

Peter is still dealing with the topic of our submission to the human authorities in our life, continuing now with the relationship between husbands and wives. He then moves on to the relationship we have with other believers, reminding us that God is ready to bless us when we love one another.

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1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

**“Likewise, ye wives”** - In the previous chapter Peter dealt with submission to authority: citizens to the government and slaves to their master. Now he turns to authority in the home, starting with the wife’s responsibility to her husband.

**“be in subjection to your own husbands”** - The wife is to respect the authority of her husband in obedience to God.

**“that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation [behavior; conduct] of the wives”** - In addition to it being obedience to God, Peter gives a possible outcome of the wife’s submission to her husband. If her husband is an unbeliever (“obey not the word”) then it’s possible that the wife’s behavior through submission could be a godly influence on her husband and lead him to the Savior.

**“While they behold your chaste [pure; clean] conversation [behavior; conduct] coupled with fear [reverence]”** - When the unbelieving husband sees his wife’s godly behavior and reverence both to God and to him (as her husband), it may soften his heart and create in him a desire to know more about this Jesus that she serves.

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3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

**“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning...”** - The true beauty of a godly woman is not in how she combs her hair or in the jewelry and clothes she wears. Peter is not saying she should neglect these things but that outward beauty should not be her focus.

**“But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible [imperishable; immortal]”** - A godly woman’s true beauty comes from what God has done in her heart, which cannot perish and is eternal. What God has done in her heart should manifest itself in her behavior.

**“even the ornament of a meek [mild; gentle] and quiet [tranquil; peaceful] spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price”** - Her beauty, and that which God values highly, comes not from what she can adorn her body with, but from having a gentle and peaceful spirit. This spirit comes from her trust in God, knowing that ultimately He is her source of fulfillment, not her husband.

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5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

This is the manner in which godly women in the past have adorned themselves and exhibited true beauty. Because they trusted God, they obeyed Him by submitting themselves to their husbands. They trusted that what God required of them was right and that He would bless them for their obedience.

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6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

**“Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord”** - Just as Abraham is honored as the father of the nation of Israel, Sarah is also honored as the mother of the nation. Sarah honored her husband and thus became an example of a godly wife.

**“whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement [to show terror]”** - Wives act like daughters of Sarah when they follow her example by doing well without fear of being submitted to their unsaved husband. They are showing their trust in God when they live a godly, submitted life even when their unsaved husband criticizes them for their faith in God.

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7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

**“Likewise, ye husbands”** - Husbands also have responsibilities toward their wife, for there is an implied submission here in that husbands also have God-given responsibilities to their wives. In Ephesians 5:25-31, Paul describes how that under God a man has a significantly greater responsibility to his wife than she has to him.

**“dwell with them according to knowledge”** - The phrase “according to knowledge” encompasses much responsibility for the man. Living with his wife, he must be continually conscious of her needs as a woman and as an individual as well as his spiritual responsibilities to her before God as her husband. See Ephesians 5:25-31.

**“giving honour [reverence; value] unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel”** - Peter does not say the wife is a vessel that is inferior or of lesser value. The husband should honor and value his wife as he would a delicate but expensive vase or painting. His wife is someone of great value and beauty that he wants to protect from harm and so treats her with respect and honor.

**“and as being heirs together of the grace of life”** - The fact that she too is an heir of God’s grace and that they are equal partners as they travel together in this journey of faith only adds to the value of the wife.

**“that your prayers be not hindered”** - A husband that does not value his wife is going to have a hard time getting his prayers answered, as God may not respect his prayers. Also, spiritual partners praying together may have more prayers answered than when praying independently, especially if one or both are in disobedience to God.

8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: 9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

**“Finally”** - Peter now moves to addressing the relationship between believers – how church members should behave toward one another.

**“be ye all of one mind”** - There should be unity among believers, united in their love for one another and for the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“having compassion one of another”** - Any disagreements should be settled through compassion, mercy, and forgiveness rather than holding grudges and creating divisions.

**“love as brethren”** - Love one another, recognizing that we are all children of God and thus are brothers and sisters in the Lord.

**“be pitiful [full of pity; tender hearted], be courteous [friendly; kind]”** - We should show each other kindness and be tender hearted to each other.

**“Not rendering evil for evil, or railing [verbal abuse] for railing; but contrariwise blessing [to speak well of]”** - We should obey what Jesus said at the sermon on the mount: *“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”* (Matt. 5:44). We should be ready to forgive others even when they treat us badly, particularly to other Christians.

**“knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing”** - We should remember that when God called us He forgave and blessed us despite the evil that we had done. Therefore we are called to also “bless them that curse you” (from Matt. 5:44) by responding with kindness even when treated badly. The result will be that God will bless us for our obedience to Him.

10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

Verses 10-12 are a quotation of **Psalm 34:12-16**, which speaks of the blessings God has for those who choose to do good rather than evil.

**“For he that will love life, and see good days”** - The following instructions are for the man (or woman) who would want to live a long and blessed life.

**“let him refrain his tongue from evil [troublesome; injurious; destructive], and his lips that they speak no guile [deceit]”** - He must guard his tongue from saying things to hurt other people or to cause trouble. He must not let his lips speak lies or deceit.

**“Let him eschew [turn away from; shun] evil, and do good”** - He avoid things that would cause trouble or injury to others and instead seek always to do good. Of course, “evil” and “good” are defined by God, not man.

**“let him seek peace, and ensue [follow after; pursue] it”** - His desire should always be for peace. He should not only passively accept peace when it presents itself but to actively go after it when it doesn't.

**“For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers”** - The result of following these instructions is that the Lord will watch over the righteous and will listen when they cry out to Him in their prayers.

**“but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil”** - On the other hand, the Lord will be against those that do evil. He not only will not listen to their prayers but will actively be against them. The original passage includes the phrase “to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth” which implies that the Lord will destroy them and any legacy they would leave behind.

**Psalm 34:12-16** *“12 What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? 13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. 14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. 15 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. 16 The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.”*