

Osaka International Church
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1Peter 3

So, after two chapters of encouragement and instruction, Peter begins to talk about marriage. Why? Because in times of difficulties. Marriages are put to the test. Those trials and difficulties will either bring them closer together or push them further apart. So, knowing this, Peter takes some time to encourage and give instruction that we all can glean from, no matter what our marital status is.

1Peter 3:1 ¶ 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,

Submit!!! It is against our nature to submit. By nature we want to do what we want to do! Don't we? Yet God has established a chain of authority here. It is interesting that Peter is not just writing to wives who have good godly husbands, but to those who either do not know God or are refusing for whatever reason to obey God's Word. Either way... the advice to wives is to submit. Why? Because our lives are always a stronger witness than our words. There are many methods out there on how to witness to non-believers. But a true witness is not a method or something you do, it is something you are. Our life is a witness for Jesus Christ. Paul said,

2Corinthians 3:2 "You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men."

People are reading us. More than 99% of the people in Japan are not Christian. That means hardly anyone knows anything about the Word of God. But they watch us and they see in us a quality of life that they desire. They see that there is a love, they see that there is a peace, they see that there is a joy in your life. Even in the midst of pain, trials, and adversity. They see the hope that we have in the midst of the pain, trials, and adversity. Our Hope is the biggest witness we have in this nation where so many have no hope. How can I say that? Well, the statistics speak for themselves. According to the World Health Organization, Japan, along with Hungary, and Lithuania have topped the list of world countries by suicide rate for the past six decades. These statistics are confirmed to us here in Osaka several times a month when the trains are shut down or delayed due to a "**Human Damage Accident.**" Suicide is the ultimate case of hopelessness. When one loses hope, what is there to hope for? But we, as Christians, have hope. We have the God of all hope!

Romans 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We have this hope and if we would only show it... many, I believe, would desire it for themselves. Our lives are to be a witness and it is to start in our homes. Remember... Talk is Cheap! Actions speak louder than words! Therefore...

1Peter 3:1 ¶ 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,

So even unbelieving husbands who are in disobedience to God's Word can be won through the godly conduct of loving wives.

1Peter 3:2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

When they see that purity in you and the reverence you have for God, it is just that much more of a witness to them.

1Peter 3:3 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.

Man looks at the outward appearance that will eventually fade away. Look at me.... I wasn't always bald you know! But God looks at the heart. The thing that is really beautiful to Him, is the inward beauty, the gentle, and quiet spirit. "which is very precious in the sight of God."

1Peter 3:5-6 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.

Notice holy women adorned themselves by trusting God.

And for wives, like Sarah, they proved it by submitting to their husbands. There's no question that the Bible teaches that the husband is the head of the home. But interestingly the context of Genesis 18, where this reference of Sarah is from is this.... The Lord and two Angels came to Abraham (who was around 100 years old) and told him that Sarah his wife (who was around 90 years old) would have a child.

Genesis 18:12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

You see although she laughed in unbelief when she heard this. She obviously submitted because she did indeed give birth to Isaac (whose name happens to mean laughter). Why is this important... because even if it seemed crazy, even if it didn't make sense, it is something that God calls the women to trust God with. What is the worst that can happen? The man can fail and have to learn a lesson of humility. But how comforting for him to know that his wife was willing to support him even if she totally didn't agree. But what is the worst that can happen if the wife refuses to follow her husband? In 2012 the Divorce Rate in Japan was approximately 35%. That means almost one in every three marriages in Japan ends up in divorce. That doesn't include all the dead marriages that have been reduced to mere cohabitation or separation. It is very sad. Now I am not suggesting that is why this idea of submission, or lack of, is the main reason for so many divorces. But if you haven't noticed already. People are unpredictable. People often times want to do what they want to do. But one day we all will have to stand before the Lord and give an account for all we have done. And at that point, we will not be able to point our fingers and blame anyone for why we didn't believe in and obey God's Word. And this is one of those Biblical principles that God simply asks women to trust Him with. In other words, if something goes wrong in the marriage, at least you can stand before the Lord in confidence, with no regret, knowing that you trusted and obeyed the Lord. What do you have to lose? Better yet... what do you have to gain? Perhaps as we saw in verse one...

1Peter 3:1 ¶ 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,**

Even without a word. Not by what you say, but by what you do! Perhaps some of the husbands have been nudging their wives thinking, "Ya, Joseph! Tell em! Preach it brother!!" Well, wives... get ready to nudge back! Notice vs. 7.

1Peter 3:7 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.

The husbands are to dwell with their wives with consideration and understanding. Although I think it is pretty much impossible for a man to fully understand a woman (lol). It is vitally important in a marriage that he tries! And he will bring honor to his wife by doing so. Paul said,

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Paul isn't saying, "husbands, be kind to your wife." Or "husbands, be nice to your wife." Although this would be a huge improvement for many marriages! This isn't what Paul is saying here. He is saying we are to lay our lives down for our wives. As Christ laid His life down for us. In essence what he is saying is, "husbands, die to yourself!" Think about it.... would we ever submit to Christ. If He didn't first love us and prove it by giving His life for us? Of course not! Why would we ever willfully submit to Christ if He didn't first die for us? It is only because He died for us that we willfully submit to Him. So if we want our wives to submit to us. Then we must first die! That's the biblical order. How are we to die? Obviously not literally. We are to deny ourselves by serving our wives, by giving preference to our wives, by loving our wives with the same unconditional, self-sacrificing love that Christ has given to us. When it comes to non-essential spiritual matters.... Die to yourself! Let your wife have her way. Let her pick out the furniture, let her cut off your beard, let her have her way in regards to these matters that have no spiritual significance.

But! When it comes to spiritual matters. That is where the man must stand as the spiritual leader of the home and be obedient to what God is telling him to do or not to do. Now... Notice once again what Peter said at the end of verse 7...

1Peter 3:7 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.**

You see, the failure to live as a godly husband has spiritual consequences. It will hinder our prayers! What will hinder our prayers? Our lack of Love, our lack of understanding, and lack of honor given to our wives. Ultimately our relationship with our wives is directly connected with our relationship with God. Very simply...If you want to please God? Please your wife! As they say... "A happy wife is a happy life!" ;~

1Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;

Notice once again the emphasis on loving one another. But the greatest challenge to our love for others comes when we have been wronged. And when we are wronged, when we are hurt by others, what are we to do then? Peter continues....

1Peter 3:9 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.

Last week we talked about how we are living stones being perfected by the hammering and chiseling of life in this quarry called the world. And how often times there are people that come our way that just seem to rub up against us the wrong way! Sometimes in very painful ways. But, it is in those times, we are called to not retaliate, but to give a blessing instead. No dispute, argument, or personality conflict among believers should ever continue to linger. Even if one Christian gets out of line, that may lead to church discipline, the initial response of the other Christian should be that of humility and love. But our natural response to verbal or physical hostility often causes us to: **Fright**.... we are just so shocked that we just stand there not knowing what to do or say. **Flight**... we run away and try our best to simply avoid that person at all costs. Or we **Fight**... we **fight** back, we retaliate. Of course we have seen this throughout the History of mankind. One group wrongs another and the wronged group then dedicates the rest of their existence to repaying that wrong. Only the love of Jesus for our enemies can break the cycle of bitterness and vengeance. As Christians we are called to love. Even our enemies... Notice what Jesus said....

Matthew 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,"

But He also reminded us that if we only love those who love us in return is no great credit on our part because even the unbelieving sinners do the same. Notice....

Matthew 5:46-47 "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? **47** "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so?"

The real test of love is to demonstrate compassion to even our enemies. But what benefit is it for us to apply this principle in our lives? What's in it for us? Well, first of all it means a life free from bitterness and vengeance in your heart! Peter says,

1Peter 3:9 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.**

If you can't love and forgive for the sake of Jesus, or for the sake of others, then do it for your own sake! Notice as Peter quotes from Psalm 32 to solidify his point here in verses 10-12...

1Peter 3:10-12 For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. **11** Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. **12** For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."

What a wonderful promise and warning at the same time. Understand... God is Omniscient... meaning He is everywhere all the time. He even knows our thoughts. We can't hide from Him.

1Peter 3:13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?

Who is he that will harm you? It isn't God. Nor should it be God's people (although because we are sinners we often do). But there are enemies who want to destroy and discourage you. The minute you start living for Jesus Christ in a very positive dynamic way, the Devil, this world, and your flesh instantly become your enemies and want to discourage you to defeat you, to ultimately destroy you and your witness for Jesus Christ.

1Peter 3:14-15 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." **15** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

We are encouraged to: "... **always be ready to give a defense**" The Greek word here for defense is **apologia**. We get an insight of what this means by looking at the Apostle Paul in the book of Acts. He said...

Acts 22:1 "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now."

Same Greek word. "**apologia**" What was Paul's defense? He went on to give his personal testimony. He was once a persecutor of Christians. He gave approval to the death of Steven the first Christian Martyr. And now he himself was a Christian. You see there are many people that like to argue against the Word of God. But no one can argue against what the Word of God has done for you or for me. Or anyone else who's life has been transformed by it. So, if one was to ask... simply tell them what Christ has done for you!

1Peter 3:16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

When we return evil with good, it will prove others wrong in their opinions about us, and it will make them ashamed for speaking against our godly lives.

1Peter 3:17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

None of us want to suffer. But if we must, let it be for doing good, not for doing evil. Sometimes Christians are rude, and offensive, and make unwise decisions that cause them to suffer. But understand, that suffering isn't a result of being a Christian! No, on the contrary, it's a result of our own evil actions that have actually falsely represented Jesus Christ and Christianity. Paul makes it very clear...

Galatians 6:7-8 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." **8** For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

In other words.... What goes around..... Comes around!!!! Don't be deceived, we will reap what we sow and it's no one's fault but our own. If we are to suffer, let it be for doing good, not for doing evil.

1Peter 3:18-20 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, **19** by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, **20** who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine long-suffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

Christ being just... suffered for the unjust. That being all of humanity. Yet, it was through His sufferings that we were brought to God. We see here in verse 20 Peter mentions Noah and His family that were saved through the water. A reference to Baptism. Notice...

1Peter 3:21-22 There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, **22** who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

We see Jesus is at the right hand side of God with all authority. Exactly what Jesus proclaimed... on earth. What is He doing on the right hand side of God?

Romans 8:34 Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

What is Jesus doing on the right hand side of God? He is interceding for us. He is routing us on! He is praying that we will be strong. That we will keep fighting, that we won't give up! Therefore, and we will close with this last reminder and exhortation from the Apostle Paul.....

Colossians 3:1-2 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. **2** Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Let's Pray!