

# Sanctification in Marriage

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're in 1 Peter chapter 3. While you open your Bibles there, let's just remember for a second what it is that we are doing in 1 Peter.

He is writing to several different churches, Christians that are beginning to go through persecution, Christians who face further persecution in the future, and he's writing to them to prepare them for such a time that they might grow in the grace of God, that they might know the true grace of God, and in knowing that they would know how to live.

And we've seen how in the first part of this book, he talked about their salvation and all the blessings of salvation and how that has equipped them and prepared them to be able to face persecution.

He's now in this section, since about verse 11 of chapter 2, dealing with sanctification, and that is the process of growing in maturity in Christ.

And he's connecting that sanctification to that preparation for dealing with the world. In other words, he's looking at how we grow and how that growth in Christ is put right down where the rubber meets the road in the relationships of life.

[ 1 : 20 ] And he's going to deal today with one of the most basic relationships that most of us either have or have had or someday in the future will have, and that is the relationship of marriage.

And unlike Paul, when Paul writes about marriage, Peter has a very different sort of goal that he's after in talking about marriage than Paul.

Paul's talking about marriage in order to make sure that you're living worthy of the calling with which you've been called. Peter is writing about marriage so that you're prepared and ready to face persecution.

So let's read from 1 Peter chapter 3, beginning in verse 1. He writes this, he says, He says, Let's pray together.

[ 3 : 20 ] Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for how it is a perfect treasure of your thoughts. It is what you think. And so, Father, I pray that you would help us submit our hearts to you in what you think about things, because you have created us, you've created this world, and you've given to us your thoughts that we might live in perfect harmony with you.

So help us today, Father. Help us to understand, to know, to live out these truths. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Well, we're going to just cover two points. We're going to talk about wives and husbands, right?

So we're just going to split it and give it. But here's the way this is going to work. In both cases, to both wives and husbands, he gives a task or tasks. He gives the goal of those tasks.

And he kind of gives sort of the method or the way to do that or some reasons for that. And so I want us to look at that in kind of that order. So the first point then is wives win your husbands.

This is the ultimate goal that he's after for wives. He's wanting wives to win their husbands. Now let's just take and break the text down just a little bit. The task that he gives to women is to submit to their husbands.

[ 4 : 37 ] He tells them to submit to their husbands. It's very clear throughout the Bible that wives are to be submissive to their own husbands, not women being submissive to men.

I need you to be sure you understand the difference between that because when people criticize Christians, they often will change those two out and say, well, you think that women should be submissive to men.

No, we think wives should be submissive to husbands and not a wife submissive to every husband, but a wife submissive to her own husband. And that is all.

That's what the scripture teaches. And this submission is much like the military. You sign up for it. You volunteered for it. And because you've now volunteered for this service, you must play your role.

And your role is that of submission to authority. And that authority has limits. That authority is not absolute. That authority cannot dictate and say everything.

[ 5 : 40 ] Only God is the ultimate authority. Peter has already used the same term for submission as he talked about submitting to governing authorities.

So you've got to take whatever you say about wives and look at the governing authorities and see that there's a comparison there. And that is that we're submitting to, yet their authority has limits. The submission and the situation that this particular wife is in that Peter is writing to is a wife who's married to an unbeliever, who's married to a lost man.

She's married to a pagan. In that culture, it was expected that whatever the husband's religion was, the wife would just simply adopt that religion and just go his direction.

But because of the gospel, people began to hear the gospel and there were women who would hear the gospel and they would believe the Lord would open their hearts and they would trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 6 : 42 ] And now they've got a dilemma. I'm married to a pagan man and I believe that that's wrong and we need to follow Christ. So how does she live in such a situation?

And that's what he's answering. Because she can't keep going to the temples with her husband. She can't keep going to offer these sacrifices. So what is she to do?

Well, she is to submit to her husband. That's the task. The goal that she has in submitting to her husband is to win her unbelieving husband to the truth.

In other words, her goal is evangelistic. Her goal is a missionary. She needs to understand and have the mindset that my job as submission to my husband is for a purpose that's not about our marriage, but it's about his eternal state.

Now, we need to say this at the very beginning. Peter is not writing to us a guarantee. He is not writing to us a guarantee that says, wives, if you submit to your unbelieving husbands, they will be one.

[ 8 : 01 ] But he says that they may be one. That there is a contingency. There's a potential nature of this thing.

There's a sort of conditional aspect here. Because he has to trust. He has to believe in the Lord. It's his relationship. There's no guarantee that if you submit to an unbelieving husband, he will be saved.

But there's absolutely no way that he will be saved if you don't submit to him. Do you understand the difference? Peter wants us to understand that there is a particular way, a particular way of living before lost people, a way to live treating them with honor and dignity and respect in all of our conduct that becomes a way of opening the door to the gospel.

Peter is not saying that to win your husband, you don't need any words, right? There's a whole group of people who say something about evangelism and gospel ministry, and they'll say things like this, that actions speak louder than words.

Or preach the gospel and use words if necessary. And there's this whole line of thinking that I can do more good in evangelism by my actions than I can my words.

[ 9 : 25 ] And that is to pit, basically, two sides of one coin against each other, right? Your actions need to be good and right and honorable, but you can't preach the gospel with your actions.

You cannot preach the gospel with your actions. You preach the gospel with the words of the scriptures. That's what you have to preach. So what our actions do is that they open up a door. Our actions are pre-evangelism. Our actions are meant to be in such a way so that we get an opportunity to speak truth.

And that's what Peter has said in other places. Look at 1 Peter 2, verse 12. He says, Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

In other words, you act a certain way so that you have an opportunity to make an influence and to have an influence. Chapter 3, verse 15. But in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and respect.

[10:34] He wants us to be gentle, dignified, and honorable in our treating of people who are lost so that we get an opportunity to be an influence.

That's what we're supposed to do. And really, and truthfully, the expectation is not just wives with lost husbands, but every Christian ought to have the mindset that says, I need to treat people with dignity, respect, and honor in order to open the door that I may preach to them the gospel. So there's the task. There's the goal. Now, how is the wife supposed to do this? How is she supposed to do this? What's the means by which she does this? And there's three things. We go back up to verse one and two, and she has to have a new way of life. A new way of life. Verse one says that they may be won without a word by the conduct, by the conduct of their wives. That word conduct is a word meaning the whole of life. It's a lifestyle. As Christians, we're supposed to have a different lifestyle than the world, right?

[11:47] I'm not supposed to be like the world. I'm not supposed to handle suffering the way the world handles suffering. I'm not supposed to handle my money, my free time. I'm not supposed to handle insults and injury from others the way the world does.

I must have a new lifestyle. And that lifestyle, he says, needs to be respectful and pure conduct. Or another way of reading it, I think the King James says it this way, a chaste behavior coupled with fear.

A chaste behavior coupled with fear. And the reason it says it that way is because the fear is not fear of the husband or fear of man, but it's a fear of God.

And the chaste behavior is this moral sort of rectitude, this purity in behavior. This is the way the woman wins her husband, is that she lives in a moral upstanding way because she fears God. She fears God. She loves God. She's enthralled with God. And because of that, it changes the way she thinks, the way she acts, the way she behaves. So she's got to have a new way of life.

[13:00] Second thing she's got to have is she has to have an internal heart change. An internal heart change. Verse 3 and 4. Now, when you read verse 3 and 4, you look at it and you go like, okay, no jewelry, no hair stuff, no clothes.

And you might go like, oh, so the Bible says we can't do anything like that at all. This is not, this is not a prohibition against makeup, jewelry, fixing your hair, or nice clothes.

That is not what this is. And anybody who tells you, well, you shouldn't be doing these things because look what this verse says. They're only reading verse 3. They're not reading verse 4. They're not understanding the context.

You have to take verse 3 and 4 together. And what he's doing is he's prohibiting, prohibiting and saying no to using external adornment to try to win your husband instead of internal adornment. In other words, he wants you to win your husband by submission and not seduction. That's what he wants you to do. In a culture back then, when women had no power or recourse to persuade someone to do something for them, they had to use whatever recourse they had.

[14:18] And Peter is saying, listen, wives, no longer use seduction or anything else, but instead use the submission. Use the internal workings of the heart and what God is doing in you.

That imperishable beauty of the gentle and quiet spirit. What is it to have a gentle and quiet spirit? Well, let's just go out on the lake, throw me out in the water, and I'll show you what a gentle and quiet spirit is not. I will be thrashing like some crazed maniac because I can't tread water.

My legs are actually made of lead. As I tread water, I just sink and sink and sink. And so I began to panic and I began to thrash.

That is not gentle or quiet whatsoever. But if you can see someone who's perfectly comfortable and they're floating, and you can just see this gentle just sort of staying afloat in the midst of this lake, they fall off the boat and they're just waiting for somebody to come back to them.

[15:26] Like, I'm just fine. That'd be my wife, right? She's just sitting there. I'm just fine, you know? And it's that gentle, quiet spirit that it's not panicked. It's not frustrated. It's not overworked.

Instead, it trusts in the Lord because there's this internal heart change that my trust is no longer in me, but my trust is in the Lord.

The third thing that the wife does in order to win her husband is have a dogged commitment to respect. A dogged commitment to respect.

Verses 5 and 6 are about the ancient women who adorned themselves, right, out of Jewish history, talking about Sarah. And it says that Sarah was submissive or obeyed her husband Abraham and she treated her husband with a respect that was so deeply rooted and ingrained in her heart.

And most of the time when people read this, they just kind of pass over it and go like, well, that's weird. Why does she call him Lord? Wives, do we need to start calling husbands Lord?

[16:36] No, this is an illusion. This is an illustration. This is an example. This is how we see respect for your husband deeply rooted and ingrained in your heart and your life.

You see, what Peter's doing is he's making an allusion to Genesis chapter 18. I don't know if you remember what happens in Genesis chapter 18, but Abraham is sitting outside of his tent and he sees three people walking up to his tent.

Most likely, the second person of the Trinity and a couple of angels. There's other theories as to who this is, but it's okay. It's God, right? They're walking up to his tent. They greet him and they begin to tell him that next year, in one year, he and Sarah will now have a child.

He also goes on to tell Abraham about what's going to happen to Sodom and Gomorrah, right? But when he says that next year you're going to have a child, you and Sarah, Sarah's in the tent by herself.

She's by herself. Nobody's around. Right? And listen to what verse 12 says. So Sarah laughed to herself saying, after I am worn out and my Lord is old, shall I have the pleasure?

[17:51] Now she's laughing because she knows Abraham's old, she's old, and they're going to have a child? That's ridiculous. How in the world could God make that happen? But notice how just off the cuff, just how it just flows out of her what she calls her husband.

My Lord. Now is that because he demanded it? No, it was just a sign of respect. And when nobody is watching, when nobody's listening, she doesn't say, you mean me and my old man or that crazy old galoot or whatever she might could say?

No, she says, my Lord. Why? Because deeply ingrained into all of who she is is a respect for her husband that gets squeezed out by the difficulty that God places in front of her and when it gets squeezed, when she gets squeezed, respect for her husband comes out because it's deeply rooted and ingrained in her heart because of what God has done for her, that she genuinely, deeply respects her husband.

Is that the case for you ladies? Do you deeply, if you get into a moment of opportunity where, you know, these other women are disrespecting their husbands behind their backs, do you join in or do you find yourself pushing back on that and saying, you know, that is just not right.

I'm so glad to be married to my husband. See, here's the thing. As we think about wives winning their husbands, we each need to understand and know and believe what this is teaching because not only could it be possible that some of you need to have this encouragement from God's word to live in such a way as to try to win your husband but many of you are going to have circumstances in which you have daughters, granddaughters, nieces, and others that come to you because they are married to somebody who was lost and they don't know how to do this because they want to follow Christ but he doesn't want to follow Christ and what kind of discipleship and what kind of teaching can you give to them?

[19:56] Well, this right here and I do believe that there is an application of this for even women who are married to Christian men because sometimes as Christian men we're not doing the things that we ought to do.

We're not living in the way that we ought to live and rather than jumping on his case and writing him about what he's not doing instead there ought to be this quiet submissive gentle spirit that in your own behavior that's what wins him to see that he needs to be obedient to the Lord.

Is it a guarantee? No. But you're certainly never going to convince your husband to do what's right by blasting him. Never. And so each of us needs to take this teaching seriously in order to help those that need to hear it.

And so what do you have to do in your own life to have that deeply ingrained respect for your husband? Now it is fascinating that he gives six verses to women and one verse to men.

But I think this verse is a lot harder. and I think you'll see it as we go. Husbands grow in your faith. Now that sounds not like the same kind of thing.

[21:23] Why isn't it something like respect your wives or whatever because that becomes sort of the vehicle for accomplishing something. So what does he tell them to do?

What are the tasks that they must do? That husbands must do? Well here they are. Number one he has to live with his wife in an understanding way. Now that brings up a couple of things.

To live with your wife in an understanding way means number one you've got to be a student of your wife. You've got to know your wife. And no I don't believe that women are such a mystery that we can never know.

I think often times as men we just don't put in the work. You can know your wife. You must be a student of your wife. You've got to learn who she is.

Will she change over time since you married her when she was 18? Yeah. She is going to change over time which means that you've never stopped being a student of who your wife is.

[ 22 : 22 ] Your wife is. The second thing this means is living with her. That means making a life with her. She's a person who has personality dreams and hopes and ideas and fears.

She is not an appliance that comes into the house to do a chore. She is someone that you are to make a life with. You are to live with her in an understanding way, recognizing her weaknesses, needs, limitations.

But the second task, and the man has two, is to show honor to the wife. To show honor to his wife. To honor means to place a value on.

Right? You calculate the cost of the worth and you place a value on. Maybe you've got a car, a tool, a watch, a book, a picture, something given to you by someone that you love, and if your house was on fire, you might run in to go get it.

Now, you might not, because you might count your life worth more than the thing that was given to you, but you might count your life worth it to go get that thing that was given to you.

[ 23 : 31 ] for husbands to honor their wives is for husbands to count their wives as more important than that thing. I actually heard a guy one time say to me that he might get rid of his wife before he got rid of his tractor.

I think he was kidding, but here's the thing. I think we as husbands sometimes don't honor and count as valuable our wives as much as we should.

As much as we should. So those are the two tasks, to live with her in an understanding way and to honor her. So what's the goal? What is the goal? Well, the goal is so that your spiritual growth is not hindered.

That's the goal. When Peter says in verse 7, he says that we're to do this so that your prayers are not hindered. To live with your wife in an understanding way, to treat her with the honor and dignity that she deserves greater than everything else that you've ever owned, every other person in your life and everything, we're to do that so your spiritual growth is not hindered, so that your prayers are not hindered.

Now why am I mixing prayer with spiritual growth? Because what do you think we're supposed to be praying for? I want you to think about it. This is hard. Men, think to yourself for just a second that if your prayers are hindered, then you cannot ask God for help when you're facing temptation to sin because he's not going to hear that prayer.

[ 25 : 13 ] You can't ask God for help in reading the Bible because your prayers are hindered because you're not living with your wife in an understanding way, showing her honor and respect.

You can't pray and ask God to help you to grow in your love for him and others because your prayers are hindered. You can't expect God to answer your prayers about your wife's growth spiritually because you're not treating her with the honor that she deserves and you're commanded to give, so your prayers are hindered.

The missionaries can't go out into the field and be prayed for by you because your prayers are hindered. Anything that you might pray for will be hindered if you do not show your wives honor and respect.

Now that's heavy. I'm looking at that and I'm just going like, so, I mean, I'm supposed to pray about a lot of things. And if my prayers are hindered because of how I treat my wife, then my marriage becomes a good test for my spiritual growth.

And not just mine, but now my wife's spiritual growth and my children's spiritual growth, and as a pastor, your spiritual growth, I wouldn't even be able to pray for your spiritual growth and God hear it if I don't treat my wife with the honor that he tells me to do.

[ 26 : 48 ] That's tough. But why?

Why are we supposed to treat her with this understanding and honor? I mean, obviously, the goal is so that I'm not hindered in my spiritual walk. But what is it that Paul gives us or that Peter gives us as reasons?

He says right there that she's the weaker vessel. We're to treat her with honor because she is the weaker vessel. The word for weak here is not the word for inferior, but it's a word that's often used for physical troubles.

And so the point is that by and large, a wife is physically weaker than her husband. By and large, rule of thumb, it's not a truism, but it's a rule of thumb, that wives are not as strong as their husbands.

Now, why is this the issue? Why is this the thing that he's talking about? Why honor someone who's weaker?

[ 27 : 56 ] Because we're to have an attitude towards those who are weaker that is an attitude like Christ's. Paul commands the church at Thessalonica to treat different kinds of people in different ways.

In chapter 5, verse 14, he says to admonish the idol. That's one kind of person. Somebody who's not busy doing the things they ought to. They've got to be warned and admonished.

You're to encourage the faint-hearted people who get discouraged. They need to be encouraged. They need to be comforted. But then the third group is help the weak. It's the same exact Greek word.

Help the weak. How are you to treat the weak? You're to help them. You're to be an aid to them. The Christian stance towards people who are weak is that of help.

And so he's saying to husbands, remember, your wives need your help. Your wives need you. They need your aid. They need you to live an unselfish way towards them and to help them.

[ 29 : 01 ] Even though they are your helpmate, you're to also return and to help them. And so in his home, a man has somebody who's vulnerable and in the first century, in many cases, oppressed.

And so we're to be mindful honoring her as that weaker vessel. I think sometimes, even because there's been so much because of Christianity and the advancement of society that so much of what we see in the first century, there's just not really too much a part of our world today.

Although, I think sometimes, men, we can violate this even through our own harshness. Sometimes we can be harsh.

There was a guy, he was having trouble with his wife and his kids and they were growing more and more upset and angry with him and he couldn't understand why and how it was that he was treating them that was making everything kind of weird.

And a friend of his kind of happened to see everything get laid out in front of him as he just watched things. And so he went to his friend and he said, you know, I just wanted to say, I came to work the other day and I watched you, the way you treated customers and the way you treated your employees.

[ 30 : 29 ] He said, when a customer came in, you were like, oh, welcome. We're so glad to see you today. How can we help you today? But when an employee walked by, you're like, hey, hey, get out of here. Go back in there. Go get that thing. And you're just barking orders.

He said, when you get home, do you treat your wife and your kids as employees or as customers? He needed his mind reframed to understand that your family, they're not your employees.

They're your family. So you got to treat them with that respect. The second reason he gives us as to why this is the way men ought to live is not just because she's the weaker vessel, but because she's equal in the life of grace.

It says that we're co-heirs or we're joint heirs together in the grace of life. It means that she is just as much a Christian as you are and you're just as much a Christian as she is.

Now, this is not about maturity in the faith. Maturity in the faith is about the starting point that says, now I need to grow in that, but we're all at this same starting point.

[ 31 : 36 ] In other words, if you die, you're going to go on to be with the Lord because you're a Christian. And if she dies, she's going to go on to be with the Lord because she's a Christian. She doesn't go to some sub place first and then try to make it up there and you don't go to some sub place first and then try to do something to make it up there.

You're with the Lord. You're equal footing. We're co-heirs of the grace of life. And so as Christian men, we need to treat our wives with this honor, with this understanding way, because this is the, this is one of the things that can hinder the spiritual growth of our lives.

So, so how do we do this? How do we do this? Let me give you a couple of things. Number one, you got to be committed. When we talk about growth, you got to be committed to reading the word

and to pray.

I feel like a broken record sometimes when I say that. But, you know, I don't remember what video it was. I was, some coach was talking about either a basketball or football team is being interviewed and he was like, you know, we just always got to get back to the basics.

I don't know, I don't know how many times I've heard a coach say, we just got to get back to the basics. We just got to get back to the basics. Why is that? Because it's the basics that are the foundation and the building blocks to being able to do what you do.

[ 32 : 56 ] You cannot grow in your faith without the word, without prayer. And men, that means that as we look at our wives, it also means we've got to treat them in such a way so that the work that we put in into reading the word and praying is not hindered.

And so maybe, maybe husbands, you need to think about how you've treated your wife. maybe you need to think about whether or not you've treated her in an understanding way.

Maybe you need to think about if you've treated her with honor. And if you haven't, then you need to repent. And wives, maybe you need to think about whether or not you've been as submissive and gentle, quiet spirit with your husband as you should have been.

And if you haven't, then maybe you need to repent. And maybe you need to go home today and ask one another for forgiveness. Maybe you've been short and curt and harsh in your words.

Maybe you've been standoffish and cold, giving the silent treatment. And maybe you need to repent and maybe you need to go home and ask one another for forgiveness. Because here's the truth.

[ 34 : 16 ] Every one of us has moments where we fail to do these things. I've had moments where I have failed to treat my wife as the weaker vessel with honor and understanding.

I absolutely have. And if it were not for the fact that Christ has paid the price on the cross, I got no hope.

And neither do you. Apart from what Christ has done upon the cross, do you understand that when he went to the cross, that over 2,000 years ago, when he went there, right at 2,000, when he went to the cross there, as he paid for sin, he paid for the sin of my not treating my wife the way that I should.

For your harshness, for your lack of respect. He paid the price there. We have forgiveness because of what he's done. And there may be some of you who, all of this sounds strange, and you think to yourself, I mean, if this is the way Christianity is, I'm not sure I want to be a part of it.

And I would just say to you, you need to understand that you can't even keep the basic things together, let alone what's going on in marriage. Because the number one command is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

[ 35 : 37 ] And that is the thing you don't do ever. So many other things. You love more than you love God. It's your friends.

It's your future that you're planning for, hoping for. It's your comfort. It's your lifestyle. You love something more than you love God.

And the thing is, is that God is not going to put up with that forever. forever. That's why he has wrath. And it's coming. And I would say to you, to recognize your sin, turn from it, and run to Christ. Because that is your only hope. Let's pray.