

“Submission: Training for Exiles, pt 2” / 1 Peter 3:1–7

Together We Endure: The Letter of 1 Peter, #6

Well, I was so grateful for Pastor Bryan sharing with us last weekend. (I would ask you to put the little hand clap emoji up but I guess that’s possible only on ZOOM.) Summit, we’ve been through some challenging times as a society, but we know that in the gospel are the resources for true reconciliation between the races. The gospel’s aim is not only to tear down the walls of hostility between man and God, but also the walls of hostility between man and man. The picture of the bride of Christ Revelation 7 depicts not just a throng of individuals united to God, but a throng of nations also united to each other. We believe that churches that take this gospel and seriously will seek to “reflect the diversity of their communities and proclaim the diversity of the coming Kingdom.” And so we’re glad to have Pastor Bryan here to join us in that. I know this has been a difficult time and a lot of you are confused about where the church stands and where we’re going on this--this Sunday night, July 19, I am going to do a members meeting where I’m going to talk about that, clarify some things, and even want to acknowledge some things we’ve done wrong. I’m also going to tell you the plan for re-gathering in light of the most recent Covid announcements, so I hope you’ll join us for that this Sunday night... .

We’re in a series called *Together We Endure*, a study through Peter’s first letter to the church, so if you have your Bible, grab it and turn to 1 Peter 3. I would always encourage you to have your Bible open when someone teaches from it, because it helps you see and make connections and read the passage better later. If you have a notebook, or something you can write it, you could use that as well.

OK, so, here’s the deal. When you’re preaching expositionally through the Bible, that means you let the text set the agenda. Instead of (wet finger) figuring out whatever everyone wants to hear about and trying to find stuff in the Bible to back it up, you let the Bible determine what people need to hear.

I am committed to that approach because this is Jesus’ church and not mine, and so he sets the agenda not me. But when you are committed to this approach, that means that sometimes you have to preach hard messages, because they are in the Bible. And that’s what we are going to do today. In fact, here’s my first point today: **"This is God's Word, not PJD's."** Everybody write that down. When you're ready to email me angrily, remember that line. When you disagree with me, remember that line. That's my first point--This is God's Word, not PJD's. Okay...here we go.

[1] Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands,

No, no! Don’t reach for that remote to turn me off. Hear me out. The most overlooked word in this whole passage is the first word: **"Likewise..."** Everybody look at someone close to you now and say “likewise.”

Works consulted:

“Submission, Parts 1-2 (1 Peter 3:1–12),” Jen Wilkin

1 Peter 3:1–7, Bryan Loritts

1 Peter for You, “Better to Suffer for Doing Good” (1 Peter 3:1–17), Juan Sanchez

“Resurrection Life in a World of Suffering” (1 Peter 2:11–3:12), Mary Wilson

Likewise means “in the same way.” Remember, this is the third of 3 relationships Peter uses to illustrate a principle: How should a “stranger and exile” respond to difficult relationships or unjust treatment? The previous two relationships--that we looked at last time were submitting to an imperfect and sometimes unjust government (2:13–17) and being under the control of an unjust Master (2:18–25). These are all just applications, the principle is what is important.

Our example in all these things, Peter says, is CHRIST. **In ANY relationship** where you experience hardship, suffering, or injustice, Peter says (and let’s read it together, out loud)--**21 For you were called to this (to suffering, hardship and injustice), because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 He did not commit sin, “and no deceit was found in his mouth” (Isaiah 53:9); 23 when he was insulted, he did not insult in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. “By his wounds you have been healed” (Isaiah 53:5)**

(Hey, I have an idea. What if you committed to memorizing this? If you are in a family, do what I do: Pay your kids \$2/verse.

This passage says that Christ did 3 things in the face of injustice and we’ve looked at them the last 2 studies: **(3 things Christ did in the face of injustice)**

1. **He was patient (v. 22, 24).** He understood suffering was an integral part of God’s plan of salvation. His wounds were the means by which God brought salvation to the world. Peter tells us that in some mysterious way that is true of us, too. A lot of Christians, I explained, have bought into the lie that if you follow Jesus and do right, everything will go smoothly. I don’t know what Savior they’re following, but it’s not Jesus. To follow in his steps means we should expect unjust suffering. Jesus didn’t roll into Jerusalem in an Escalade and take up residence in a mansion, he came in on a donkey and had nowhere to lay his head.
2. **He committed himself to “him who judges justly (v. 23).”** He knew earthly justice may never come, but God would give full justice to him in his heavenly country.
3. **He kept doing good (v. 23), even when being slandered. Even when others wronged him,** he kept doing the right thing, knowing that in all situations he would respond first and foremost to God and God would vindicate him one day.

So, let’s apply that mentality to marriage:

[3:1] Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, [2] when they see your respectful and pure conduct. [3] Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—[4] but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. [5] For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, [6] as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. That’s a jarring statement to modern ears, is it not? You’re like, “Oh, is that where we are going today?” I suggested that to Veronica: that she call me ‘lord’ for the rest of the day and it did not go well. Hear me out. **And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.** Ladies, the question for you is going to be, “How do you submit to your husband in a Christlike way?” Foremost in Peter’s mind is a wife with an unsaved husband, because that was really common in the early church--and we have people in our church in that situation, too, and they feel just as lost. That’s why he says those who do not obey will be “won without a word through your conduct.” But even if both of you are Christians, surely you have

moments of frustration, where your spouse lets you down, even just flat out wrongs you. How do you respond like Christ in that moment?

And [7] Likewise, husbands, (In the same way, husbands. Men, there's an application for you too) **live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel** (there's another phrase that sounds strange to modern ears), **since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.** Men, the question for you is going to be what does it mean to show honor to your wife in a Christ-like way? A lot of men have no clue on this. I heard a story about four golfers out for a round, and as they were lining up their shots, the first man saw a line of cars going by. Their lights were on in the middle of the day; it was a funeral. He took off his cap and bowed his head and waited to take his shot. His friends were shocked. They had never seen him show such respect and compassion. He said, "Yeah, it's the least I can do. We were married for 35 years." So, is that what he means? Probably a little more.

3 Ways to Honor Your Spouse

*God, this is hard to hear and even harder to act on. I need your grace today. I need my ears opened. I need you to soften my heart today to receive this word. **Father, by the power of the Holy Spirit, help me receive this word and act upon it.***

1. You use your "power" to bless and serve, not manipulate and control

- Peter points to power that both men and women have in the relationship and shows you what to do with it.
- Men, of course, usually have physical power. They are typically bigger and stronger. I think that's primarily what Peter means in vs. 7 when he calls her the "weaker vessel."
- But it also, in Rome, meant weaker in her power in the marriage. Marriage law in Rome was much better for men than for women in Rome. Men could have affairs--were expected to--she could be killed if she did so. Men could divorce their wives for pretty much any reason--the way she cooked, if she wouldn't let you go to Gladiator games on Saturday, if you didn't like the way she aged--but wives in general couldn't divorce their husbands. And divorces always favored the man. The money was his. The kids were his. Many divorced women had to resort to prostitution. It was a horribly unjust system. But the point is she was a "weaker vessel" legally.
- She's also weaker in the sense that the New Testament gives him a position of leadership in the home. She's told to submit in ways he is not. That's not a bad thing, of course, it's a beautiful, Christlike thing, but it makes her positionally weaker.
- Some commentators say that his reference to her being weaker might be a general reference to the fact that God has endowed women with an emotional sensitivity that makes them more nurturing and compassionate. The mothering instinct. Having that sensitivity doesn't mean that they are inferior, right? Which is weaker, a crowbar or a thermometer?" In some ways the thermometer, but the thermometer can do a lot of stuff that the crowbar can't. In many ways, a thermometer is *more* powerful and useful than a crowbar. So, maybe that is in Peter's mind.
- But none of these 4 weaker positions makes her inferior. That's what Peter means when he says, **"heirs with you in the grace of life."** She is an heir with you--right alongside of you, in Christ. She is your full equal.
- And Peter says that whatever power you have in the relationship should be used to honor her, and serve her, not exploit her. Live with her in an understanding way: If she's emotionally wired differently than you, don't despise that. Seek to understand her. Learn her love language. Love her on her terms.
 - **A friend of mine and I were reading 5LL together... "Whichever one she is not doing at the moment." "Become a student of your wife."**
 - Use any position of power to serve her, because that is what Christ did with his strength.

- Let me tell you something absolutely wicked: When a man uses his physical power to dominate his wife. Even worse is when he uses the Christian idea of submission in marriage to dominate her. That's not what Christ did with his power. He used his power to serve. He laid down his life. It's like C.S. Lewis said, "The crown a man wears in marriage is first one of thorns." I use the leadership I have to serve her. Practically, that means as leader of our family, I should voluntarily lose 90% of the disagreements we have.
- I don't pull out the submission card to get her to do what I want to do.
 - Pastor Curtis and I were talking the other day about our wives and pillows. Somehow it came up how I can't seem to sit down my couch or lay down in my bed without moving a couple dozen pillows-- maybe it's a couple hundred--and PC said, "That's exactly how Elizabeth is" and he sent me [this meme](#). (That's not either of our wives, FTR. That's Adam Driver).
 - But here's the deal, if I'm leading in a Christlike way, I'm letting her win the day on most of the preferences, because that's what it means to lay down my life for her and serve her. In every decision I make, I'm trying to ask, "How can I honor her, lift her up, make life easy for her?"
 - And of course she is trying to do the same, but the point is that **"a man's leadership in the marriage is not a license to do what he wants to do, but empowerment to do what he ought to do."**
 - Kathy Keller example: you get the deciding vote
 - Men: Whatever power you have--physical, positional, financial, the dominance of your personality-- you use to bless and honor her.
- **OK, now for women, what kind of power do they have?**
 - Well, first, Peter says, their beauty and sexuality. Peter indicates that many women can build their identity on that and use that as a means of power.
 - When he says in vs. [3] **Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—** he's not saying you can't braid your hair and you can only wear it in a messy-bun, he's saying that the substance of your life should not be beauty. Listen, early on, women are taught that their value, their worth, and even their power come from their beauty. They are taught by our culture that a woman with great physical beauty will have power to get what she wants. And will be greatly valued.
 - Peter says, "No. What is valuable to God is Christ-like character. A calm, steadfast faith in him." [4] **but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.** A gentle and quiet spirit--this doesn't mean being introverted and shy, that extroverted loud women are offensive to God; "gentle and quiet spirit" means one at peace, not trying to use her position to manipulate and control, full of trust in God--this is very precious to God *because that's the spirit Jesus had*. Submission with a quiet spirit was a core dimension of Jesus' character. That's more valuable to God than your beauty, and in tough situations you should, like Christ, be more concerned about what God thinks than what you can get for yourself. To say it simply: the Christlikeness of your person is more valuable to God than the stylishness of your purse. Your faith is more precious to God than your face or your figure. Submission to God is ultimately more powerful than anything beauty can procure for you.
 - Single ladies, he is saying, your future is determined not by how beautiful you can make yourself or how perfectly you can present yourself. You cannot post enough beautiful photos of yourself online to make up for what you feel you are missing--that's never going to make you feel secure. What you are looking for is found in the presence and promise of your Heavenly Father. Don't adorn yourself with filtered Instagram photos. Sometimes you wonder when you see a picture on Instagram how many different times they took the pic to get that one. Don't adorn yourself with filtered Instagram photos. Put on Christ and let him worry about your future.
 - Here's another application from Peter's words: Married ladies, it's wrong to use your sexual appeal to get him to do what he wants; to withhold sex until he conforms to the way you want him to be is using your beauty and sexuality as power. Giving him the cold shoulder, making life miserable for him until

he does what you want--this is using your power in the relationship to manipulate and control. That's not how Jesus used his.

So, #1, Christlikeness in marriage means you use your "power" to bless and serve, not manipulate and control.

So, that raises the question--*What if you're doing your part and they don't do what they are supposed to do?*

2. In all things do good, obey God, and trust him

- Well, in the face of incompetence or injustice, what did Christ do? He committed himself to him who judges justly. And then he kept doing good, trusting God with the results.
- Look at his example of Sarah: [5] For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, [6] as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.
- The use of Sarah here is really helpful. Abraham was not a perfect man. I know we have our songs about Father Abraham having many sons and I am one of them and so are you, but read Genesis, Abraham really blew it sometimes. He led their family to places he shouldn't go and made some truly boneheaded decisions. But Sarah stayed by him submitted to his leadership. She wasn't like, "This guy does NOT know what he's doing, we'd be better with me in charge." **No, (vs. 6)**, she did the right thing she knew to do, which was honoring her husband's leadership, committing herself to God, and as a result, **"she didn't fear what was frightening."**
- Remember Kathy Keller's statement? I'll let you decide, and I'll trust God. It doesn't mean you don't offer your opinion, even strongly! And any man who makes decisions for the family without the counsel of his wife is a fool. It means your attitude in marriage is dominated by a calm trust in God.
 - Hey--let me be really clear on something so you're not confused: This is NOT saying spousal abuse is OK or that God wants you to stay in a home where you are being abused and just take it as some expression of Christlikeness. No passage of Scripture encourages you to do that--if for no other reason than staying in an abusive home is enabling someone to sin. Psalm 11:5 says the Lord hates those who do violence, and you should not subject you or your children to that. You need to protect yourself, your kids, and help your spouse get help.
 - Of course, these are difficult situations and almost impossible for me to address in general ways here--so let me just say if you have questions about this, or think you might be in a relationship like this, let me encourage you to reach out for some help. You could start with our counseling ministry, Bridgehaven, and go from there. Or call the **Domestic Violence hotline: 1-800-799-7233**
- Regardless, Peter's point is that whatever situation you find yourself in, you must continue doing good and trusting God. No one else's sin justifies your sin. Your husband or your wife is being stupid and acting like an idiot--you keep obeying God and trusting him. When you do that, God promises to help you, just like he did Christ! Psalm 125: "The Lord is good to those who walk uprightly. HE IS their shield and support." Psalm 34: The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry; The Lord will rescue his servants; no one who takes refuge in him will ever be forsaken."
- And on the flip side, WHEN you take matters into your own hands, you mess things up. And God becomes your enemy. See **vs. 7? Likewise, husbands... showing honor to the woman... so that your prayers may not be hindered.** Men, when you use your power to coerce, you may get what you want from your wife, but your prayers will be hindered and you'll lose God's blessing and that's far more devastating.

Listen, I've told you this before, but when you take vengeance matters into your own hands, you mess things up: Zipper story. Trust God, keep doing good, and let him deal with it.

There's a song we sing where the chorus says, "You, Lord, are worthy to receive all of my worship and (here it is) no one can worship you but me." Only you can worship God for yourself. Only you can trust him. Only you can act on his promises. Let's remind ourselves of that right now by singing together and then I'll come back for our final point.

[SONG: *No One // My Worship*]

Which leads me to the last thing:

3. Grace is a more powerful change agent than retribution

- Everybody nods their heads at this but nobody believes it. Grace changes people far more quickly than retribution. Grace changes their heart.
- Victor Hugo has that great scene at the beginning of *Les Mis* where the hardened criminal Jean Valjean has his heart changed not by an act of retribution, but by one of grace.
 - Bryan told us that great story last week about the tip...
 - My dad
 - I heard an African American lady share the story of her grandfather, the Reverend Willy Jenkins Jr., who grew up in Mississippi under the hardship of Jim Crow. He worked for the ethnic integration of public schools. Because of this, some white teenagers cruised through their neighborhood firebombing homes. They came to the Jenkin's house and the unexpected happened--they ran out of gas. The sons looked up at their dad. They were ready to fight. He picked up a glass bottle and busted it. But then he walked over to his car, and used the busted top of the battle to make a funnel, siphoned some gas from his own car and filled the empty tank of these boys who had come to hurt him. It changed him. They left in shame changed by the experience.
- This is what Peter is referring to when he says, "Ladies, even when you are in the home of an unkind, even unsaved man, keep doing good and responding like Christ, so that **"They (the unsaved husband) may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives."** (vs. 1) You're not going to change his heart by manipulating him, or berating him and wearing him down. His best shot at being changed is seeing the humble, trusting, Christ-like spirit at work in you. Through that you "win" them. See how Peter uses that word?

This is the way of Christ, and how he changed us. BTW, has he changed you? He came to earth, not to condemn you, but to save you. (John 3:17, For God did not send...) Right now, what he offers you is mercy, if you'll receive it. He died on a cross to suffer the penalty of your sin in your place. If you ignore that, one day he will come again in judgment. But you could right now, if you will turn from your sin and receive his offer, be united to him in mercy. (John 3:16, For God so loved the world...) Do you want to do that? To receive him?

Pray with me...

