



KING'S CHAPEL

Daily Devotional - 1 Peter Study

Week 4 - Day 5

Approaching God

Read Isaiah 55:10-11 - *You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper, and instead of briers the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, that will endure forever."*

Prayer: As you enter into time with the Lord today, slowly read through the promise that closes out Isaiah 55. Remember, this is being written about those returning from Babylonian exile, a period of great despair and lost hope for the people of Israel. God is making all things new in your life. Where are the thorns and briers in your life that you most long to see redeemed and made new, even bearing fruit for his glory? Take them to the Lord today.

Husbands & Wives - Conclusion

Today we'll conclude our study of biblical marriage by reading our theme passage for the week 1 Peter 3:1-7. Now that we've looked at God's design for marriage throughout the bible, today our goal is to connect those contextually with our study of 1 Peter. In 3:1-6, Peter argues that God is pleased with beautiful women who attract their unbelieving husbands to Christ. Let's follow Peter's argument. After the fall, God cursed the woman with a "desire ... for [her] husband" (Genesis 3:16). The same language is used in Genesis 4:7 of sin's desire to control Cain. Seen in that light, God cursed the woman with a desire to control her husband. With this background, 1 Peter 3:1-7 then shows how the gospel transforms the relationship between man and woman, undoing the curse of Genesis 3.

Bible Reading & Meditation - slowly read the passage 2 or 3x's

1 Peter 3:1-7 (ESV)

1 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, **2** when they see your respectful and pure conduct. **3** Do not let your adorning be external--the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear-- **4** but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. **5** For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, **6** as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. **7** Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Daily Study Questions

You may find it helpful to read through the commentary in “Resources for Further Study” at the end of today’s study to answer these questions.

Questions for Study

- Take a minute to circle, underline, or highlight words that have been common themes throughout Peter’s letter or that stand out to you. For example, what significant word does Peter use to describe the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit?
- What contrast is Peter establishing in this passage between physical and spiritual beauty?
- What are 2-3 spiritual priorities Peter highlights for wives in this passage? What are 2-3 spiritual priorities he highlights for men?

Questions for Meditation & Application

- What practices or disciplines enhance physical beauty? List all that you can think of below. Think about your weekly schedule. How many hours of your week are spent preserving or enhancing physical beauty? What practices or disciplines enhance spiritual beauty? List all that you can think of? As you personally engage with the Lord about this - listen for his voice of guidance, truth, and love.
- What did you find hardest about this chapter, and why? Do you need to do more thinking about it, or speak to someone else about it? If you are a husband, is there any way in which you might be failing to understand or to honor your wife, or hindering her prayers instead of encouraging them? How can you make it easier for her gladly to submit to your leadership?

Close in Prayer:

Rejoice: What from your study this week causes you to rejoice in God your Creator?

Repent: What from your study this week is an area you can confess and bring before the Lord?

Request: What are you asking of the Lord today in prayer?

“One thing is for sure: The Lord wants us to believe most certainly that asking, seeking, and knocking cannot be in vain. Receiving an answer, finding God and the opening of His heart and home are the certain fruits of prayer.”

Andrew Murray

Resources for Further Study

1 Peter chapter 3 notes

Commentary & Notes on 1 Peter 3:1-7

I remember a wise preacher pointing out that even when people are free to make up their own minds and form their own decisions, most of them quickly find a framework to fit into. They adopt a stereotype; they fit into a pattern; they behave in an utterly predictable way. Perhaps we're not so free after all. He gave two examples. Watch people coming into a church. They are free to sit wherever they like. But most people, left to their own devices, will go half-way up one side. It's usually the same side, too. Only when those seats are all occupied will people gravitate elsewhere. I suppose he could have said similar things about the psychology that drives supermarket shopping. People have studied which colors sell best at which height, no matter what the product. The other example he gave was that of teenagers. They are free to wear whatever they want. But they all instinctively go for the same things – the jeans, the shoes, perhaps the earrings – so that when you see several of them together they look as though they are in uniform. In a sense they are. It seems safer that way. Easier, too.

This passage slices through the stereotypes into which women and men easily fell in the ancient world as in the modern. Look at the 'women's magazines' to this day. Hairdressing, jewelry, clothes – those are part of the staple diet. It seems from verse 3 as though they were the regular things for women to think about in the ancient world as well. And look at the men's magazines (at least, the ones you aren't ashamed to be seen with). Bodybuilding, strength, fast cars, high technology. Perhaps even golf. Symbols of power, skill, control and show.

Now watch what Peter does in this passage. Try thinking about it in a different light, he says! Suppose the real womanly beauty comes from the heart! Supposing what really gives a married woman her full stature as a human being is something that affects her whole character, rather than something merely stuck on to the outside! Now there's a radical idea.

And supposing the way a married man can find true fulfillment is not by bullying his wife into submission, forcing her to do what he wants. Supposing the way to fulfillment is through treating the wife as an equal, even though she will, in the normal run of things, be less physically strong? Supposing, in religious terms as well as other ways, she stands on level ground with you? Now there's a radical idea.

We should allow these radical ideas – radical then, radical now – to sink into our imagination. What would it be like if the magazines reflected a quite different idea about what it means to be a woman, or a man? What would it be like if Christians were to start cheerfully behaving in that different way, whether or not the magazine trade caught up with the idea? The fact that this still sounds quite drastic indicates that this is a lesson each generation has to learn. Left to ourselves, even in the church, we gravitate towards what women and men have always done, allowing social stereotypes and natural hormonal instinct to dictate to us. We don't find it easy to go by the hard road of rethinking roles in the light of the gospel of Jesus the Messiah.

Of course people will be suspicious. Many men, down the years, have emphasized verses 1–6 and quietly forgotten verse 7. Many women have gone along with this. The line between a cheerful and creative radicalism and a falsely 'meek' subservience is no doubt a fine one. But, just

because that false 'meekness' remains a temptation ('keep your head down, do as you're told, and you won't get hurt!'), that doesn't mean we shouldn't think through the cheerful radicalism.

The aim, after all, is not simply that husband and wife should be able to get along happily, though that is central and important. There are two other aims, larger and quite different.

The first, larger aim is that non-Christian husbands might be won to the faith (verse 1). As historical studies have shown, this is in fact one of the primary ways in which the Christian faith spread during the first two or three centuries, despite the fact that the authorities were doing their best to stamp it out. In fact, there were many more Christian women around than non-Christian ones, since in pagan households it was common to abandon a second or subsequent girl child – in other words, to throw her away to starve or be eaten by wild animals, or perhaps picked up and reared into slavery, probably prostitution. Girls were considered an expensive and difficult nuisance. Christians, like Jews, refused to do this, so there were far more marriageable Christian women available. They took advice such as this chapter to heart. And Christian families grew and spread.

The second larger aim is that Christian couples should be able to pray together and to do so effectively (verse 7). If one is domineering or bullying, shared prayer will be an imposition rather than a natural and delightful joint project. Of course, a couple may well find that, temperamentally, they like to pray in quite different ways. But when they do come together to pray, for instance when they attend church together, there should be no resentment between them, in particular no resentment because of the man forcing his wife into compliance or treating her as a lesser being. Only when we have considered the ways in which women were regarded in the ancient world – as a secondary form of human being, according to Aristotle! – will we realize just how revolutionary Peter's message (like that of other early Christians, and following the actual practice of Jesus himself) actually was. And is.