

## Living Hope in Relationships

1 Peter 2:11-3:7

In the sermon on Sunday morning, I commented that verses 11 and 12 of Chapter 2 are both the launching pad for Peter's main discourse as well as the final teaching objective in the letter; 'live ones life in such a way as to commend the gospel and help others glorify God.'

The key points of the sermon were:

- As foreigners and aliens, live in such a way as to curb natural desires that push against a Christian lifestyle.
- Live an exceptional life in the power of the Spirit.
- Christians are free in Christ and not slaves to anything or one other than God and therefore mutual submission to fellow believers follows.
- In our freedom we are to show proper respect for God and his mission and therefore believers are called by God to 'live under order' for the cause of the gospel.
- Peter wrote about the dominant relational contexts in which followers of Jesus might need to be gracious in order to commend the gospel given the specific cultural context.
- AND – that Peter's main thrust was providing an 'Apologetic' argument for submission even though believers are free in Christ.

Living an 'exceptional lifestyle' as a follower of Jesus.

### 1. With 'authorities' – 2:13-17

- a. In the context of Peters letter, his instructions are positive toward the emperor. If Christians live as good citizens, the ruling authorities will look on them with favour and that is good for the gospel.
- b. What do you think Peter means by verse 15?
- c. Reflect upon (and discuss if in a group) what might be involved or intended by verse 17?

*NOTE – about household 'codes'.*

*In the verses that follow, Peter is focused on exhorting the believers in the various churches to witness to the unbelieving society in a winsome way. This is especially relevant for what is known as the 'household code' – the foundational unit of civilisation in the Greco-Roman world and central to these considerations is the influence of suspect religions on the family. There is a tension here; Peter wants the freedom of the gospel to be expressed within the Christian household in such a way as to not provoke unnecessary accusation against Christianity and yet at the same time he does understand that the Christian gospel of Jesus Christ is subversive to the Greco-Roman way of life and social order. For Peter, it is the example of Jesus Christ, the suffering servant and God's redemptive plan that is to be the paradigm for Christian relationships.*

### 2. With 'masters' – 2:18-25

- a. Be subject in respectful fear – see 1:17 and discuss what this might mean within the context of this passage.
- b. Look at what is said in verse 16 – what does it say about all those who are 'in Christ'? Given that, What do you make of verse 18-19?
- c. What is being said about a slaves suffering in vs 19? And what is the link with Christ's suffering?
- d. What does Peter say about 'commendable behaviour' in vs 20 through into 21?

### 3. With 'husbands' – 3:1-6

- a. The motive for a wife to submit to her husband is to move him toward salvation by godly behaviour. What does it mean when I say "Peter's argument for willingly submitting to her husband was one of 'apologetics' not one of 'theology'?" Explain.
- b. What is the significance of the repeating phrase "In the same way" in vs 1?

- c. What do I mean when I say that for Peter, his exhortation to wives about submission to their husband is “a qualified submission”? Qualified by what?
- 4. With ‘wives’ – 3:7
  - a. Peter begins with ‘Likewise... (or ‘in the same way)’ – there is reference here to 2:17; what might be some of the implications in this case?
  - b. Husbands are to maintain a positive holistic ‘knowledgeable’ relationship with their wives and to do so with respect and understanding. For Peter, this knowledge is inherently ‘Christian’ – In the context of what Peter is saying over all, what might it mean to ‘live knowledgeably with your wife’ for the Greco-Roman believing husband?
  - c. Think about and discuss what it might mean for Peter to speak of the “weaker partner”? In what sense is she ‘weaker’?

**For further consideration:**

- 1. In our work and serving context – are we known for assertiveness or our commitment, kindness, fairness, loyalty etc. ARE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES SEEN BY THOSE AROUND US.
- 2. In our personal lives, Is CHRIST seen or are WE seen?
- 3. Are we generous to those who are in need? (do we let the Cross infiltrate our lifestyle.) Are we “self-sacrificing”?
- 4. Do we live “under the order” (male and female alike) so that we maintain a credible witness? NOTE: the “orders” were hierarchical when Peter wrote, BUT this has changed in our society. ARE WE LIVING FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL?
- 5. In our egalitarian society, what “godly” behaviour will commend the gospel WITHOUT WORDS? What might be an appropriate SILENT WITNESS?
- 6. Loving respectful behaviour IN THE MARRIAGE – NOTHING LESS.
- 7. AND LASTLY, there is a challenge here to consider what the Bible says elsewhere about submission within the marriage relationship today between believers – BUT THIS IS NOT THE TEXT TO LAUNCH OUT FROM! Any application of the biblical text, must start with diligent exegesis that starts with the text in CONTEXT and then work toward application. For further discussion and comments please see the GWAC website for a three part Blog I wrote on ‘A biblical basis for partnership in ministry.’ <https://www.gwac.org.au/blog/category/Biblical%20Basis%20for%20Equal%20Partnership>