

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, September 18, 2019 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

1 PETER & 2 PETER FULL of Hope FULL HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF TIMES OUT OF YOUR WORST OF TIMES

WEDLOCK OR DEADLOCK?

1 Peter 3:1-7

We began our study through 1 and 2 Peter weeks ago entitled **“Full of Hope-full: How to Make the Best of Time Out of Your Worst of Times.”** The question is how do I develop that kind of life and faith that enable me to be full of “hope-fullness” even in the midst of the “worst of time”... in times of hardship, suffering, and the struggles of this life or as in the case of those in Peter’s day, extreme persecution. That is where First Peter comes in. The Christian life is an overcoming life. Even though we will definitely have problems and personal struggles in this life (trials of many kinds), we will be able to overcome because of Jesus. Because of Him, we have victory over the world, including sinful habits, bitterness, loneliness, guilt, fear, and discouragement. God desires for you to live an overcoming life! Jesus, Himself, said in **John 16:33, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”** And in 1 John 5:4-5, **“For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”** Christians are overcomers and truly are to live hope-filled Christian lives every day, but let’s be honest, there are many trial and struggles, heartaches and difficulties along... times of suffering that can daily rob us of our joy and paralyze our faith, steal our hope, and destroy our relationship and weaken our walk... times of suffering can embitter and defeat us if we let it. 1 Peter was written to help believer’s believe and grow even in times of suffering... to be “Full of Hope-full.”

Before we study the details of this fascinating letter... one of only two books in all of the Bible written by Jesus closest disciples and a leader of the disciples, and both very short... before we get into our study let’s be reminded of some of the most important background information for the book.

5 Important Background Information for the Book of 1 Peter:

1. **The author of the book of 1 Peter is the APOSTLE PETER, the head and lead spokesman for Jesus' twelve disciples** - The New Testament had four different names for Peter: Simeon (the Hebrew for Peter's original name, Acts 15:14, 2 Peter 1:1), Simon (the Greek name for Simeon applied 49 times in the New Testament), Cephas (a Greek transliteration of the Aramaic word for rock [כִּפּוֹס קִיפּוֹס]; this is used to play off of πέτρος), Peter (Πέτρος) the leader and spokesman for the early disciples. This is how he is addressed in the greeting emphasizing his authority to speak. The early New Testament Church almost exclusively regarded Peter as the author of the letter. And of course there is the internal evidence supporting Peter's authorship, the letter claims to be from "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:1), the writer claims to be the readers "fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed" (1 Peter 5:1), the writer identifies "Silas" (Silvanus) as one who helped him to write the letter (1 Peter 5:12; see also Acts 15:22 and 1 Thessalonians 1:1), the writer also sends greetings from Mark (1 Peter 5:13; see Acts 12:12).
2. **The book of 1 Peter (like Paul's letter to the Galatians) is actually a CIRCULAR LETTER, meant to be circulated to multiple early New Testament churches and believers** - Peter is a letter written in normal epistle form and style. The rhetorical and didactic nature of the letter may mean that it was intended to be read aloud to the congregations. It is best to see this letter as a circular type of letter in its present form which was directed to all the churches in the areas mentioned in northern Asia minor.
3. **The recipient of Peter's letter (also like Paul's letter to the Galatians) were probably a mixed group of JEWISH and GENTILE believers who were scattered throughout the five Roman provinces of ASIA MINOR in what is present day Turkey** – This is a circular (or general) letter, but unlike the others, it identifies its recipients. The letter is addressed to those who are from places in northern Asia Minor or modern Turkey (1:1): Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia.
4. **The letter was written around AD 64, either before or during the Neronian persecution, which helps to date the writing** – Tradition holds that both Paul and Peter were victims of persecution under Nero at Rome after the disastrous fire in the city of Rome on July 19 of AD 64. The death of Paul is considered to be before Peter's. The timing of Paul's death does not really affect the date of 1 Peter. The letter was written from "Babylon" (1 Peter 5:13) which was probably a cryptic title for Rome... the head of the then pagan, anti-God world (see Rev. 14:8, 17:5&18).
5. **The purpose of 1 Peter is to encourage and enable Christians/believer to face PERSECUTION and SUFFERING with hope in the grace of God** - Although 1 Peter does bare the form of a letter, the tone is that of a homiletical, teaching, instructional sermon designed to provide direction for believers under persecution; at times it also includes theological considerations which support the ethical exhortations, and to exhort his readers under persecution to follow the example of Christ whose life was characterized by patient suffering

With that review and brief introduction we want to get back into our study this evening. We are going to be looking at 1 Peter 3:1-7. Look at that with me (1 Peter 3:1-7)

A strange situation exists in society today. We have more readily available information about sex and marriage than ever before, yet we have more marital problems and divorces. Obviously something is wrong. It is not sufficient to say that God is needed in these homes, because even many Christian marriages are falling apart.

The fact that a man and a woman are both saved is not guarantee that their marriage wills succeed... perhaps it should be, but let's face it, it's just not. Marriage is something that we have to work at; success is not automatic. And when one marriage partner is not a Christian, that can make matters even more difficult. **Peter addressed this section of his letter to Christian wives who had unsaved husbands, telling them how to win their mates to Christ. Then he added some important admonitions for Christian husbands.**

No matter what your marital status may be, you can learn from Peter the essentials for a happy and successful marriage.

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST (1 Peter 3:1a & 7a)

The term(s) “likewise” or “in the same manner” or “in like manner” refer us back to Peter’s discussion of the example of Jesus Christ in 1 Peter 2:21-25, ²¹ *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:* ²² *Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth;* ²³ *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;* ²⁴ *who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.* ²⁵ *For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”* Just as Jesus was submissive and obedient to God’s will, so a Christian husband and wife should follow His example.

Why do we have such a skewed view/understanding of the idea of “submission” today? Perhaps it is because of poor examples of it, where it is abused, misused, or set aside altogether.

The word *submission* makes even many Christians uncomfortable. They squirm or murmur against the apparent injustice of it. Somewhere along the line, Christians have come to a false notion about what submission means in the Bible. Thanks to attacks on the Biblical idea of submission, Christians have come to think of submission as oppressive. When the topic comes up in Scripture, whether it is Peter’s word in 1 Peter 3 or Paul’s words in Ephesians 5:22, “Wives submit to your own husbands” (5:22) and cry foul. They brand the verse as sexist or even rant about the passage as justification for husbands’ mistreating or abusing their wives. They insist that these words prove the Church expects women to stay married to them. This is NOT the Biblical understanding of submission. The biggest problem with this view: the verse has been stripped of its context to promote the idea that the Bible is sexist.

Is submission oppressive?

Is submission sexist?

Is submission a license for abuse?

6 Things Submission Does NOT Mean: (Dr. John Piper)

1. Submission does not mean agreeing with everything your husband says - You can see that in verse one: she is a Christian and he is not. He has one set of ideas about ultimate reality. She has another. Peter calls her to be submissive while assuming she will not submit to his view of the most important thing in the world—God. So submission can't mean submitting to agree with all her husband thinks.

2. Submission does not mean leaving your brain or your will at the wedding altar - It is not the inability or the unwillingness to think for yourself. Here is a woman who heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. She thought about it. She assessed the truth claims of Jesus. She apprehended in her heart the beauty and worth Christ and his work, and she chose him. Her husband heard it also. Other wise Peter probably wouldn't say he "disobeyed the word." He has heard the word and he has thought about it. And he has not chosen Christ. She thought for herself and she acted. And Peter does not tell her to retreat from that commitment.

3. Submission does not mean avoiding every effort to change a husband - The whole point of this text is to tell a wife how to "win" her husband. Verse one says, *"Be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won."* If you didn't care about the Biblical context you might say, "Submission has to mean, taking a husband the way he is and not trying to change him." But if you care about the context, you conclude that submission, paradoxically, is a strategy for changing him. The goal of this text is to help wives bring about the most profound change in their husbands that can be imagined—the transformation from being a spiritually dead unbeliever to a spiritually alive believer. Submission does not say, "I renounce all efforts to change my husband." What it does say we'll see in a moment.

4. Submission does not mean putting the will of the husband before the will of Christ - The text clearly teaches that the wife is a follower of Jesus before and above being a follower of her husband. He is going on the path of unbelief. She does not follow him in that, because she has been called to be a disciple of Jesus. Submission to Jesus relativizes submission to husbands—and governments and employers and parents. When Sara calls Abraham "lord" in verse 6, it is lord with a little "l". It's like "sir." And the obedience she renders is secondary obedience, under, and because of, and filtered through obedience to the LORD with a capital "L".

5. Submission does not mean that a wife gets her personal, spiritual strength from her husband - A good husband should indeed strengthen and build up and sustain his wife. He should be a source of strength. There are ways in which a wife is the "weaker vessel" as verse 7 says. But what this text shows is that when a husband's spiritual nurturing and leadership is lacking, a Christian wife is not bereft of strength. Submission does not mean she is dependent on him to supply her strength of faith and virtue and character. The text assumes just the opposite. She is summoned to develop depth and strength and character not from her husband but for her husband. Verse five says that her hope is in God, not the husband.

6. Finally submission does not mean that a wife is to act out of fear - Verse 6b says, "You have become [Sarah's] children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear." In other words submission is free, not coerced by fear. The Christian woman is a free woman. When she submits to her husband—whether he is a believer or unbeliever—she does it in freedom, not out of fear.

Jesus is our example of submission. How does Jesus show us... picture for us... model for us, submission. Give examples (you may cite scripture)

5 Examples of Submission in the Life of Christ:

1. **Giving up his own desires: Mark 14:36** - *"And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will."*
2. **Obedience to God's will: John 6:38** - *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."*
3. **Submission to God, Himself: 1 Corinthians 15:28** - *"When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all."*
4. **Emptied Himself: Philippians 2:5-9** - *"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men..."*
5. **Willing to endure suffering: Hebrews 5:8** - *"Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered."*

Much of our learning in life comes by way of imitation. Grandparents have a delightful time watching their grandchildren pick up new skills and words as they grow up. If we imitate the best models, we will become better people and better achievers, but if we imitate the wrong models, it will cripple our lives and possibly ruin our characters. The role models that we follow influence us in every area of life.

While standing in a checkout line in a supermarket, I overheard two women discussing the latest Hollywood scandal that was featured on the front page of a newspaper displayed on the counter. As I listened (and I could not help but hear them!) I thought, *How foolish to worry about the sinful lives of movie stars. Why clutter up your mind with such trash? Why not get acquainted with decent people and learn from their lives?* A few days later, I overheard a conversation about the marital problems on a certain television "soap opera," and the same thoughts came to me.

When Christian couples try to imitate the world and get their standards from Hollywood instead of from heaven, there will be trouble in the home. But if both partners will imitate Jesus Christ in His submission and obedience and His desire to serve others, then there will be triumph and joy in the home. A psychiatrist friend of mine states that the best thing a Christian husband can do is pattern himself after Jesus Christ. In Christ we see a beautiful blending of strength and tenderness, and that is what it takes to be a successful husband.

Peter also pointed to Sarah as a model for Christian wives to follow. To be sure, Sarah was not perfect, but she proved to be a good helpmate to Abraham, and she is one of the few women named in the great faith chapter in Hebrews 11. I once made a pastoral visit to a woman who said she had marital problems, and I noticed a number of "movie fan club magazines" in the magazine rack. After listening to the woman's problems, I concluded that she needed to follow some Bible examples and models and get her mind off of the worldly example.

We cannot follow Christ's example unless we first know Him as our Savior, and then submit to Him as our Lord. We must spend time with Him each day, meditating on the Word and praying, and a Christian husband and wife must pray together and see to encourage each other in the faith.

SUBMISSION (1 Peter 3:1-6)

Twice in this paragraph Peter reminded Christian wives that they were to be submissive to their husbands. In 1 Peter 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." And in 1 Peter 3:5, "For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands." (1 Peter 3:1 and 5) The word translated "submissive" (submit) is actually a military term that means "to place under rank." God has a place for everything; He has ordained various levels of authority. Remember what he said back in 1 Peter 2:13-14, *"¹³ Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good."* He has ordained that the husband be the head of the home (Ephesians 5:2ff) and that, as he submits to Christ, his wife should submit to him. Headship is not dictatorship, but the loving exercise of divine authority under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Peter gave three reasons why a Christian wife should submit to her husband, even if the husband (as in this case) is not saved.

3 Reasons a Christian Wife Should Submit to Her Husband:

(1) Submission is an obligation (1 Peter 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."* God has commanded it because, in His wisdom, He knows that this is the best arrangement for a happy, fulfilling marriage. Subjection/submission does not mean that the wife is inferior to the husband. In fact, in 1 Peter 3:7, Peter made it clear that the husband and wife are "heirs together." The man and woman are made by the same Creator out of the same basic material, and both are made in God's image. God gave dominion to both Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:28), and in Jesus Christ Christian mates are one (Gal. 3:28).

Submission has to do with order and authority, not evaluation. For example, the slaves in the average Roman household were superior in many ways to their masters, but they still had to be under authority. The buck private in the army may be a better person than the five-star general, but he is still a buck private. Even Christ himself became a servant and submitted to God's will. There is nothing degrading about submitting to authority or accepting God's order. If anything, it is the first step toward fulfillment. And **Ephesians 5:21** make it clear that both husband and wife must first be submitted to Jesus Christ, *"Submitting to one another in the fear of God."*

Husbands and wives must be partners, not competitors. After a wedding ceremony, I often privately say to the bride and groom, "Now, remember, from now on it's no longer mine or yours, but ours." This explains why Christians must always marry other Christians, for a believer cannot enter into any kind of deep "oneness" with an unbeliever (2 Cor. 6:14-18... *"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers..."*).

- (2) **Submission is an opportunity (1 Peter 3:1b-2)** – *“... 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.”* An opportunity for what? To win an unsaved husband to Christ. God not only commands submission, but He also uses it as a powerful spiritual influence in a home. This does not mean that a Christian wife “gives in” to her unsaved husband in order to subtly manipulate him and get him to do what she desires. This kind of selfish psychological persuasion ought never to be found in a Christian’s heart or home.

An unsaved husband will not be converted by preaching or nagging in the home. The phrase “without a word” does not mean “without the Word of God,” because salvation comes through the Word (John 5:24, *“²⁴ Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”* Romans 10:17, *“¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*) It means “without talk, without a lot of speaking.” Christian wives who “preach” at their husbands only drive them further from the Lord. I know one zealous wife who used to keep religious radio programs on all evening, usually very loud, so that her husband would “hear the truth.” She only made it easier for him to leave home and spend his evening with his friends.

It is the character and conduct of the wife that will win the lost husband – not arguments, but such attitudes as submission, understanding, love, kindness, and patience. These qualities are not manufactured; they are the fruit of the Spirit that comes when we are submitted to Christ and to one another. A Christian wife with purity and reverence will reveal in her life “the praise” of God (1 Peter 2:9) and influence her husband to trust Christ.

One of the greatest examples of a godly wife and mother in church history is Monica, the mother of the famous St. Augustine. God used Monica’s witness and prayers to win both her son and her husband to Christ, though her husband was not converted until shortly before his death. Augustine wrote in his “Confessions.” *“She (Monica, his mother) served him as her lord; and did her diligence to win him unto Thee... preaching Thee unto him by her conversation (behavior); by which Thou ornamentest her, making her reverently amiable unto her husband.”*

In a Christian home, we must minister to each other. A Christian husband must minister to his wife and help to “beautiful her” in the Lord (Ephesians 5:25-30). A Christian wife must encourage her husband to help him grow strong in the Lord. Parents and children must share burdens and blessings and seek to maintain an atmosphere of spiritual excitement and growth in the home. If there are unsaved people in the home, they will be won to Christ more by what they see in our lives and relationships than by what they hear in our witness.

- (3) **Submission is an ornament (1 Peter 3:3-6)** – *“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.” The word translated “adornment” or “adorning” is “kosmos” in the Greek, and give us our English word “cosmos” (the ordered universe). We also get our English word “cosmetic” from this word.” It is the opposite of “chaos.” Peter warned the Christian wife not to major on external decoration but on internal character. He is not condemning beauty treatment, but rather saying that as a believer it’s what’s on the inside that really matters... focus on that. Roman women were captivated by the latest fashions of the day and competed with each other in dress and hairstyles. It was not unusual for the women to have elaborate hair-arrangements, studded with gold and silver combs and even jewels. They wore elaborate and expensive garments, all for the purpose of impressing others.

A Christian wife with an unsaved husband might think that she must imitate the world if she is going to win her mate, but just the opposite is true.

A contrast in glamor vs. true beauty:

- 1. Glamor is artificial and external; true beauty is real and internal**
- 2. Glamor is something a person can put on and take off; true beauty is always present**
- 3. Glamor is corruptible, it decays and fades; true beauty from the heart grows more wonderful as the years pass**

A Christian woman who cultivates the beauty of the inner person will not have to depend on cheap externals. God is concerned about values, not prices.

Of course, this does not mean that a wife should neglect herself and not try to be up-to-date in her apparel. It simply means that she is not “majoring” on being a fashionista just to keep up with the crowd. Any husband is proud of a wife who is attractive, but that beauty must come from the heart, not the store. We are not of this world, but we must not look as though we came from out of this world either!

Peter did not forbid the wearing of jewelry any more than the wearing of apparel. The word “wearing” in 1 Peter 3:3 means “the putting around,” and refers to a gaudy display of jewelry. It is possible to wear jewelry and still honor God, and we must not judge one another in this matter.

Peter closed this section by pointing to Sarah as an example of a godly, submissive wife. Read Genesis 18 for the background. Christians’ wives today would probably embarrass their husbands if they called them “lord,” but their attitudes ought to be such that they could call them “lord” and people would believe it. The believing wife who submits to Christ and to her husband, and who cultivates a “gentle and quiet spirit” will never have to be afraid. (The “fear” in this verse means “terror,” while in 1 Peter 3:2 it means “reverence.”) God will watch over her even when her unsaved mate creates problems and difficulties for her.

CONSIDERATION (1 Peter 3:7)

Peter wrote in 1 Peter 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.*” Why did Peter devote more space to instructing the wives than the husbands? Because the Christian wives were experiencing a whole new situation and needed guidance. In general, women were kept down in the Roman Empire, and their new freedom in Christ created new problems and challenges. Furthermore, many of them had unsaved husbands and needed extra encouragement and enlightenment.

As Peter wrote to the Christians husbands, he reminded them of four areas of responsibility in their relationship with their mates.

4 Areas of Responsibility for Christian Husbands to Their Wives:

(1) Physically... “dwell with them” – This implies much more than sharing the same address. Marriage is fundamentally a physical relationship... “*The two shall become one flesh*” (Eph. 5:31). Of course, Christian mates enjoy a deeper spiritual relationship, but he two go together (1 Cor. 7:1-5). A truly spiritual husband will fulfill his marital duties and love his wife.

The husband must make time to be home with his wife. Christian workers and church officers who get too busy running around solving other people’s problems may end up creating problems of their own at home.

One survey revealed that the average husband and wife had thirty-seven minutes a week together in actual communication.

It is any wonder that marriages fall apart after the children grow up and leave home? The husband and wife are left along... to live as strangers!

“Dwell with them” also suggest that the husband provide for the physical and material needs of the home. While it is not wrong for a wife to have a job or career, her first responsibility is to care for the home (Titus 2:4-5). It is the husband who should provide (1 Tim. 5:8).

(2) Intellectually... “with understanding” – Some translations say “according to knowledge.” Somone asked Mrs. Albert Einstein of she understood Dr. Einstein’s theory of relativity, and she replied, “No, but I understand the doctor.” In my premarital counseling as a pastor, I often gave the couple pads of paper and asked them to write down the three things each one thinks the other enjoy doing the most. Usually, the prospective bride made her list immediately; the man would sit and ponder. And usually the girl was right and the man was wrong. What a beginning for a marriage.

It is amazing that two married people can live together and not really know each other. Ignorance is dangerous in any area of life, but it is especially dangerous in marriage. A Christian husband needs to know his wife’s moods, feelings, needs, fears, and hopes. He need to “listen with his heart” and share meaningful communication with her. There must be in the home such a protective atmosphere of love and submission that the husband and wife can disagree and still be happy together.

“Speaking the truth in love” is the solution to the communications problem (Eph. 4:15). It has well been said that love without truth is hypocrisy, and truth without love is brutality. We need both truth and love if we are to grow in our understanding of one another. How can a husband show consideration for his wife if he does not understand her needs or problems? To say, “I never knew you felt that way!” is to confess that, at some point one mate excommunicated the other. When either mate is afraid to be open and honest about a matter, then he or she is building walls and not bridges.

- (3) **Emotionally... “giving honor to the wife”** – Chivalry may be dead, but every husband must be a “knight in shining armor” who treats his wife like a princess. By the way, the name Sarah means “princess.” Peter did not suggest that a wife is “the weaker vessel” mentally, morally, or spiritually, but rather physically... physiologically. There are exceptions, of course, but generally speaking, the man is the stronger of the two when it comes to physical accomplishments. The husband should treat his wife like an expensive, beautiful, and fragile vase, in which is a precious treasure.

When a young couple starts dating, the boy is courteous and thoughtful. After they get engaged, he shows even more courtesy and always acts like a gentleman. Sad to say, soon after they get married, many a husband forgets to be kind and gentlemanly and starts taking his wife for granted. He forgets that happiness in a home is made up of many little things, including the small courtesies of life.

Big resentments often grow out of small hurts. Husbands and wives need to be honest with each other, admit hurts, and seek for forgiveness and healing. “Give honor unto the wife” does not mean “giving in to the wife.” A husband can disagree with his wife and still respect and honor her. As the spiritual leader in the home, the husband must sometimes make decisions that are not popular; but he can still act with courtesy and respect.

“Giving honor” means that the husband respects his wife’s feelings, thinking, and desires. He may not agree with her idea, but he respects them. Often God balances a marriage so that the husband needs what the wife has in her personality, and she likewise needs his good qualities. An impulsive husband often has a patient wife, and this helps to keep him out of trouble.

The husband must be the “thermostat” in the home, setting the emotional and spiritual temperature. The wife often is the “thermometer,” letting him know what the temperature is. Both are necessary. The husband who is sensitive to his wife’s feelings will not only make her happy, but will grow himself and help his children live in a home that honors God.

- (4) **Spiritually... “that your prayers may not be hindered”** – Peter assumed that husbands and wives would pray together. Often, they do not; and this is the reason for much failure and unhappiness. If unconverted people can have happy homes without prayer (and they do), how much happier Christians’ homes would be with prayer! In fact, it is the prayer life of a couple that indicates how things are going in the home. If something is wrong, their prayers will be hindered.

A husband and wife need to have their own private, individual prayer time each day. They also need to pray together and to have a time of “family devotion.” How this is organized will change from home to home, and even from time to time as the children grow up and schedules change. The Word of God and prayer are basic to a happy, holy home (Acts 6:4).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

A husband and wife are “heirs together.” If the wife shows submission and the husband consideration, and if both submit to Christ and follow His example, then they will have an enriching experience in their marriages. If not, they will miss God’s best and rob each other of blessing and growth. “The grace of life” may refer to children, who certainly are a heritage from God (Psalm 127:3), but even childless couples can enjoy spiritual riches if they will obey Peter’s admonitions.

It might be good if husbands and wives occasionally took inventory of their marriage. Here are some questions, based on what Peter wrote.

- 1. Are we partners or competitors?**
- 2. Are we helping each other become more spiritual?**
- 3. Are we depending on the externals or the eternal? The artificial or the real?**
- 4. Do we understand each other?**
- 5. Are we sensitive to each other’s feelings and ideas, or taking each other for granted?**
- 6. Are we seeing God answer our prayers?**
- 7. Are we enriched because of our marriage, or robbing each other of God’s blessing?**

Honest answers to these questions might make a difference!