

LIVING GOD'S WAY

1 Peter 3

Last week we saw the example of Christ who lived with an eternal perspective. The world is watching us and we need to live a life above reproach. We should lay aside our freedom for:

- The sake of the lost.
- The sake of the Lord.
- The sake of ourselves.

In Chapter Three Peter moves the focus off people around us and to our closest relationships. In tough times our families and friends are more important than ever.

I. Complete your marriage partner.

“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,² when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.³ Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—⁴ rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.⁵ For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” (1 Peter 3:1-7)

We spent a lot of time on the subject of husbands and wives a few weeks ago. The secret of enduring marriages is submission to one another. Submission is having the courage to give up your rights to meet the others needs. It's a decision to live unselfishly. Submission suffers from an image problem.

Three ways we can live in relationship:

- My way: Selfishly.
- Others way: Subjectively.
- God's way: Submissively or unselfish. This is the key to great relationships.

A. Why should I be unselfish? Honestly, for some selfishness seems to be working out.

1. Because selfishness is the source of conflict. I want what you want and you want what you want. That spells conflict.

“Do you know where your fights and arguments come from? They come from the selfish desires that war within you.” (James 4:1)

2. Because unselfishness is the secret to change.

“...so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives.” (1 Peter 3:1)

- You can't force people to change.
- You can invite people to change.
- Jesus inspired change because He was the most unselfish man who ever lived.

***NOTE** Peter is assuming people want to work things out in relationships. “I married the wrong person.” You might have but if you do the right thing, the wrong person will become the right person.

3. Because selfishness short-circuits our prayer life.

- The Bible is clear that the acceptability of our gifts and our prayers are dependent upon the acceptability of the giver and the prayer.
- At the core prayer says I depend on God. Selfishness takes the focus off God and puts it on yourself.

B. How can I be unselfish?

1. Be understanding: Considerate of others needs.

“In the same way, you husbands should live with your wives in an understanding way...” (1 Peter 3:7, NCV) The Bible says, ***“I have the burden of being considerate of other peoples doubts and fears.” (Romans 15:2)***

The problem is my doubts and fears make sense; yours are foolish. Paul said, ***“Let everyone see that you are unselfish and considerate in all you do.” (Phil. 4:5)***

***NOTE** This means you have to learn to listen to what others are saying. Most of us don't. We have to work at it.

Listening is the key. Women like to tell stories – men like to get to the point.

When we get to the point we are through with the story.

- Consider their physical needs ... ***“Dwell on them...”***
- Consider their intellectual needs. ***“According to knowledge...”*** In other words, get to know the person. The more you know the more you understand.

***QUESTION**

1) What is their temperament?

2) What is their spiritual gift?

- Consider their emotional needs. ***“...giving honor unto the wife...”***

***NOTE** Chivalry might be dead but every woman wants a knight in shining armor who will treat them like a princess. Giving honor and respect means you listen to their words and the feelings behind them. It does not mean you totally agree or that you always give them their way.

- Consider their spiritual needs.

Every wife needs a husband who is a spiritual leader.

2. Be respectful: Honor other's value.

“When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourself.” (Philippians 2:3, NCV)

That not saying you are not valuable, you are! It's not saying, “Don't think less of yourself, and just think less about yourself.” Learn to appreciate each other. To appreciate means to add value! If your home appreciates that means it has risen in value.

3. Be sacrificial. Act on others behalf.

“Your godly lives will speak to them better than your words.” (1 Peter 3:1, NCV)

A guy says to a girl: “I love you so much I would swim the ocean to be with you. I would lay down my life for you.” Sacrificial talk makes us feel good but it is sacrificial actions that make a difference. We say I would die for you but won't pick up your dirty underwear. Paul says, ***“Love does not demand its own way.”*** That is part of sacrifice.

“Let us stop just saying we love people; let us really love them, and show it by our actions.” (1 John 3:18, LB)

***NOTE** The key to unselfishness is to let go of your fear. “If I’m unselfish I might be taken advantage of.” In giving myself I might lose myself.

“We need to have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly; His perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what He might do to us.” (1 John 4:18, LB)

If Jesus is for you, who can be against you?

II. Cherish your friends.

“Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous...” (vs. 8)

***NOTE** Someone might say, “I don’t have any friends.” You don’t get friends by trying to make people like you; you get friends by being a friend. *“He who would have friends must show himself friendly.”*

A. Live in harmony. “...*Be of one mind...*”

1. Build relationships with like-minded people.
2. We are different but just like the choir may sing different parts; the song is still the same.
3. We are better together.

B. Live sympathetically. “...*having compassion for another...*”

1. When I hit my finger my whole body hurts.
2. We are to hurt together and laugh together.
3. We win and lose together. We are a family; we are on the same team.

C. Live with brotherly love.

1. Do you approve of everything your brother or sister did growing up?

2. I might fight them but if someone is after them I stand by them.
3. This is not a superficial love. We don't compete with each other; we compliment with one another.
4. Brother love: Out of the same womb. We value one another. This creates loyalty. So you attack the problem and not each other. You fix the problem, not the blame.

D. Live with a tender heart.

1. That means you feel deeply.
2. We are to place ourselves in their shoes.

E. Live courteously: Put others first; accept people.

Acceptance is not approval. Conditional love places conditions. Acceptance – we are to love period! “You are a good egg, even if you are a little cracked!”

***PMS JOKES** Why does it take three women with PMS to change a light bulb?
“It just does!”

What is the difference in a women with PMS and a terrorist? You can negotiate with a terrorist!

What's the difference in a woman with PMS and a pit bull? Lipstick!

Paulette says that I have “MALE PMS...PRE-MESSAGE-SYNDROME!”

III. Confront your foes.

“...not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.” (vs. 9)

A. We are not to repay evil for evil.

1. Returning evil for good is Satanic: Unnatural.
2. Returning evil for evil is human: Natural.
3. Returning good for evil is divine: Supernatural.

***NOTE** People who say, "I'm going to get even," are doing exactly what they do. They stoop to the same level of living that the person is at.

B. We are not to repeat evil.

"For he who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit." (vs. 10)

1. The tongue can turn a good day into a bad day.
2. If you want to have a good life watch what you say.

"Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles."
(Proverbs 21:23)

"Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips."
(Psalm 141:3)

C. We are not to respect evil.

1. We are to turn from evil, flee youthful lust.
2. David prayed, "Turn my eyes away from every worthless thing."

Jesus is our example. ***"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 'Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth'; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously..." (1 Peter 2:21-23)***

When you try to avenge yourself you are playing God.

IV. Communicate your faith.

A. Demonstrate your faith. “*And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?*” (vs. 13)

1. Have a full faith. The word follower has the same root form we get our word Zealot from. Our faith must be single-minded.
2. Have a fearless faith. “*...who will harm you...*” People can hurt us but they can’t harm us. If we suffer for righteousness sake we will be blessed. We set apart Christ in our heart.

B. Defend your faith.

“...be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you...”

1. You must be ready! Know what you believe and why.
2. You must be reasonable: Be able to articulate the gospel.

C. Declare your faith in a respectful way.

1. The Bible is a sword but not a club.
2. We share the good news because we are passionate about Jesus, not because we hate sinners.