

# 1 Peter 3 Notes

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## ***Suffering Christians Should Remember Their Example Before Men (2:11-4:6)***

- Living honorably before unbelievers (2:11-3:7).
  - Submission in the family (3:1-7).
    - In the first-century Greco-Roman culture, women received little or no respect. As long as they lived in their father's house, they were subject to Roman law which granted fathers ultimate life-and-death authority over their children. Husbands had a similar kind of legal authority over their wives.
    - "Likewise" in both vs. 1 and vs. 7 points back to 2:13. Christian wives are not to be submissive like slaves; rather, the principle of Christian subjection to God's will relates to every class and every situation. Rules for wives occur in other locations in the New Testament (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-15; Titus 2:4-5).
    - Submission does not imply any moral, intellectual, or spiritual inferiority in the family, workplace, or society in general. The idea of subjection or submission exists for mankind's well-being. Peter was careful to note that women are not to be servile to all men in every context.
    - "Chaste conversation" means irreproachable and pure conduct. The wife's godly conduct is the most valuable testimony to open the husband's heart to the gospel. In the Greco-Roman world, women were devoted to superficial adornment. Paul addresses the physical adornment (1 Timothy 2:9-10; cf. Isaiah 3:16-24), while Peter addresses the mental adornment. We constantly make superficial judgments (cf. 1 Samuel 16:7). Many have taken Peter's words to be an absolute prohibition of any outward adornment. But Peter's emphasis is not on prohibition but on proper internal values.
    - Peter turns to the Old Testament in support of his exhortation. The major characterization of these women who were "holy" because they were set apart to God was their hope in God. They trusted the promises of God and longed for salvation (cf. 1:3, 13, 3:15; Hebrews 11:13). In so doing, they were habitually adorning themselves with an inner beauty. Sarah especially demonstrated a continual attitude of respect toward her husband Abraham.
    - The husband is to be sensitive and considerate of his wife's deepest physical and emotional needs. The word "dwell with" refers to living with someone in intimacy and cherishing them. Husbands

are the sacrificial providers and protectors of their wives because they generally possess less physical strength than men. Sadly, intimate companionship in marriage was a foreign concept to the Greco-Roman culture of Peter's day. The gospel teaches that, in respect to her highest interests, the interests of religion, she is every way his equal. She is entitled to all the hopes and promises which religion imparts. God promises to hear the husband's prayers when he treats his wife as he should (Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:2; John 9:31; James 4:3).

- Living honorably before believers (3:8-12).
  - "One mind" is indicative of a common commitment to the truth that produces an inward unity of heart with one another. "Compassion" means "to share the same feeling;" both sorrows and joys. "Love as brethren" is an affection among people who are closely related in some way. This love is demonstrated by unselfish service for one another. "Pitiful" is sometimes translated as "bowels" or "intestines," signifying a powerful feeling, and "courteous" means being humble in spirit. Humility is arguably the most essential, all-encompassing virtue of a Christian.
  - When Christians are mistreated by someone with a wicked disposition, they must not retaliate (Matthew 5:38-45). Instead, they must give a blessing. "Blessing" is the word from which the English word eulogy derives. It means to praise or speak well of others (cf. Luke cf. 1:42).
  - Peter quotes from Psalm 34:12-14, supporting his exhortation that Christians must have a correct response to hostility. In addition to refraining from verbal retaliation, Christians must also refrain from lying, deception, and hypocrisy. "Eschew" means an intensely strong rejection of what is sinful. "Good" is that which is excellent in quality or what expresses deep virtue.
  - "The eyes of the Lord" is a common Old Testament phrase that relates to God's special, caring watchfulness over His people (Proverbs 5:21; Zechariah 4:10).
- Living honorably in the midst of suffering (3:13-4:6).
  - The principle of suffering of righteousness (3:13-17).
    - If Christians have the zeal for good that Psalm 34 speaks of, who will do them harm? The expression, "But and if ye suffer," points to the fact that suffering is not the expected outcome of zeal for doing good, though it can and does happen. Jesus emphasized that Christians cannot presume to escape all suffering if He did not (Matthew 10:24-25; Luke 6:22; John 15:20; Acts 14:22; Philippians 1:29-30; 2 Timothy 3:12; Hebrews 12:3-4).

- Peter told his readers to “be not afraid of terror, neither be troubled” (cf. Isaiah 8:12-13). Instead, they must “sanctify” Christ in their hearts. Every Christian must give Him the primary place of adoration, exaltation, and worship. He must be the sole object of our love, reverence, and loyalty.
- “Defense” sometimes meant a formal defense in a judicial courtroom (cf. Acts 25:16; 2 Timothy 4:16), and sometimes an informal defense before others (Philippians 1:17). One of the distinguishing marks of Christians is their possession of hope (cf. 1:3, 21; Romans 4:18; Ephesians 2:12; Titus 2:13). It is the focal point of any rational explanation Christians should be able to provide regarding their salvation. The answer should not be dominant or overbearing, and should show a deep regard for truth and respect for the person listening.
- It is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. Suffering is a just recompense for doing evil. But if one does good and still suffers, there is no disgrace -- if one’s conscience is clear before God -- for that person can have confidence that such suffering was not caused by sin.
- The paragon of suffering for righteousness (3:18-22).
  - “For Christ also hath once suffered” suggests that the example of Christ’s experience through suffering into victory gives assurance that those who have obeyed Him will share the same destiny.
  - Most commentators identify the “spirits in prison” as fallen angels who were disobedient at the time of Noah. This connects with the rebellion of Genesis 6:1-4 (cf. 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).
  - However, the word “preached” does not demand direct contact, only a proclamation of a message. The only audience mentioned in vs. 19 is the generation of Noah, which is now imprisoned in Hades, awaiting the final judgment. Based on the context, Christ, through the Holy Spirit, solemnly warned Noah’s contemporaries by the mouth of Noah himself (described in 2 Peter 2:5 as “a preacher [or ‘herald’] of righteousness”).
  - Denominationalists argue that baptism simply means “to immerse” without the necessity of water. They believe that Peter uses “baptism” to refer to a figurative immersion into Christ as the ark of safety that will sail over the holocaust of judgment on the wicked. By extension, they believe 1 Peter 3:21 refers to the preservation of God in the midst of His final judgment (cf. 2 Peter 3:10-13).
- The type/antitype arrangement of baptism in vss. 20-21 means that as Noah passed from the old world to the new world by virtue of water, so we pass from the “old man” to the “new man” by vir-

tue of water baptism. It is not just a washing, but is an “appeal to God for a good conscience” (cf. Hebrews 9:14; 10:22). We want a clean conscience and as we appeal to God, His answer is baptism, for it washes away our sins (Acts 22:16).

- In the proclamation of the gospel, salvation from sin and its punishment is announced through Jesus’ death and resurrection. The announcement of the penalty for sin stirs the conscience and the Spirit brings conviction (John 16:8-11; Acts 2:37-38; 13:37-41).
- Because Christ has achieved victory and is now at the right hand of God, the oppressed Christians in Asia Minor to whom Peter is writing need not fear anyone.