

"The Believer's Duty"

Part 6

1 Peter 2:11-3:12

Introduction: Tonight we return to our study of 1 Peter. The last time we were in this study was August 29th and for this reason we need a brief review. Peter is writing to believers who are scattered due to persecution. They are under Nero and they either are suffering for their faith, or they will shortly suffer for their faith in Jesus Christ. These believers were blamed for the fire which burned Rome and because they were hated before the fire, this then just provided a reason for the Romans to persecute them. These believers would face some of the most severe persecution ever to come upon the church. We are currently in a section in which Peter is addressing his readers concerning submission. Even in the face of persecution they were to still live in a way that would glorify the Lord.

Notice 1 Peter 2:9-12

Here in these verses we see that as believers we are to live in such a way that we glorify God with our lives and that the unsaved will glorify God on the day of visitation. Peter's desire here is that when the unsaved watch the way we live that they will have a desire to know the very Lord we serve and follow and that they will get saved.

Peter then goes on to point out three areas of life where we as believers have an opportunity to live in such a way that our lives impact others.

1. Under Government.

Notice 1 Peter 2:13-17

Here we see how we are to be model citizens. We are to submit to the authorities who are over us for they have been ordained by God.

Romans 13:1-5

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

² *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

³ *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

⁴ For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

⁵ Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

We are to be model citizens by submitting to the government but not if the government is commanding us to walk in disobedience to the Word of God.

Acts 5:28-30

²⁸ Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

²⁹ Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, **We ought to obey God rather than men.**

³⁰ The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

2. In the Work Place.

Notice 1 Peter 2:18-21

Here in this section Peter instructs his readers and us that we are to be model employees. Believers are to submit to those whom they work for and if we are mistreated, we are not to retaliate, but we are to endure it patiently. Just as in society we are to do all we can to reach the lost with how we conduct our lives.

Now before we move on to the next area of life which Peter address, let us consider why Peter would feel as though these areas of life need to be addressed. There is the temptation when we get saved to see ourselves above the government or above taking orders from and unsaved boss at work.

Ephesians 2:1-6

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

² *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

⁶ And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

These verses in Ephesians tell of our new position in Christ. Paul wants his readers to know about their new life in Christ but none of us are to be so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good. As believers we are not to think that we are above the government nor are we to think we do not need to submit to unsaved authority, whether it be governmental authorities or a supervisor at work. As believers we are to submit even more now than when we were not saved. We are now ambassadors of our Lord. Peter even gives us the Example to follow.

Notice 1 Peter 2:21-25

If ever there was someone who was above those who persecuted Him, it was our Lord. But He never slandered His oppressors, nor did He threaten them. He submitted because there were souls at stake; our souls. He had come to seek and to save the lost. He was in the middle of the Father's will, and He trusted the Father in the midst of the persecution. Jesus was more concerned with reaching the lost than He was in silencing His oppressors.

So we are to be model citizens in our society, and we are to be model employees at our place of employment.

Now Peter will address the third area of life in which the believer has the opportunity to reach the lost.

3. The Family

Notice 1 Peter 3:1-7

There are several points to see in an overview of these verses.

a. The Context

These verse deal with a family in which one spouse is saved and the other is not. The one spouse has come to Jesus after they were married. This is not addressing the Christian

family in which both the husband and the wife are saved. This passage is here to give spiritual guidance to the saved spouse concerning how to win the lost spouse to the Lord.

b. The wife gets more attention from Peter.

I want to point out in these seven verses that six are addressed to the wife and one to the husband. Why is this? The reason is because life was much more difficult for a woman who came to Jesus and her husband was not saved, than it was for a man who came to Jesus and his wife was not saved. Let us notice some history:

In every sphere of ancient civilization, women had no rights at all. Under Jewish law a woman was a thing; she was owned by her husband in exactly the same way as he owned his sheep and his goats; on no account could she leave him, although he could dismiss her at any moment. For a wife to change her religion while her husband did not was unthinkable. In Greek civilization the duty of the woman was "to remain indoors and to be obedient to her husband." It was the sign of a good woman that she must see as little, hear as little and ask as little as possible. She had no kind of independent existence and no kind of mind of her own, and her husband could divorce her almost at caprice, so long as he returned her dowry.

Under Roman law a woman had no rights. In law she remained forever a child. When she was under her father she was under the patria potestas, the father's power, which gave the father the right even of life and death over her; and when she married she passed equally into the power of her husband. She was entirely subject to her husband and completely at his mercy.

The Roman Cato wrote: "If you were to catch your wife in an act of infidelity, you can kill her with impunity without a trial."

What a contrast with Christianity which commands husbands to love their wives unconditionally!

Roman matrons were prohibited from drinking wine, and Egnatius beat his wife to death when he found her doing so.

Sulpicius Gallus dismissed his wife because she had once appeared in the streets without a veil.

Antistius Vetus divorced his wife because he saw her secretly speaking to a freed woman in public.

Publius Sempronius Sophus divorced his wife because once she went to the public games.

The whole attitude of ancient civilization was that no woman could dare take any decision for herself. What, then, must have been the problems of the wife who became a Christian while her husband remained faithful to the ancestral gods? It is almost impossible for us to realize what life must have been for the wife who was brave enough to become a Christian.

A woman becoming a Christian in the first century would be faced with many questions.

- **Should I leave my husband?**
- **Should I change my behavior towards him?**
- **Should I assume a superior position to him because now I am in Jesus?**
- **Should I submit to him since he is not a Christian?**

These are all legitimate questions for a lady in the first century, so Peter is going to give instructions to the women in six verses and to the men in one verse.

I. A believing wife with an unsaved husband.

Notice 1 Peter 3:1

There is much to see within this verse. The first word of this verse is very important. The word "likewise" looks back to the Example of Jesus in the previous chapter. Just as He endured suffering to win the lost so the saved wife too was to endure suffering in order that she would reach her husband with the Gospel. The unsaved wife was not to leave her husband, she was not to see herself as superior to her husband, she was not to dominate her husband. She was to submit to her husband. Whether he was saved or not, in God's design for the family he was the head of the family, and she was to submit to him.

She was not to constantly preach to him but instead she was to live in such a way that he would be won without a word. In other words she was to live in such a way that her husband could see Jesus Christ in her life.

This verse is not saying that the husband would be won without hearing the Word of God. No one is saved without hearing the Word of God.

Romans 10:13-15, 17

¹³ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

¹⁴ How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

¹⁵ And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

¹⁷ So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

James 1:18-21

¹⁸ Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

¹⁹ Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

²⁰ For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

²¹ Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

The point which Peter is making is that the woman can share the Gospel with her husband but there comes a time when the best thing to do is live the new life in Christ in front of him and start with submission. The woman was to allow the Holy Spirit live the life of Jesus through her and this would then bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

²³ Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

When a woman's life produces these characteristics, it will speak loudly to her husband.

This verse reveals something which is very important to grasp. God certainly uses His Word to reach the hearts of the lost and He also will use the Godly lifestyle of the righteous to reach the heart of the lost. So, if you have a loved one or a friend that will not listen to the Word of God then remember that God will also use your Godly lifestyle to reach them. This should be a great encouragement to all of us. We have all come to the place with someone where we just do not know what to say anymore. Here we see that the proper thing to do is just live the Christian life and let God do His work in their hearts.

Before I end this let me also say that the saved wife still has the responsibility of speaking out about her husband's sin and its consequences. That is what love does, it warns people. But it does not constantly pound on the individual. There comes a time when you say what you can and then you give it over to the Lord.

Conclusion:

Next week we will continue in this text. Tonight I want to leave you with the encouragement that God can and will use our Godly lifestyles to bring the lost to salvation. He can do it as we become model citizens, He can do it as we become model employees, and He can do it as the saved wife submits to her husband, does not nag him and just lives her new life in Christ in front of him.