not know it! His wife knows it. Everyone else knows it but he does not know it. The Christian nevertheless gives him an honest day's work for an honest day's wage.

Principle

Our place of employment is full-time Christian service.

Application

God expects us to do our job not primarily for our employer but for God himself. What is your attitude toward your job? What is your state of mind toward your boss? Perhaps you say, "Well, my boss is about the most unreasonable, unrelenting, implacable and merciless man you have ever seen. He makes demands that are not just. It is impossible to please him. No matter how much I extend myself he still isn't pleased."

Still, the believer is to give his employer a full day's work. It matters not whether the boss is fair or whether he has a miserable personality.

1 Peter 2:19

"For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully."

For this is commendable

The word "commendable" is the Greek word for grace. God gives grace in suffering that He might bless us in the suffering. We could translate "commendable" as "favor."

Principle

We find favor with God when we endure suffering with God's grace.

Application

We find favor with God when we endure suffering graciously. This is life on a higher plane than those without Christ experience. Giving grace delights the heart of God.

if because of conscience toward God

"If" means this statement is assumed to be true. This is our lot in life. If we suffer for the Lord Jesus, our love for him must endure grief. It is grace to suffer wrongfully for your convictions. The boss does not promote you simply because you are a Christian. "You are too religious. What will our customers say?"

We have two choices: to resent our suffering or to suffer for the glory of God.

"Because of conscience toward God" means we have God's norms and standards in our lives from the Word of God. If we recognize God's blessing, we will have inner stability in suffering. The more we know of the Word of God, the more norms we have for facing life. If we know a lot of biblical principles about a lot of subjects, we will be able to apply those principles to life.

The word "conscience" comes from two words know and with. Once we know something to be true from the Word of God it sets up a base of knowledge in our mind. We know that the Word works with our experience. This base of knowledge becomes our standard for living life. Our conscience makes us aware of information about something. "I am aware of nothing against myself" (1 Corinthians 4:4).

Unbelievers set up their norms of right and wrong strictly from the conscience. The conscience is their sole basis for evaluating values, and it usually develops from their background. That is, what they learn from their parents, childhood experiences and experiences as an adult. Some of it comes from training such as how to be a gentleman. We obtain some of our conscience from culture. We live out our responsibilities of life based on these norms.

We have all heard of the "guilt complex," the guilty conscience. Our conscience is a complex of many norms and standards. Since they are firmly inculcated into our conscience, when we violate one of its standards this sets up vibrations that go into the emotions. The guilt complex simply means that we have violated our own norms over a period of time. They may simply be the norms and standards of society but we have accepted them to our view of the world. Non-Christians have inner conflicts because they violate their norms and standards derived from culture.

We develop norms from our culture, too but we have a set of norms that go beyond culture. We are now regenerated, and have new life in Christ. This new life in Christ can now receive the Word of God. God now introduces a whole new set of standards into our life. Now we have conflict with the old standards from culture.

Before we accepted Christ as our Savior we had certain ideas as to what was right or wrong.

Usually this has to do with overt morality. The Bible goes far beyond morality as its way of life. It deals with negative attitudes of anger, jealousy, bitterness and gossip. The Bible changes our views of right and wrong. It changes our evaluation of people.

The Word of God goes beyond simple right and wrong. It moves into the promises, with God. So the Christian's conscience undergoes some very radical changes as we learn principles and apply them to our lives from the Bible. When we do this we come into conformity with God's thinking. This is necessary to become an ambassador for Christ. Since every Christian is in full-time Christian service as per the previous verse, we must have a conscience toward God.

Principle

God does not want us to suffer from simply a sense of duty but from a conviction about God's purpose for us.

Application

The employee who has norms set up by God will suffer because of those norms. Someone says, "Well everyone else is doing it." He replies, "Not me. I cannot honestly do that before God. Fire me. So penalize me. My conscience will not bend that far. I can't stretch my conscience like a rubber band like everyone else."

You may be passed over for a promotion but you take your stand. This is grace. You know that you were in line for that job but someone else got it. Someone else less qualified was promoted. You refused to lower your standards. You stood firm and were true to the Lord.

However, if we suffer because we are peculiar or eccentric that is a different matter. In that case we simply suffer because we are an oddball. That is our fault. If we suffer because we are disagreeable, don't blame that on the Lord.

one endures grief

"Endures" means to hang in there. Literally, it means to bear under. The principle is that we are able to get under a heavy load and carry it. This is a person who is strong. This means that we are able to handle disaster without breathing hard.

"Grief" means to cause pain, to distress, grieve. This is pain of the mind here. It is anything that causes sorrow. Grief is a state of unhappiness marked by regret – unhappiness, sadness (Luke 22:45; 2 Corinthians 9:7). It means to become so overcome with grief as to despair – grieve to the point of giving up (2 Corinthians 2:7).

Principle

God gives us the ability to carry grief over a long period of time by the norms He gives us.

Application

Where do we get the ability to carry grief? The standards (principles) of the Bible. The Bible sets up standards in our conscience so whenever heartache comes along we have norms to handle them. We know what God is like. We can appropriate His promises. Therefore, we do not fall apart and move into panic palace.

suffering wrongfully

"Suffering" denotes whatever one suffers in any way. It means to undergo difficult experiences. "Wrongfully" indicates undeserved suffering.

Principle

God gives us the grace to suffer wrongfully.

Application

God designs most suffering for blessing. The one exception is suffering because of sin. When Christians confesses his sin (1 John 1:9) God removes that exception. God then turns the cursing into blessing, even though the suffering may continue (Hebrews 12:6) but its purpose changes. The unbeliever will suffer in eternity, but the believer will not (Revelation 21:4). There is no suffering too great for God to handle.

1 Peter 2:20

"For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God."

For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently?

This verse gives us two ways we may suffer on our job. The first way is to suffer for our own faults.

The word "credit" means reputation, fame or good report. The issue here centers on our reputation. "Beaten" means to strike with the fist, to pummel. Masters often beat house-servants in the Roman Empire. Matthew 26:67 uses this term of Christ when the frenzied mob struck Him (Isaiah 52:14).

"Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, 'Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?'" (Matthew 26:67).

"Faults" is literally sinning. We sin on the job when we are lazy or do our job sloppily. We sin when we spend too much time talking to other employees or talking about the boss behind his back. There is no glory in suffering for such sins as these. If we blow it and the boss demotes us, there is no value to that kind of suffering. That is not suffering for the Lord Jesus, it's suffering for our own mistakes.

"Take it patiently" means to endure or stand it. Many slaves were physically abused. In our day this would not preclude an effort to change our job situation, working conditions or even the job itself. It does rule out sharp retort or getting even. Seething or sulking is not the biblical way of solving the problem.

The point is this: "What good is it if people pummel us for our sinning and take this patiently?" What credit is it to us if our employer disciplines us for doing wrong?

There is no credit to the house-slave if the master beats him for stealing. The credit comes only in undeserved suffering. Deserved suffering is divine discipline. Under grace no believer ever really gets what he deserves even when God disciplines us.

Principle

To be reprimanded for our mistakes or sins is no honor.

Application

If we blow it at work, we have no ground to complain about the consequences that may come.

We should not cast blame on our employer. Why should we become surly or refuse to work? We had it coming to us. We asked for it. That is not grace. Our employer has every reason to demote or fire us.

Some Christians have a persecution complex. They look for reasons in their employer's attitude that are not there. Many people think that they are suffering for the Lord Jesus on the job when in reality they suffer because they blew it. If they had been a better worker they would not get into that mess. There is no glory in that kind of suffering.

But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently,

The word "but" is a strong conjunction of contrast between deserved and undeserved suffering. If we take our lumps because of our personal problems that is one thing. This should not disturb us. To take lumps for something that we do not deserve, that is another thing.

The second "if" clause shows us how God wants us to suffer - "when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently." God wants us to patiently endure suffering even when we do good. This is a completely different matter than suffering for our own problems. We can suffer for our own mistakes or we can suffer for doing "good." These are the two options of this verse.

In both "if" clauses the word "patiently" occurs. Patience means endurance. It comes from two words (to stay and under) and carries the idea of staying under the pressure. In this passage, it means to stay under pressure with grace, without squawking, crying or complaining. If we do right and someone wrongs us in the face of it, this is glory to God if we handle it with character. If we endure suffering in the context of the good that we do, this is grace from God.

There are immature Christians who wait around for the roof to fall in. If things are going well in their lives, they constantly look for trouble. This is morbidity. The Christian life is made up of both difficult and blessed times.

Principle

God wants us to develop tenacity of soul (character) at work.

Application

God wants us to make His life manifest in difficult circumstances at our place of employment. God designs all undeserved suffering for blessing. The only opportunity for God to demonstrate his love in suffering is in time. There will be no suffering in eternity (Revelation 21:4). Undeserved suffering is a manifestation of God's love and is an occasion to demonstrate His perfect mercy and grace. God has special blessing for those who demonstrate character at work.

A big problem with many Christians is that they cannot take pressure. To do well and to do an honest, reliable job, and receive a hassle, is in their mind totally intolerable. "After all, people can count on me, why should they attack me?" To "take it patiently" means to take it without griping or complaining. However, God expects the Christian to address the issue in a mature way and not just lie down like a whipped dog.

How much abuse can you take? Some of us cannot take much. We have more opportunity to apply this kind of grace at home than anywhere else. If someone blames us for something that we did not do, anger surges quickly into our soul. The blood rushes to our face. Our first reaction is to vindicate ourselves. That is the natural reaction.

God expects us to live a supernatural life. God, the Holy Spirit, indwells in us. The Lord said that we are to love our enemies. It is not enough to love our friends or the people who love us (Matthew 5:43,44,46). Most of us have problems loving our friends, much less our enemies. To love those who do not love us in return is supernatural. A Christian who works for an employer who is considerate and pays well takes no grace. If your boss is disagreeable, unappreciative, that takes grace. That kind of life will impact non-Christians.

What is your boiling point? Does it take very little heat to make you boil over? Are you explosive? Do you get a full head of steam quickly? Do you blow your stack? If you do, you ruin your testimony.

There should be some evidence of spiritual growth the longer we have known the Lord. You do not

blow up as quickly as you used to do. Is it now easier for people to get along with you?

this is commendable before God

The word "commendable" is the word grace -- "This is grace." The Christian who utilizes God's provision for both salvation and the Christian life operates under the grace principle.

"Before God" means grace that comes from the immediate presence of God. The Christian who operates under grace will bring delight and praise from the heart of God. God knows all about us. He thinks about us. He designed us to live under His provisions when we face pressure at work.

Both "if" clauses of this verse modify the phrase "this is grace before God." When we are in fellowship with God, He allows undeserved suffering to come into our lives to show how He provides for us in grace.

If we stay under undeserved suffering with grace, we get "credit" for it in our employer's eyes. This is also grace from the immediate source of God. Only grace can convert cursing into blessing. The plan of God is greater than any suffering or pressure in this life. God will provide grace for any situation.

Principle

God will provide for whatever we face at our job or place of employment.

Application

God has goodwill toward undeserved suffering. It takes the grace of God to endure undeserved blame without complaining. If we receive severe rebuke for something that we did not do from our employer, how do we take it? Do we endure? Anyone can endure reproof when he knows he deserves it. [This does not imply that God does not want us to speak up for ourselves.]

It is something else to endure rebuke and reproof if you do not deserve it. It takes grace to receive undeserved blame without complaining. And it is hard to accept blame for what we did not do. This passage challenges us to take our blessed Lord for an example. People falsely accused and harassed Him for things He never did. He left these things

in the Father's hands. [He also stood up for Himself in a mature way.]

God expects a new relationship between employee and employer when someone accepts Christ as their Savior. When we accept Christ, our standards change. God introduces a new attitude toward work under the grace principle.

1 Peter 2:21

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:”

When someone acts with cunning toward you, how do you react? How do you endure harassment? This verse shows how Jesus suffered for well-doing.

For to this you were called

The antecedent of "this" is undeserved suffering. "To this" means that it is God's purpose that we suffer unjustly. Peter has just exhorted the believers to whom he is writing to be the kind of employees who suffer patiently even when the suffering is unjust. Now he turns to the example found in Christ.

"Called" (cf. 1:15; 2:9) -- in eternity past God called us to suffer unjustly. God did not call us to slavery but to patient suffering of unjust wrongs. God called us into the sphere of undeserved suffering. "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29). God calls us into the same unjust suffering that Christ suffered.

Principle

Suffering is no mistake, it is in God's eternal plan.

Application

Do you expect trouble to come your way? God called you for this.

Why should we submit to unjust suffering? It is God's plan for us. When we determined to receive Christ, unjust suffering became our calling (1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 3:3). God ordained us to affliction, though we often don't manifest the grace of God at work in unjust suffering.

because Christ also suffered for us

The preposition "for" means that Jesus suffered in our place or in our stead. Christ the sinless One suffered in the place of sinful ones. That is unjust suffering. The cross of Christ at first glance seems to be a tragedy but when we realize that He suffered in our place, the tragedy becomes a victory.

The phrase "for us" indicates the substitutionary death of Christ for our sins (Romans 5:8; 8:34; Hebrews 9:24). Jesus represents us personally in His death on the cross. Jesus suffered vicariously, that is, He paid the penalty for our personal sins. That is why we love Him.

The word "also" puts our suffering on a new plane. There is comfort in knowing that Christ went through unjust suffering as well.

Principle

Christ suffered in our place.

Application

Jesus suffered by His own volition. He did not suffer for Himself but for us.

If anyone suffered unjustly, it was the Lord Jesus. He never committed a sin (v.22; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus knew no sin, yet He paid for the sins of the entire world. That is unjust suffering. Under God's economy, a person who never sins does not have to die. Sin is the cause of death. Jesus did not sin so He did not have to die. Yet He personally died for our sins.

Have you come to the place where you trust the death of Christ for your sins? This action of belief is necessary for your salvation.

leaving us an example

"Leaving" means to leave behind. Jesus left behind an example for us to follow.

This is the only occurrence of the Greek word "example" in the New Testament. Literally it means "underwriting." It is a writing or drawing that a student reproduces.

The word "example" means a model or pattern to be copied in writing or drawing. This word comes from a compound Greek word (under, to write) and means under-writing (to write under, to trace

letters for copying by scholars). Therefore, it is a writing-copy. The writing-copy usually included all the letters of the alphabet. It was given to beginners as an aid in learning to draw. The sufferings of Christ left us a writing-copy.

The word "example" means a thing to be retained. An "example" was a model given for imitation, such as a header for a copy book. In patterning our life after Christ, God wants us to write our life under His. He is the pattern we are to copy our lives after. God wants us to copy our lives, just as a child in grade school copies an example of writing.

Principle

God wants us to use Christ as a pattern of suffering.

Application

We often go outside the guidelines of Jesus' example of suffering. Every day we write on the page of life. But we often shun suffering, especially unjust suffering. When we hold up our writing to the pattern set by Jesus' life, the comparison is minimal. Yet the more we practice the life of Christ, the more we become like Him, and find value in our sufferings.

Each of us will take our copy books to Jesus one day. Then he will give us our grade. How have you measured up to His suffering?

that you should follow His steps

God wants us to emulate the character and conduct of Christ.

"Follow" means to follow after, follow close upon. The implication is that we are to comply closely with the life of Christ. We should put our lives in conjunction with Christ. God wants us to go the same way as Jesus (Mark 8:34; 9:38; 10:21). We should make our lives happen along with His, and accompany Him along the journey. The implication is that we are to wholly follow Christ or to devote ourselves to Him. God wants us to give Jesus our whole heart. God wants us to take the same road as Jesus. He wants us to follow closely upon His path.

"Steps" means tracks. We are to follow the tracks of Christ. Our behavior should be the same as His.

Let us imitate Him. We do not do as others do, we do as He does. The New Testament uses the word "steps" for Abraham's faith (Romans 4:12) and for carrying on the work of the Gospel (2 Corinthians 12:18). We are to take the same road as Christ and apply the truth of suffering to our experience.

Note that this passage does not say "follow in His steps." It says simply "follow His steps." God wants us to go in the same direction Jesus went (Hebrews 12:1-4). We get our signals from him. He sets the example for us to follow (Romans 15:3).

Principle

God wants us to copy Christ and reproduce His character in our lives.

Application

When Christians suffer insult with uncomplaining steadfastness, they show the life of Christ to others.

Christians sometimes meet spiritual pygmies. They then go back to back with them and say "I have outgrown them spiritually." Yes, but they are measuring themselves against a spiritual dwarf.

Instead of measuring yourself against a spiritual midget, why not measure yourself against a spiritual giant – Jesus Christ? Back up to the Lord Jesus and measure yourself against Him. Then you will realize how far you have to grow in grace. His spiritual reflexes were perfect. Anyone measured up against Him is mighty small. Sheep should follow the Shepherd, not other sheep.

If we do something wrong at work, how do we react? Is there any difference between the way we react and the way those who do not know Christ react? If our reaction is different from theirs, they will sit up and take notice. We have something that they do not have. This has great influence on non-Christians. However, this is exactly where we fail before our wives, husbands, children, parents and business associates.

1 Peter 2:22

"Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"

Who committed no sin

Jesus never committed an act of sin (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 3:5). Jesus was perfectly sinless. The tense indicates that Jesus never committed a sin – not even one time.

Why then should He suffer? All the suffering that came to Christ was totally undeserved. Jesus said, "Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?" (John 8:46). We could say this of no other person who ever lived. Jesus never confessed any sin because He never had sin to confess. It is remarkable when we think of the sin that He had to bear.

Nor was deceit found in His mouth

There was no deception ever found in his speech (Isaiah 5:39). Jesus never used cunning with his words. "Deceit" means a bait and comes with mean fraud, snare or guile (cf. 2:1; 3:10). It means to deceive by using trickery and falsehood as the Trojan horse or the robe of Penelope. What you see is what you got with Jesus. The Bible characterizes him as the "truth" (John 14:6).

"Found" is failure to find something after careful scrutiny. Jesus' enemies were cunning in their approach but there was no trace of guile or trickery in Jesus. He confronted them with truth (Luke 23:41; John 8:46; Hebrews 4:15). He truly was a suitable sacrifice for our sin.

There is no doubletalk with the Lord Jesus. We never find Him operating with duplicity. Even under extreme incitement, Jesus did not reply with rancor. He never led people astray with His words. He was always on the level. Everything He said was exact and accurate.

Principle

Sin usually shows itself first by sins of the tongue.

Application

Our speech reveals our heart. God's people are not sinless but they sin less having come to Christ as their Savior. Once a person comes to Christ there is a blessed lifelong process whereby the Christian grows to become more like Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).

It is possible for us to retard this process by stiffening ourselves against the will of God. In this

situation we have a case of arrested spiritual development. We then are a heartache to our loving Father. We do not go on with the Lord. We are Christians but we do not advance our spiritual condition. We become a religious shadow-boxer.

One of the sad facts of life is that generally people in this condition are not aware of it. Their wife or husband may see it clearly. Their friends can see it, but they are oblivious to their situation. Sometimes it takes a financial disaster to get their attention. It may take an accident or some physical illness. God always does something to make our heart tender and sensitive to Him. In any case, it will be something to blast the rebellion out of our hearts.

God wants our spirit to be like it was when we first came to Christ – our first love. When this happens, we think of the wasted years and confess our sins. Then the joy bells will ring and peace returns to our hearts. Others will see the censoriousness go and the bitterness and criticism leave our lives. This will fill our hearts with light and joy. We are back in fellowship.

It is a sad thing when people have to take what we say with a grain of salt. Do people believe what you say? If you promise something and do not deliver, can people trust you? Do you promise to show up somewhere and fail to show up without ample notification? People will get the impression that they cannot rely on you and that you are not dependable.

Are you trustworthy? God expects his people to be reliable and people of their word. God forbid that we develop a reputation for not being reliable or dependable.

1 Peter 2:23

Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously."

Who, when He was reviled

"Who" is Jesus. This speaks of Jesus' undeserved suffering.

"Reviled" means to abuse, insult, slander (John 9:28; Acts 23:4; 1 Corinthians 4:12). People blasphemed Jesus. They mocked Him and called

Him dirty names. Even when they put a crown of thorns on His head and mocked Him as a king, He did not retaliate. None of this could cause Him to compromise His character. Just because someone provokes us to sin does not justify the sin. We always have higher reasons to avoid sin.

"For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls" (Hebrews 12:3).

His friends said that He was insane:

"But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, 'He is out of His mind'" (Mark 3:21).

His enemies called him names:

"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children" (Matthew 11:19).

Most of Jesus' enemies were religious leaders. This crowd was jealous and bitter toward Him. They expressed their hate for Him in criticism. They maligned His character and works.

did not revile in return

"Revile in return" in the Greek means to revile back or again. Jesus did not retaliate when people attacked Him with slander and insult. He did not return insult.

Jesus did not give tit for tat. He was not in the business of getting even. Some of us would even the score even if it kills us – and it may! By nature we are vindictive. Vindictiveness will eat our heart out. It will sour our spirit,

especially if we spend all our time defending ourselves, we will not be like the Savior. In doing that,

"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7).

Their evil accusations brought no reply from his lips. Jesus claimed the principle found in Romans 12:19 -- "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord."

This means that he operated from character not circumstance.

Principle

God wants us to be free from vengeance and leave retaliation in his hands.

Application

How unlike the Savior we are. As soon as someone starts a rumor about us, we get on our high horse. Our backs arch like a cat. We show our fangs. We are ready to do battle. If given a chance, we will hang their hide on the wall.

This is so unlike our Lord. We are still in kindergarten spiritually. We believe that we must defend ourselves and vindicate ourselves. When it came to this kind of thing, our Lord Jesus was not concerned about His reputation.

Are you willing to leave retaliation in God's hands? This is not to imply that we are to be passive in our relationships. Jesus often confronted those around him, but He was not vindictive.

when He suffered

Oh how He suffered (1:11; 2:21; 3:18; 4:12,13; 5:1). We know little about true suffering.

He did not threaten

When Jesus suffered, He did not threaten his oppressors with suffering. He would not make them suffer as well. He did not conjure up revenge. He did not look for opportunity to put revenge into action.

Jesus had the power to call vengeance down upon His enemies, but He chose not to do so. He did not defend himself against personal wrong. He was more concerned about the plan of God than about Himself.

Principle

God wants us to be more concerned about His plan of for our lives than about ourselves.

Application

Jesus did not threaten His accusers with harm. He did not say, "I'll get even. I'll get the Father after you." Christians are playing away from home. We forget that we are in a world hostile to Christ. We will not get a break from the umpire here.

As far as the people of this world are concerned, we are misfits. They do not approve of our way of doing things. We do not approve of their values. They put up with us as a mild form of amusement. They tolerate us if we do not expose their values for what they are.

Are you willing to take a stand on your values? Do you orient to the plan of God for your life? Do you live by that plan or do you respond to the immediate issue at hand?

but committed Himself

"Committed" means to give over, to hand over. It carries the idea of giving the control of oneself to someone else. Jesus gave Himself over to another. Jesus granted this right to the Father. Jesus granted to the Father the opportunity to do what he wanted with His life.

By faith, Jesus handed over this situation to the Father for management of His life. When we put something in the hands of someone who has perfect judgment, he or she will handle it perfectly. So when we commit our case to the Father, we know that he will have the perfect answer for it.

Jesus did not come to His own defense. He let the Father defend Him. Jesus refused to defend Himself against the kangaroo court of chief priests, who stacked the case against Him. He reserved His defense for the Father to handle. Jesus knew that the Father would vindicate Him. One day, we will stand before God. That will be our true judgment.

Jesus committed his cause, name and fame to the Father. "If I am to be vindicated, the Father will take care of that." This has not happened yet. One day, God will vindicate Jesus but that is in the future. Our Lord can wait because he put his case in the hands of the Father. His trial was not fair. They trumped up charges against him. He accepted the plan of God for His life.

to Him who judges righteously

Jesus submitted to the plan of God or the program of God for His life. He committed the whole thing to His Father and left it there.

God is righteous in the way He handles our lives. The nature of that righteousness must be

understood by a comprehensive understanding of the whole plan of God.

Principle

God wants us to accept His righteous plan for our life by trusting Him with attacks on our person.

Application

We do not trust when we fret, fume and fuss. That is not committal. We need to trust a God who is interested in us (Genesis 18:25; Mark 7:37; 1 Kings 12:15, 24; 1 Samuel 3:18; Matthew 11:26; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Romans 8:28).

God knows each tear we shed and each hair that falls from our head. God is aware of everything that comes into our lives and He cares. We matter to Him.

Do we think that God loves us less now than when we came to Christ? He loves us more now than ever. We will understand more by and by. Will you commit everything in your life to God (Psalm 37:5; 1 Peter 4:19)?

1 Peter 2:24

Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed."

Peter here alludes to Isaiah 53:6-7. Jesus' death on the cross is the greatest example of undeserved suffering.

Who Himself bore our sins

Why did Jesus die on the cross? The issue is the character of God. God cannot live with sin. The judgment of Jesus on the cross was a judgment upon our personal sins.

"Who Himself" is emphatic, stressing the personal connection of Jesus in death for our sins. Note the two phrases "who Himself...His own body." No one else could share this suffering. He was totally and uniquely capable to suffer for the sin of humanity. Jesus alone was able to save our souls from sin (Acts 4:12).

The value of His sacrifice is not in the extent of Jesus' anguish on the cross but in the person who suffered. Jesus bore our sin judicially. God never made Him sinful in His character.

"Bore" is a compound word made up of two words: to bring or bear up. It denotes to lead or carry up, to offer. Jesus brought our sins to the cross (cf. Hebrews 9:28; 2 Corinthians 5:21) and actually carried them in His own body (Galatians 3:13; Deuteronomy 21:23). He stood indicted with our sins, and the sins of the entire world (Isaiah 53:6).

"Bore" means Jesus took the punishment for our sins (John 1:29). This satisfied God's justice. As the scapegoat carried away the sins of the Israelites so Jesus carries away our sin on the cross (Leviticus 16:21-22). Jesus brought our sins to the cross in His own body. The Septuagint uses "bore" for a priest carrying a sacrifice up to the brazen altar. The brazen altar was four and a half feet high and was approached by an incline (Leviticus 14:20). Jesus carried our sins to the cross instead of the altar. By this, Jesus broke the power of sin.

"Our sins" is emphatic. Jesus' death freed us from both the penalty and the power of sin. He paid the penalty for our sin so that we would not have to go to hell. His death made it possible for us to "live for righteousness."

Principle

Jesus' unique person paid personally for our sin.

Application

Rome crucified tens of thousands of people in its history but only one of them was unique. Jesus was the God-man. He was undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever. This is His uniqueness. He is different from God in that He is man and He is different from man in that He is God.

Do you love the Lord Jesus for taking your personal sin to the cross? He is unique. There is no only else like Him.

in His own body on the tree

Jesus suffered both in his body and soul. His suffering in soul was not as apparent, but it was very intense (Matthew 26:38).

The Greek word for "tree" is an object fashioned out of wood. Esther 5:14 translates this word "gallows." Acts uses "tree" for the cross (Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29). The last time the New

Testament uses this word is Galatians 3:13 "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')."

Jesus did not suffer for my sins in Gethsemane. He bore my sins on the cross. Jesus was at once both priest and victim.

that we, having died to sins,

"That" introduces a purpose clause, and means "in order that."

"Died" is literally to be away from. It comes from two words: from and to become. "From" signifies separation. "Died" means to cease with a complete and abrupt change. This is a rare word. It means to cease to exist, to go out of being.

Some translate this word "to die" but this is inexact. Literally, it means "having become off with respect to sins." This means that Jesus disconnected us from our sins and speaks of the action of God in breaking the power of the sinful nature. We need not be slaves to sin. The classical Greek renders this word "depart." We have ceased from sins positionally (cf. Romans 6:1-23, esp. vv2, 10f). Christ died for all our sins. This is the action of God in breaking the sin capacity's power when we place faith in Christ. From now on we do not need to be a slave to sin (Romans 6:10).

Principle

Before we became Christians we were dead in sin, now we are dead to sins.

Application

God broke the power of the sin capacity at the point of faith in Christ's work on the cross. This means that sin does not have to control us. Since our sins have already been judged when Jesus hung on the cross, the Father is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. There is the disconnection from sin. There we can live unto righteousness.

In God's sight He reckons us as being so identified with our Lord, so what He predicates of Him is also true of us. We died in His death. We were raised in his resurrection. We were seated with Him when He ascended in glory. God views us as

perpetually dead to every appeal that comes from the flesh.

In God's reckoning, when Christ died, I died. This is a truth we cannot feel or smell. We hear it and believe it. We think God's thoughts after Him. God identifies us with Jesus as He hung on the cross. His life becomes our life. His righteousness becomes our righteousness. This is positional truth. His sonship becomes our sonship. God identifies us with Jesus Christ as He hung on the cross. We stopped sinning in God's eyes. We died to sin.

might live for righteousness—

"For" -- the death of Christ provides a motive for living.

"Righteousness" is rightness. God wants us to be right toward Himself and right toward people. This is not imparted but practical righteousness. This motive goes far beyond simply the negative of not doing evil (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Principle

The death of Christ is our motive for living for righteousness.

Application

God saves us to be different from those around us. Jesus endured the worst kind of injustice and yet He died for us and left us an example. After we believed that Jesus died for our sins on the cross, we began to live. Before that, we were spiritually dead. We were alive psychologically and physically but we were dead spiritually. We were dead to God. Now we are alive to God.

God expects us to live in such a way as to be a credit to Christ. Jesus saves people free of charge. They render no merit, no work, no effort. After we become a Christian God expects us to live a life that reflects our life in Christ. It can no longer be business as usual. People who hear of our conversion have a right to expect a different quality of life from us. If they do not see change, why should they want what we have?

A danger in the study of the Bible is that we might get spiritual indigestion. We learn more than we live. We have more in our head than in our heart. This is spiritual gout. We know much and live

little. Yet God makes us responsible for what we know. If we know a maximum and live a minimum, God will hold us accountable for that. The quality of our lives here will determine our reward hereafter.

Are you on the level with God?

by whose stripes you were healed

This phrase alludes to Isaiah 53:5. Jesus took our rap. He took the place of suffering for my sin.

The "stripes" here are the stripes left by a lash. We can translate "stripes" as "wounds," wounds from stripes. This has to do with the whipping by a lash put upon Jesus during His passion. Jesus underwent "stripes," wounds, and ultimately death. Romans scourged with pieces of brass or lead or small pointed bones. They stripped the victim to the waist and bound him in a stooped position with his hands tied behind his back to a pillar or post.

This probably refers to more than just the lashes that Jesus took by the Roman soldiers but also the stroke of the Father's justice administered vicariously to Him on the cross.

"Were healed" is past tense indicating a finished action. It means to cause something to change to an earlier, correct, or appropriate state - to renew, to heal. This deals with our spiritual healing. Healing can mean to restore from a state of condemnation. This does not deal with healing in the atonement or refer to physical healing of any kind. It means to be restored from a state of condemnation.

The New Testament uses "heal" of physical healing 22 times (Matthew 15:28; Acts 9:34). It is used of spiritual healing in Matthew 13:15; John 12:40; Acts 28:27; Hebrews 12:13; here and possibly, James 5:16.

Principle

Jesus healed us spiritually by His death on the cross.

Application

Jesus died for our sins, not our diseases. Physical disease is not in itself sin. It is the result of sin. The whole context of this passage talks of the substitutionary death of Christ. Jesus took away diseases by healing them.

Sickness is the judicial result of sin. Jesus did not take on the nature of Adam's sin. He took on the penalty of his sin.

If Christ can heal spiritually, He can heal physically (Matthew 8:17). This passage in Matthew has to do with alleviation of suffering rather than the atonement for sin. The purpose of such physical healing was to point to Christ as the Messiah.

1 Peter 2:25

"For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

For you were like sheep going astray

Peter contrasts their present and former relationship to Christ. Before they became Christians they "were like sheep going astray."

"All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

Sheep wander astray. "Going astray" means to move about without definite destination, to cause to wander off the path. Before we became Christians we held wrong views of God and thus led a mistaken life. We were deceived and misled (Matthew 24:4; 2 Timothy 3:13; 1 John. 4:6). Our thoughts were twisted. What was false seemed true. We made lies appear true. We were mistaken.

"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd" (John 10:16).

but have now returned

"Returned" means to turn about, turn towards. This is conversion. "Returned" is in the passive voice showing that our return to God is an act of grace. The return is to Christ who cares for us as sheep.

"Returned" means to change one's belief with focus upon that to which one turns. We turn to truth. We accept the truth as it is in Jesus. to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls

The "Shepherd and Overseer" stress the providential management of our souls by the Lord Jesus (cf. 5:4; John 10:11; Hebrews 13:20).

The shepherd was a familiar image to the people of the first century. Sheep could fall over jagged cliffs with deep precipices. Wandering in grasslands without walls, they could easily become lost. Wild animals roamed seeking them as prey. A shepherd feeds, protects and sustains his sheep. Jesus as the Shepherd seeks for lost sheep and tends sick ones. He vigilantly guards from wild beasts. He leads to good pasture.

The "Overseer" is one who cares for spiritual concerns. He is a guardian or keeper. An overseer mainly guides and directs. Jesus is the Guardian of our souls. The Overseer makes the Shepherd more emphatic. Jesus is the supervisor of our soul.

Principle

Jesus is concerned about supervising our soul, not just saving it.

Application

Jesus will nourish our soul all the way to glory. We are soul and our body transports our soul. Our soul will go on long after our body is dead and gone. Jesus shepherds and supervises our soul until we go to be with Him.

"Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen" (Hebrews 13:20-21).

1 Peter 3:1

Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives."

We have been studying the believer's responsibility to other people. The believer has a responsibility to his nation (2:13-17) and to business

(2:18-20). In this passage we come to the third category – domestic responsibility. Each of these three categories has one key word -

"submit." The issue in each situation is order.

The first seven verses of this chapter deal with husband-wife relationship. Peter explains the role of the wife (vv.1-6) then the role of the husband (v.7). Verse seven, which deals with the husband's role in marriage, is loaded with as much content as the previous six.

Many men do not understand their wives. They do not know their needs. Peter lands directly on the wife's central need to be loved properly by her husband.

There are three categories of Christians who will not respond to Peter's challenge:

1. Those who are older - they have already established their patterns and principles for marriage. They will not respond to this challenge because they are in a rut.
2. Those who have given up - they claim there is no way out of this mess. Forget it! I have tried everything to fix this thing. I do not want to go through the pain of trying to fix this marriage again."
3. Those who are naive - Some teenagers think that marriage is a panacea for all their problems. If they could just get married and out from under their parents roof all would be well. Marriage does not resolve life problems; it complicates them! Marriage is no gimmick for a lack or a problem in life.

Principle

Marriage as an institution requires roles to establish order.

Application

Some teenage girls believe that marriage will resolve their problems. No one asks them out so they hop on the first bus that comes along. After riding it for a couple blocks (years) she says, "Oh, I got on the wrong bus. This bus is taking me in the wrong direction. I did not notice the location this bus was heading." She would have been much happier remaining single.

Her problem was a complete lack of understanding as to what makes up husbands and wives in marriage. The appeal in marriage is not physical beauty, although many men would argue with that. The issue is inner beauty. This is the point of the first six verses.

A woman who does not fill her mind with implacability, bitterness, resentment, hostility or anger is free from attitudinal sins. Peter addresses here the mental make-up of a godly woman.

For those of you who have not married yet, if you marry the wrong person you will live a life of misery. There is nothing worse than living with the wrong person. You might as well live with a rattlesnake.

Wives, likewise

"Likewise" - like what? Like business and government mentioned in the previous chapter. Wives are to operate like business and government. All the institutions of business, government and marriage require order.

Peter makes the same argument for wives as he did for other categories. The word "likewise" indicates a further category. The new category is the wife. He will deal with husbands in verse 7.

"Likewise" means in a similar manner. "Likewise" indicates that the wife is to submit to her husband just like people submit to their government and Jesus submitted (chapter 2). Jesus also submitted to the Father. By submitting to the Father, Jesus demonstrated the dignity of submission. A person who submits is not weak but strong. Our society knows nothing of this.

The word "submit" occurred in 2:13 "Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme." The issue in this word is order instead of chaos in human institutions. Submission in this verse applies to human government. Each believer has the responsibility to submit to the national entity in which he or she resides.

Later in 2:18 Peter uses this term for slaves, "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh." Today would be analogous to employer/employee relationships. The employee's

role is to arrange his working relationship under his boss. No business can operate without authority.

This submission is according to a divinely-willed order. This divinely willed order is submission to authorities in Romans 13:1ff., which acknowledges the legitimacy of government on the basis of their divine commission to reward good and punish evil. Titus 3:1 and 1 Peter 2:13-14 echo this teaching. Christians do not submit to the state merely because it provides conditions for their life. They and all people owe subjection because government is by divine ordination.

If authority is important in government and business, it is equally important for the husband/wife relationship. Egalitarianism is not a biblical value. Authority in role relationship is a biblical value. Egalitarianism assaults the role of authority in society. Authority gives stability to society. If I submit to the head of my government, I will live in orderly relationship to my fellow citizens. If I do not accept authority, chaos will result.

Role is crucial to government, business and family. Order for any institution requires organization. Someone has to have the authority to make the final decision. Someone takes the initiative and others respond to their leadership.

In any organization of more than one person, there must be authority. If I join the military, I fight under authority. If I drive down the street, I accept the authority of the traffic signal. Business has to operate on authority. Schools require the acceptance of the authority of the teacher in the classroom. Life under the philosophy of "kill or be killed" would be grim indeed. Life is made up of principles of authority. It is important for the wife to understand this.

Principle

Order is crucial to a stable society and stable marriage.

Application

What happens to society without clearly defined roles? Chaos, anarchy and dissolution. Countries without order do not have stability. Revolution upon revolution and coup upon coup occur.

Putting this in a microscopic scale, this is what happens in marriage - revolution upon revolution in the relationship.

The principles of the first six verses are vital for the wife's understanding of her husband's needs. Otherwise she will live in drudgery and agony. Some who read this are in total misery by martial conflict. Psychology and sociology have some answers but basically they suggest "Do your own thing," "Take a fling," or "Find a new environment."

The Bible takes an entirely different approach. This approach revolves around the wife meeting her husband's needs and the husband meeting his wife's needs. This is not self-centered but other-centered.

be submissive

What is submission? The word "submit" comes from two words: under and arrange. A wife is to arrange herself under her husband. This means she fits into her husband's essential need in his leadership in the home. She is to gear her life to the husband's role in marriage.

The idea of submission in the Bible deals with authority. Submission was used primarily as a military term with the idea to rank under. This term means to place or arrange under, to post under, to subject. This word comes from two words: 1) "to appoint," "to order," with such nuances as "to arrange," "to determine," "to set in place," "to establish," and middle "to fix for oneself." 2) the second word is under.

Principle

The wife's role in marriage brings order to the institution of marriage.

Application

Every divine institution has its own duty. If there are two people in an organization, one must have authority for there to be a resolve between them. In marriage God chose the husband to have that authority. The husband may or may not be able to handle this authority. In principle, he has the authority.

Why then does the wife submit herself unto her husband? Because it meets his essential need of

respect for the leadership role God gave him. The basic need of the husband is to carry out leadership in the family God intends for him. The wife helps him achieve that goal. In order to do that, the wife must fit herself into his leadership in the home. This is what makes the woman feminine and wonderful to the man.

Christian marriage does not mean that the woman is a slave or inferior. Men who treat women as inferiors lose out. When love does not exist, the wife's surrender becomes slavery to her. No matter what her husband gives her, it does not satisfy her. There is no rapport, no satisfactory relationship. If there is no rapport it is just two neurotics hanging onto each other. Obviously, their sex life will be less than the best.

A woman first submits her soul, then her body. One of the worst things in life is to have a woman's body but not her soul. She simply gives her body while thinking of something - or someone - else. She conjures up unrealistic romantic relationships that have no basis in reality. The husband has nothing if he does not have her soul as well as her body.

Submission has nothing to do with the wife's intelligence. Her intelligence may be 50 IQ points above his. Subjection does not demean the capacity of the wife. Her personality may be more vivacious and wonderful than his. Submission has nothing to do with capacity of the individual biblically. The issue is role. The issue is to fit marital relationship into its proper function.

This verse does not mean that the husband and wife are in a master/slave relationship, as is the interpretation of some. This is not God's design for marriage.

To the contrary, submission is not slavery, it is something that fulfils a woman -- it is an expression of rapport. She yields both her mind and body. She has something beyond description to give to her husband.

be submissive

Lest wives who have just become Christians feel they are exempt from submitting to their pagan husbands, Peter clearly defines her role in marriage. When the wife arranges her life to respect her husband's leadership in the home, she

does her part to bring harmony to the home. We will study the husband's role later.

The Bible deals with the submission of the wife in other passages (cf. Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18). God has a divinely-willed order for the wife in marriage. The role of submission is an issue of position, not person.

The Greek indicates that the wife is to develop a mind-set (present tense) of arranging herself under her husband's leadership in the home. After promising in her marriage vows to orient herself to the leadership of her husband, a wife needs to develop a habit of this. This is a life-time principle.

The Greek also indicates that the woman benefits by fulfilling her role in marriage (middle voice). The woman who arranges her life under the leadership of her husband benefits personally. Instead of nagging him, she helps him excel. Instead of discouraging him through constant criticism, she helps him succeed in his leadership of the home. She benefits from this because she will have a happy husband and home.

The problem in marital conflict is that one or the other breaks out of their role. God designed the husband to meet his wife's need and the wife to meet her husband's need. If someone breaks out of this design the marriage relationship breaks down. The woman can derive her basic need from God and God's Word, but it is normal for the husband to meet her need as well.

The biblical view of submission is an expression of rapport. She has something to yield - her mind and body. She has something beyond description to give to her husband

In Christian marriage love is the basis for rapport. Rapport means there is appreciation for each other. That is why we should never marry out of pressure or because a guy says all the right things and impresses a gal. He appears as a knight in shining armor, when really he is a monster.

The principle in the New Testament exhortation to submit is that there should be mutual readiness to renounce one's own will for others.

Principle

Marriage roles are designed to mutually meet the needs of the husband and wife.

Application

What happens if the husband takes advantage of his wife's submission? It subverts the delicate balance of the relationship of each role. Some men feel that the biblical role of the wife gives them the right to abuse their wife. "OK, wife, I'm giving you 15 things to do today. Make sure you have them finished before I get home from work." This detracts from the dignity of his wife. Peter will address this in 3:7. God expects the husband to honor his wife.

Women, if you want your basic need as a wife met, then meet your husband's need as well. Peter will explain how to do that in succeeding verses. We can summarize his advice in two words - "inner beauty." This is a relaxed attitude. Hostilities cease. She becomes so relaxed toward her husband that he sees a beautiful being inside her.

When there is little rapport between husband and wife, roles do not work well. Where there is no love in marriage, marriage becomes a master/slave relationship. When there is true rapport, roles work well. Marriage will survive physical changes as the couple grows older. As the compatibility becomes stronger, so will the marriage. Compatibility takes up the slack for everything that might happen to the marriage.

Every couple has problems adjusting to marriage. The real problem in adjusting is not sex, housekeeping or money. These are details. The real adjustment is whether the man meets the basic need of his wife. It does not matter whether she burns the biscuits. He still loves her. It makes no difference whether she cannot balance the checking account or forgets to change the oil in the car. He still loves her. These things may be fun to joke about but they should in no way destroy the rapport of the marriage.

When genuine love exists, then a wife will willingly surrender her volition to her husband and he will fulfill her soul. This is why in the selection of a husband, he cannot be a status symbol, an escape hatch or a meal ticket.

to your own husbands

"Own" is a special term. The word in the Greek is **idio**~ from which we get the word "idiot!" The word here does not mean wives are to think of their husbands as idiots! No, the word simply means privacy. The implication is that the wife is to submit to her husband, not to men in general. She is to accept the leadership of her husband.

The word "own" can carry the idea of intimacy. The wife is to arrange herself intimately with her husband. This is not only talking about physical intimacy but emotional intimacy. This is intimacy of the soul. Every woman wants that. So this is referring to intimacies of the personality, of the soul, of being.

Principle

The purpose of biblical marriage is intimacy.

Application

Every woman wants to share her life with her husband. She truly desires to be "in" her husband's life. "Will you open yourself to me? Let me inside."

Marital life is a cyclical relationship. Each role of the husband and wife contributes a different enhancement to the marriage. The wife contributes something different from the husband and vice versa.

Two of the greatest false assumptions of all time are that the husband has the same need as the wife and that the wife has the same need as the husband. That is a colossal mistake in marriage. Because each partner in marriage operates within their own premise, they do not understand the need of their partner. They understand their own needs thoroughly, though not the others.

The Bible presents the roles in marriage so that a woman looks at her husband's essential need and the husband looks at the wife's essential need.

The wife's need is security in her husband's love. The need of the husband is respect for his leadership in the home. Both the wife and the husband need both of these ultimate needs but they have different ultimate needs in marriage.

If a wife listens to her husband's hopes and plans and gives her approval, she operates at the essence

of his needs. If she demeans his accomplishments, he will clam up. God's responsibility for the wife is to bring out the best in her husband. No wife gets a ready-made husband. Helping the husband toward maturity is a delicate process.

Some husbands feel the need to keep their wives off balance by criticism. They criticize her cooking. They disparage her dress. Their insecurity is the driving force behind this. They bolster their own insecurity by minimizing their wives. All of this makes it difficult for wives to follow the role God has designed for them. Wives can help their husbands become more mature by creating an atmosphere where they see what God can do. Husbands will judge by what they see in their wife's life.

A wife is fulfilled by her own husband, not with a man she meets at the party. The apparent gregarious, attractive, dynamic personality may be deceptive. That is why "own" in this verse means to exclude other men from your consciousness. This does not mean that you do not talk to other men. However, romance is no substitute for rapport.

What holds a relationship? People married for 20 years can love more than the day they were married. Why? Because rapport love fulfills the soul. That love becomes more wonderful as the years go by.

You can easily spot a couple who have their own interests and don't love each other. He is retired and plays golf. She has a flower garden. They talk about grandchildren but they do not have rapport between themselves. They are totally bored with each other.

be submissive to your own husbands

God instituted divine institutions for order in society. The purpose of God's arrangement of marriage is to give order so that marriage will not end in chaos.

Subordination does not imply inferiority. We can see the distinction between position and person in the roles of the Trinity (1 Corinthians 11:1,2). The Son in position is under the Father and the Spirit in position is under the Son. In their persons, the members of the Trinity are co-equal in essence. As in the case of the Trinity, the wife is not less in her

person but simply under her husband in role. Therefore, a woman should never be dependent for her personhood from her husband or any other person. Her submission is an issue of position, not person.

Principle

The role of submission is an issue of position, not person.

Application

If we hold a high view of the integrity of Scripture, it is not possible to hold a feminist view of the world. However, neither can we hold to distortions of the biblical viewpoint.

God put the man first, not in his person, not in his intellect, not in his total personality but simply as far as arrangement for the order of the family. God has a divinely willed order for the husband and wife in marriage. The Christian wife is free from her husband by virtue of grace but she is bound to her husband by virtue of love.

If the woman loves her husband, she will submit to his leadership in the home. If love does not exist, submission becomes servitude for the woman. Submission is more than sexual for it encompasses all responses to love, in all areas of life. This submission also is free from bitterness and anger. It is not slavery but a voluntary expression of inner beauty.

Many of us enter marriage thinking that it is going to be free from strife only to find that it is a storm. The person of our love may be the obstacle to love itself. God never intended for marriage to be a bastion from problems. It is not a place for lazy people, but a place of sacrifice. Marriage is a place where the worst can come out or where we can display the best -- two mature people who love each other. Marriage is a place where individuals can grow beyond their singleness.

that even if some do not obey the word

"Do not obey" means to be disobedient, to refuse to be persuaded, to refuse belief. This is a very strong term in the Greek. It means to set oneself against the Word, the Bible. It means not to be persuaded, to be obstinate.

In this verse the meaning is to refuse to believe the Christian message -- to refuse to be a believer, to reject the Christian message. This woman, unfortunately, is married to an unbeliever.

Even though the Word is designed to win people to Christ, some husbands are obstinate to the Word. The only way the wife will win her husband is through her life or behavior. She will win this unbeliever to Christ through submission to his leadership in the home.

Some men mix the gospel with their wife's manipulation. He refuses to believe because he is so busy fighting her manipulation. He thinks that this is a dictum from his wife. He confuses his wife's commands and the gospel. Therefore, he resents and rejects the gospel.

they, without a word

What should a wife do if she is not able to win her husband into the kingdom? Her first role is not to nag or bully her husband. Her first role is to live out the grace of God in her life.

In their zeal to win their husbands to the Lord, some women nag their husbands. When this happens, it destroys the concept of fulfillment in marriage. Instead of accepting her husband's leadership she regurgitates criticism. She criticizes him for his bad habits.

The average woman thinks that if her husband would just straighten up, he would be a good candidate for becoming a Christian. "If he goes on the wagon, he will go to heaven." Many women drive their husband from the gospel with this approach. She calls this "witnessing."

The silent witness is the best witness when it comes to people who live close to each other as husbands and wives. Note the wife wins the husband without "a word." The wife does not have to talk her husband into receiving Christ. In close relationships the life is more important than the lip in witnessing. They will be won without talk.

I found this with my own father. When I first became a Christian, I was so enthusiastic about it that I wanted him to receive Christ immediately. He revolted against my witness because he took it as his son telling him what to do. Until I stopped talking and started showing him that I loved him,

he was not open to the gospel. He received Christ 20 years later.

Some think that submission means that a wife is to be a doormat for her husband, and that she is not free to express her opinion. Submission does not remove her freedom. It allows for it. A train has its greatest freedom when it is on tracks.

may be won

"Be won" means winning souls into the Kingdom of God by the Gospel, (1 Corinthians 9:19, 20 (twice), 21, 22) or by godly conduct (1 Peter 3:1). A wife will win her husband to Christ if she follows the principles of this verse.

Principle

Wives win their husbands to the Lord, by respecting their leadership in the home.

Application

Many women have husbands who are obstinate to the Bible. One reason for that is that their wives have tried to ram the gospel down their throat. This is a mistake. They will never win their husbands by badgering them with the gospel. Some Christian wives ride their husbands about moral issues -- drinking and smoking. These things are inconsequential. If the husband refuses to receive Christ, the wife must grant his desire.

As soon as some women say "I do" they try to "redo" their husbands. Their husbands will fight for their personhood. Some women have the belief system that if they degrade their husbands, they will straighten them out. Others feel they need to invade every area of their husband's life. These husbands will hide their needs from their wives due to fear of criticism. If a wife is not sensitive to this, she will be met by self-induced deadness from her husband.

by the conduct of their wives

"Conduct" means turning back, manner of life, way of life. The emphasis is upon daily behavior. Wives win their husbands by their manner of life. It is how we live that makes the difference. God counsels wives to win their husbands this way.

Principle

A wife will win her husband if she operates on rapport with him.

Application

Non-verbal witness has greater impact than verbal. The husband will formulate his view of Christianity by what he sees in his wife. He judges Christianity by the way she interprets it for him.

If a woman talks her husband into submission she humbles him, takes away his manhood. He no longer makes decisions on the basis of what he is. He then makes decisions on the basis of who she is.

that even if some do not obey the word

It is not God's will that Christians marry non-Christians (1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14-28). The end values conflict. A marriage works best when the couple shares end values such as how a person becomes a Christian or how to raise children.

Principle

Christians should not marry those who do not know Christ personally because this is a conflict of values.

Application

The biblical principles for selection of a mate: do not marry a non-Christian (1 Corinthians 7:39; 9:5; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18) do not marry an immature person; avoid teenage marriages do not marry on rebound do not marry because of social pressures such as an unhappy home life or my friends are getting married do not marry for sex; sex is not love but an expression of love women should not marry until they can follow the leadership of their husband do not marry until communication systems are established do not marry for status or a life-time meal ticket, for success or desire for travel do not marry the knight in shining armor; find out what the person is truly like do not stuff another person into your mold hoping that they will change into what you want them to be do not think of marriage as a panacea to resolve your problems do not marry because you love children; children do not hold a marriage

together do not marry without a great sense of commitment to working through the problems do not marry a person who is there for you during a problem in your life do not marry with the attitude that if it doesn't work I can get out of it

1 Peter 3:2

When they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear."

Verses 2-6 shows the wife the kind of behavior that wins her husband.

When they observe your chaste conduct

When non-Christian husbands witness the powerful testimony of their wife's pure life, it will thaw even an icy heart. The wife is to do this without being preachy (v.1).

"Observe" -- even the hard-hearted husband will pay attention to a pure life. Observe means to intensely investigate. The close husband-wife relationship will reveal the reality of Jesus Christ in the pressures of marriage. The husband cannot miss what his wife is truly about. He cannot overlook the impact salvation made on her life.

As soon as the husband sees for himself the reality of Christ in his wife's life, he will have the greatest opportunity to accept Christ. He may not listen to her verbal witness but he will observe her life. He looks, not listens. He waits to see if there is a change.

"Chaste" simply means pure. It may carry the idea of blameless in this verse. This is purity in the broadest sense, not just sexual purity. It should permeate everything the wife does. Her husband observes every decision she makes, every action she takes with her children.

Principle

Non-Christian husbands will judge Jesus by their wives.

Application

The husband largely configures his view of Christ by what he sees in his wife. He judges Christ by the way he sees his wife living. If his wife has a sharp tongue, a yen for gossip or an uncontrollable temper, that is his view the Christian life.

By putting church work before their husbands, some Christian wives cause their husbands to view the church as a rival lover. Love your husband out of joy and put him before church responsibilities.

Other wives unintentionally act superior to their husbands when they become Christians. This is deadly. The husband may feel he has little in common with his wife. He may infer he is no longer important to her or that she does not love him.

The picture here is of a mature woman who, in the face of adversity from her husband, stands independent. Even though he may treat her poorly she does not interfere with the Lord's work in his heart by complaining. The following verses show what wins a husband -- inner beauty.

The husband will respect his wife's testimony. He will watch to see if there is any change in her life. Is she just as short tempered as she always was? Is she still as critical as she was? Does she nag like she used to? If this is true, what kind of salvation is that? He does not want it.

Incompatibility of belief does not justify dissolution of marriage. God designs marriage as a symbiotic relationship. Marriage is a delicate relationship balance. Both husband and wife contribute to that balance even though they may not share the same faith.

This verse does not argue that the onus for the marriage relationship rests on the wife. She does not simply exist to meet the needs of her husband nor is she to subsume her mind, opinions or dreams so that she is nothing outside her husband. The Bible does not ask the wife to live vicariously through her husband, but to reach the potential God designed for her.

Many husbands, like bloodsuckers, drain their wives of everything. They render little in return. Some husbands feel there is inherent superiority in their role. The Bible argues for authority of position, not person. Christianity argues for mutuality in marriage, not individuality. Individuality is the central thesis of much modern thinking about marriage.

accompanied by fear

"Fear" is respect for her husband. Respect carries the idea of distinction. This wife sets her husband aside as unique and special. Although he is belligerent to the gospel, she respects him as the leader of her home, as a man and as a husband and father. If he sees his wife respect even his right to reject Christ, this will lower the barrier between them, and between him and the gospel.

"Fear" does not carry the idea of dread of the husband. Ephesians 5:33 -- "Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband." The Christian wife treats her husband with deference, respect, honor.

Principle

It is difficult for the non-Christian husband to remain an island to his Christian wife if she steps into his essential need.

Application

If the wife treats her husband as somebody, if she believes in him, he is more likely to become a Christian and the husband he should be. A wife who downgrades her husband by always disagreeing with him, making him appear foolish or being sarcastic toward him in public will never gain her husband.

A wife who is indifferent toward her husband's accomplishments or who ignores his achievements disrespects him. This will drive him into a shell. He will shut his wife out of his life.

If the wife honors her husband by bringing out the best in him, this will glorify God. No woman gets a ready-made, fully-mature husband. She has a responsibility before God to help him become what he can become.

Women who live a positive testimony before their husbands will earn their respect even if they do not agree with her beliefs. These women become more thoughtful, more reasonable than ever before. This will have great impact upon non-Christian husbands.

1 Peter 3:3

“Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel--“

Do not let your adornment be merely outward--

Peter does not argue against wearing jewelry. He is talking about what truly wins an obstinate husband. Inner beauty is more important than extrinsic beauty. Outward beauty and inward beauty are two different values.

The word "adornment" comes from the Greek word kosmos. Kosmos means order. Sometimes the New Testament translates this word as "world." Kosmos is a system where order prevails. We get our English word cosmetics from kosmos. Cosmetics can help to bring order to a face.

Peter's point here is that a woman does not win her husband by outward order. Outward cosmetics do not win her husband. Inward cosmetics wins the husband. This is inner beauty, a wonderful, feminine woman. The idea is that a woman's symmetry does not come from outer beauty. If a woman orders herself on the inside, she will not fall apart during a crisis.

arranging the hair,

Now Peter turns to a list of items that will not make a happy husband. The first is the hairdo.

The word "arranging" means braiding. Braiding is elaborate gathering of the hair woven into many tiers of knots. Women of the Roman Empire were addicted to ridiculous extravagance with their hair. They were afraid to touch their hair because it took so long to do. Many had wigs, often blond. Archaeologists found some of these wigs in the catacombs. They made their hairstyles of ivory and gold studded with gems.

Women in the Roman world would spend many hours braiding their hair. Sometime they would pile their hair three feet high. Hair that high is hard to carry around all day! They had to constantly keep themselves in balance. At night they had to prop themselves up so as not to disturb their hair. They could not put their head on a pillow. They put fantastic emphasis on outer beauty.

However, Peter is not arguing for disheveled hair. He is not saying that the shabbier you look, the

more spiritual you are. Vance Havner said, "To be all out for God you don't have to look all in." Obviously women should make themselves as attractive as possible.

Principle

God wants godly women to develop inner cosmetics of the soul.

Application

A woman who is ugly on the inside will never win her husband. A biblically beautiful woman is beautiful on the inside. She orders herself on the inside.

wearing gold,

The second category of female beauty is jewelry. Women generally love jewelry.

"Wearing" means putting around. This woman wears ornaments. She wraps gold ornaments around her wrists, around her neck, ankles and ears. This is no condemnation of wearing jewelry. The point is a matter of emphasis. Do not place the emphasis on outer beauty but on inner beauty. Jewelry is nothing compared to inner beauty.

Obviously this is not an absolute condemnation of jewelry for look at the next category...

or putting on fine apparel—

The third category Peter addresses is clothing. Even since Adam and Eve went into the clothing business the wardrobe has always been a major piece of female beauty. I wonder if Eve's fig leaves were nicer than Adam's!

Obviously there is no absolute prohibition against wearing jewelry. If we say that is wrong to braid hair or wear jewelry then we have to say that it is wrong to wear clothes!! This is not the point.

Some Christian women put too much emphasis on clothes and jewelry. This is just a manifestation of distortion elsewhere. They don't concentrate on developing inner beauty which is the main issue of this passage.

The point of this verse is a woman can have lovely hair, beautiful jewelry and stunning clothes but if her heart is full of bitterness, criticism and selfishness she is ugly on the inside.

Principle

Women who do not have inner beauty will not win their husbands.

Application

Peter's point is to show women not to expect outward beauty to win their husbands. The opposite of cosmos is chaos! Outer beauty will not win the husband. It will help, but this is not the central focus of how to appeal to the husband.

Although beauty helps, it is not at the core of attraction to a husband with any sense. A woman may be beautifully dressed, neatly groomed and yet destroy everything by a bad attitude.

Mutual exclusive attention to outer beauty does not make truly beautiful woman. It is possible to be the most beautiful woman in the world and never attract your husband. Women totally occupied with outer beauty miss the point.

Some women want everyone occupied with their outer beauty. They want people to be enamored with them. She wonders, "Why isn't everyone looking at me?" Many men are sharp enough to know that physical beauty is not everything.

Beauty is not everything. A man wants beauty on the inside. Physical beauty will only last for a certain period of time. Eventually it will wear off. Her skin will start to wrinkle. Her body gradually will grow old. Even though we grow old physically, we can become more beautiful throughout our life-time. Inner beauty will never age.

1 Peter 3:4

Rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God."

Verse four tells how a woman wins her husband.

Rather let it be the hidden person of the heart,

Peter's interest is not in what the adorning of the Christian wife should be but where it should be. Beauty is in the personality.

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward

appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

The word "hidden" is a medical term meaning the most deep-seated aspect of a person. The "hidden person" is the soul or seat of the personality. A woman's beauty should be in the deepest, most inmost part of her being. The most significant aspect of her beauty is what is inside her. Put priority on making your soul beautiful rather than making your body beautiful.

If a woman is to win her husband, whether she is a Christian or not, she does it by inner beauty. The wonderful thing about is that she can decide to become beautiful inside at any point in her life.

The wife has a responsibility to fulfill the husband. The husband has a responsibility to fulfill the wife. This is a cycle - not a vicious cycle. Neither is this going around in circles. It is simply a cycle. Both have responsibilities to each other. At this point we are just looking at the wife's responsibility to her husband.

Principle

Christian women should develop beauty from within her spiritual being.

Application

Grace makes a beautiful woman. That which is on the inside will shine on the outside. No amount of make-up or clothing will make up for inner ugliness. Are you hard to get along with? Are you filled with yourself? Are you filled with pride? Are you quick to anger?

Anyone can dress up and look good. A woman who depends exclusively on physical beauty is only half beauty. God wants us to be adorned from within. The Christian woman's beauty should come from her inner spiritual disposition.

with the incorruptible beauty

Some women are very corrupt. I do not mean necessarily that they run around with a half a dozen men, but they fill their minds with anger, hostility, jealousy and bitterness. These things make up an ugly woman - corrupt beauty.

The woman who has "incorruptible beauty" is the woman with inner beauty. She is faithful to her husband. Neither body nor her soul is available to

anyone other than him. Her husband fulfills her. Her inner beauty is incorruptible. Her husband can count on her faithfulness. When the wife puts the Lord Jesus first in her life, she moves into the sphere of the incorruptible. She is faithful to both the Lord and her husband. The more she loves her Lord, the more she loves her husband.

This inner beauty does not fade. No matter how old a woman becomes she can still adorn her inner beauty. It survives the ravages of time. Outer beauty fades with time.

Inner beauty can grow. Fashions may change and physical beauty passes but inner beauty can blossom.

How does a woman develop deep-seated beauty? She does this by developing two categories in the seat of her being - gentle and quiet spirit. We will begin to study this next time.

Principle

Inner beauty frees women from seeking approval from men.

Application

The Christian woman who has incorruptible beauty is free from slavery to men. Some women marry lemons and feel sorry for themselves. They always look for approval from men. Her husband just happens to be around. She never instinctively thinks of him. She always seeks approval from him. She always wants him to think of her. She needs constant approval.

This wife always does something to gain his approbation. If she does not get it, she turns to other men. She is vain in her self-consciousness. She tries to gain his attention by flirting with other men. Further, if she has lost hope with her husband, she does it simply for the attention of other men. She may spend hours a day in front of a mirror examining herself. When she steps out from the mirror she expects everyone else to admire her.

There is little instinct for true love for her husband. She is always looking for compliments: "Your hair looks great. You have nice legs. You look strikingly beautiful today." Just think of the poor man that married her. She is taken with herself.

A woman with true biblical beauty can change all this. She will begin to look at her husband in a different way. She will respond to him with positive volition. Her inner beauty will change her self-consciousness into other-consciousness. She is no longer that superficial person she once was. No longer is she taken with her own beauty. She shares her beautiful person with others.

of a gentle

Peter now prescribes the true ornaments of the soul of a beautiful woman: gentleness and a quiet spirit.

A "gentle" person is not a wimp. This woman is not mousy or whiny. She is not afraid to assert herself. She is not a fearful person. This is not the point here.

The Greek word for "gentle" means in-wrought grace. This is grace that God works into her life. She humbly recognizes that she is what she is because of what God has done in her life. This humility recognizes it is God who made her; God who changed her. Therefore, she is not the cause of domestic war. She so appreciates what God has done for her that she will take the high road - the road of spiritual maturity. This springs from her relationship to God.

A "gentle" woman is a person who orients to the grace of God. This person humbly accepts God's plan for her life. She appropriates grace. She is one who understands who she is and that she is who she is because of Jesus Christ and what He has done for her. She is not what she is because of what she has done. Jesus has made all the difference in her life. "Gentle" is therefore not self-effacement. It is an attitude of humility. Humility orients to the grace of God.

Principle

God's grace will feed the facets of a wife's soul.

Application

When God feeds the facets of a wife's soul, her husband will see something in her soul he never saw before. She no longer operates on jealousy. She no longer nags him. She is no longer angry, implacable, spiteful or vindictive. Her life calms

down so much that he looks forward to coming home.

This woman does not think of Christianity in superficial terms, such as thinking Christianity is morality. It is something beyond that. She no longer thinks in terms of straightening out her husband. This Christianity is far beyond an overt system of morality. She no longer tries to pour her husband into her mold. That is not marriage but slavery. She believes that she cannot change him. Only God can do that. She keeps the apertures of her soul open to God and his Word.

Suppose for a moment that a certain woman destroys the inner beauty of her soul. Let us say that she allows jealousy to dominate her thinking. The Word of God is not foremost in her thinking so she sucks jealousy into the vacuum of her mind. This attitude sin turns off her inner beauty. This leads to self-pity and produces self-induced misery. She then decides to hurt the man she loves by having an affair with another man. Her attitude sin becomes a soul kink.

She puts the soul kink into action. To do this she must violate her conscience, norms and emotions. She does not truly care about the man with whom she has the affair. Her true motive is to hurt her husband. Two wrongs do not make a right. We cannot build our happiness on someone else's unhappiness. Nevertheless she turns to this intruder.

Just as a thorn may infect our flesh, so does her emotional pattern become infected. She becomes even more vulnerable to other men. She has another affair. By repeatedly committing adultery, she knocks true emotions out of her soul.

By accepting this foreign norm, she will develop emotional scars. This will affect her relationship to her husband, if they ever get back together. Her sin started with jealousy and bitterness. It developed into antagonism. She went out and became unfaithful. She became corruptible. She rejects true love by her attitude sins. Her conscience will never resolve by this method of operation.

Women should avoid adultery because it will scar their souls. They should avoid any kind of lascivious activity. It ruins a woman.

and quiet spirit,

"Spirit" means disposition or attitude in this verse. This wife grounds herself in the principles of grace. She understands what God has done for her, therefore she is serene and tranquil. She is at peace in herself and in her disposition.

A quiet spirit is a calm spirit. She is peaceful in her attitude. She is not full of hostility. This wife is settled on the inside. She possesses a serenity of soul even though her husband may be a jerk.

Again, this word does not imply that this woman sits behind the scenes, afraid to speak. She may be very gregarious, yet she is quiet on the inside. She is settled in her soul. She does not rage because of her insecurities. No military campaign wars inside her soul. She has a sense of fulfillment and is satisfied with God's plan for her life. There is no raging sea inside her. Therefore, this has nothing to do with a woman refraining from talking or staying silent in public.

Principle

A beautiful woman is at rest on the inside.

Application

We all know some men who would love to have a mouse rather than a woman for a wife. They do not want her to talk in public. This is contrary to Scripture.

The Word of God argues that the word "quiet" applied to a wife means that she will not nag or complain. God wants a woman with a relaxed attitude -- at rest; at peace within herself. This is God's perception of a beautiful woman.

which is very precious in the sight of God

"Precious in the sight of God" is applied to something that God values. God honors a woman who orients to grace and is settled in her soul. God values a woman who is beautiful on the inside.

Principle

A benefit of a "gentle" and "quiet" spirit in a wife is that she beautifies her soul in the eyes of her husband and God.

Application

Are you a beautiful woman on the inside? Does your husband view you as beautiful on the inside? This is the essence of submission. Submission does not mean one is a cringing, mousy woman who is afraid of her own shadow.

If a wife is not beautiful on the inside, she is not in the will of God. It makes no difference how much work she may do in the local church, she is not in the will of God. If you are a raging, horrible, ugly woman on the inside, then your work amounts to little before God.

Anything that God highly values should be highly desirable to us. A woman like this is valuable to God. She is also valuable to her husband. Her non-Christian husband has never seen anything like this before.

The woman who tries to make a fool of her husband in front of others makes a big mistake. This may send him packing to the golf links every

day, or cause him to stop at the local pub for a couple of bourbons.

A woman who understands her biblical role pleases her husband. She will go to some of the places he likes. She may learn something about football. She will change many of her friends caught up in the same narcissism in which she has been. She will develop a new appreciation for sex based on love. She will operate on compatibility rather than self-orientation.

God's method for the wife to win her non-Christian husband, or her Christian husband for that matter, is to change her attitudes from negative to positive. Many women deck themselves in richly looking wardrobes but keep their inner person clothed in rags. A fur-bearing animal produces its beautiful fur from the inside. The Christian woman should depend upon the adornment from within -- her spiritual life.