



## BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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**SERIES : Studies in 1 Peter ~ "A Living Hope"**

**July 15, 2007. Study 6 : "A COMPELLING WITNESS" 1Ptr 2:11 ~3:7**

### THE STUDY SERIES

Peter sums up what God has done for us in Christ : "You have been born anew into a living hope." **1:3**

The last two studies have been about our RESPONSE to God's grace:

Be holy in all you do **1:16** ... from Study 4 - "A New Lifestyle"

"You are a chosen people ... that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. **2:9** ... from Study 5 - "A New Community"

These two themes, living commendable lives, and, giving witness to God's grace, continue through Peter's letter and are intertwined in today's passage.

Today, we discover Peter's sixth principle - "A Compelling Witness"

### INTRODUCTION TO STUDY 6

1 Peter 2:11-17 functions as both an introduction and framework for the greater part of the passage under Study today - the "duties lists" from 2: 18 to 3:7

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God ... **1Ptr2:11-12**

Note that these two themes appear in these two verses, expressed as the negative and the positive of living a "godly" life

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king. **1Ptr2:13-17**

### A. THE FRAMEWORK ... 1Ptr2:11-17

#### 1. TWO KEY CONCEPTS

a. Be SUBMISSIVE In the NT - every Christian to God (Heb12:9, Jam2:4), human authority generally, (here, and Rom13:1), leaders in the Church, (1Cor6:15-16. Heb3:17) and to each other (Eph5:21)

b. Show due RESPECT As the larger passage unfolds, Peter gives three examples :  
Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect. **2:18**

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husband. **3:1**

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect **3:7**

The greater part of today's passage is taken up with specific instructions to two groups of people - slaves and wives. In understanding these instructions, it is vital to note that issues of "submission and 'respect' are not EXCLUSIVE to these two groups.

Whatever Peter meant when he asked wives to "be submissive ... like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master." (3:5-6), we may not interpret it as authoritarian and selfish control - particularly when these verses are "bookended" by :

Do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil ... show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers. **2Ptr2:16-17**

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. **2Ptr3:8**

## **B : WHY THESE TWO CONCEPTS?**

Why should Christians submit and show proper respect? Peter's three reasons all have to do with our INTEGRITY as Christians!

- 1. Our WITNESS** Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God **(2:12)**
- 2. Our DEFENCE** By doing good, you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men **(2:15)**
- 3. Our IDENTITY** Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover for evil; live as servants of God **(2:16)** c/f **Gal5:13** You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature, rather, serve one another in love.

## **B. THE DUTIES LISTS ... 1Ptr2:18-3:7**

Lists of duties in the ancient world to regulate the relationships of husband to wife and master to slave were common. They addressed the "without rights" party in each relationship by simply listing what was expected. Remember that slaves and wives had no legal status at all in the Roman world. The husband / slave master had absolute power - even over life itself.

In the NT, both Peter and Paul supply lists of expectations to these "without rights" parties - slaves and wives. (For Paul's, see Eph5:22-6:9 and Col 3:18-4:1)

1. In addressing the "without rights" parties, these lists DO NOT vary from the secular norms. Everything asked of wives and slaves in them agrees with the standards of the day.

This means that there is nothing SPECIFICALLY Christian about them and that we should be wary about using them as a guide to regulate relationships today - particularly between husbands and wives.

There is also a wider "theology of relationships between the sexes" that needs to be considered. That is : EQUALITY in Creation (Gen1:27-28), SUBJUGATION a result of the Fall (Gen3:15-16) & RESTORATION of equality as a result of redemption (Gal3:26-29)

2. How do these "Christian" lists vary?
  - a. Christian ethical teaching is the CONTEXT of each list. (Eg. see Eph4:22-5:21)
  - b. they address the ABUSE of power by husbands and slave owners - by radically transforming the behaviour and attitudes of those who professed Christ. This is unknown in such lists and is a radical departure from them. Eg. :

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her ... in this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies.

**Eph5:25, 28 (see also Col3:19, 21, 4:1; Phm 15-16)**

Husbands ... be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect ... and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life. **1Ptr3:7**

Peter has two concerns : The first : That in a time of increasing persecution, that Christians "without power" do nothing that may ADD fuel to the fire within their own relational network with those who do not believe, and, second, (the flip side of the first concern) that their lives, in such circumstances, be a compelling witness to the reality of Christ as their Lord and Saviour

How is it to your credit (Christian slave) if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. **1Ptr2:20**

Wives ... be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the Word, they may be won over without words ... when they see the purity & reverence of your lives. **1Ptr3:1-2**

And, in the bigger picture, their relationship to the whole of society:

If you suffer, it should not be as a ... criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. **1Ptr4:15-16**

## **SOME REFLECTIONS**

How is it possible to "submit to one another"? (Eph5:21) Consider that to "submit" is to : want the other person's good and work for it, and to live within the relationship without bitterness or keeping a tally to see when I have done enough.

Two questions for us today ...

How should I live in my relationships to reflect my "new nature?" (Col3:9-14)

How great a priority for me is it to "make attractive" the gospel? (Titus 2:9-10)