

An In-Depth Study of the First Letter of Apostle Peter

[Part 5]

1 Peter 3:1-2 [NIV] “Wives, *in the same way* be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.”

“*In the same way,*” why this statement? What way?

To understand the reason for this statement we need to apply the same study principle as we do when we see the word “*therefore.*”

Read the context in which the statement is made.

In this case it is **1 Peter 2:18-23** [NIV] wives are to serve their husbands as if they were serving Jesus Christ, their Saviour and Master. [**Ephesians 5:22-24**]

Please wives please don't stop reading at this point!!

To obey this command will bring great blessings to you and other people.

- a) Such an example could be the vehicle God uses to call an unbelieving husband,
- b) Such an example will also be a bright light to bring others to seek to know the God you worship, the Saviour of all humanity, Jesus Christ.

A changed life speaks loud and clear to all who know that person.

1 Peter 3:3-4 [NIV] “Your beauty should *not* come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. *Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.*”

In a society that is obsessed with women's fashion, such a character will really set you apart from most other women.

This does **not** mean a woman should be unconcerned with her outward appearance and cleanliness.

Hygiene, neatness and grooming are important but even more important are a person's attitude and inner character.

People are won over by love and compassion rather than looks, true beauty begins inside a person.

Live a Christian life quietly and consistently in your home and community, then others will see Jesus Christ in you.

Note such an attitude is of great value to our Creator God.

1 Peter 3:5-6 [NIV] “*For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.*”

If you read the lives of all the holy women that God used in the past you will see that submissiveness means to co-operate voluntarily with someone else out of love and respect for our Creator God and for that other person.

Ephesians 5:21 [NIV] *“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”*

Submission is a two-way attitude of mind.

Submitting to another person is often a misunderstood concept, it does **not** mean becoming a “doormat.”

Philippians 2:5-8 [NIV] *“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!”*

This is the example we have from Jesus Christ, that we should follow.

Jesus Christ became a servant of humanity in order to be our Saviour.

Matthew 26:36-39 [NIV] *“Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”*

Jesus Christ also submitted His will to God the Father.

John 3:16-17 [NIV] *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

God the Father also gave of Himself [read articles on the Triune Nature of God] to humanity in order that all may have the chance of eternal life.

Philippians 2:9-10 [NIV] *“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,”*

“Therefore” – don’t read over this word, but renew what has been stated before.

As a result of the submissive attitude of Jesus Christ, the human Son of Man, God the Father has exalted Jesus Christ to a position of great authority that we are to submit to in our lives.

1 Peter 3:7 [NIV] *“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”*

Again, don’t read over the words “in the same way” a husband should submit to the needs of his wife by being considerate and respectful to her.

A husband and wife are equal heirs to the gift of eternal life.

The prayers of **both** husband and wife will be hindered unless they are submitting and supporting each other in their marriage union.

Always a right relationship with God, that is one in accordance to scripture found in the Christian Bible, is dependent on our relationship with other human beings as expanded in the Christian Bible.

Matthew 5:23-24 [NIV] *“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. **First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.**”*

Jesus Christ taught the same, that God will **only** accept us and our prayers and offerings if we are living in a right relationship with other human beings.

Ephesians 5:25-31 [NIV] *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no-one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church, for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”*

Husbands show their love for their wives by laying down their lives, that is time and substance, to provide for her physical and spiritual needs.

That they may be heirs together of eternal life in the created family of God.

Jesus Christ showed His love for the Church by dying to sanctify and cleanse it.

Baptism is an outward sign of what has happened in our mind and spirit, cleanses us and prepares us for a life within the Church of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:32-33 [NIV] *“This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”*

The wonderful purpose behind the marriage relationship is being revealed in these scriptures.

Physical marriage is an opportunity to prepare for the spiritual marriage of the Christian Church to Jesus Christ, this is the “*profound mystery*” mentioned in this scripture.

Revelation 19:6-9 [NIV] *“Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. **Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.**” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”*

This is the revelation of this “*profound mystery.*”

When we understand this, the relationship in our physical marriage is taken to a much higher level of responsibility.

1 Peter 3:8 [NIV] *“Finally, all of you, live in **harmony** with one another; be **sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.**”*

Peter lists five elements that should characterise any marriage or Christian fellowship.

1) **Harmony** – the Greek word is “*hōmōphrōn*” meaning to be of one mind.

This can **only** happen when the Holy Spirit is working through the human spirits of each person involved.

In this specific case the human spirits of both husband and wife.

Romans 12:18 [NIV] *“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”*

This harmony is **not** always possible in a marriage or any other relationship.

As a Christian we should be doing all **we** can to bring about this like-mindedness.

2) **Sympathetic** – the Greek word is “*sumpathēs*” meaning mutually commiserative, from a root word meaning to experience pain jointly or **suffer together**.

3) **Love as brothers** – the Greek word “*philadēphōs*” meaning a tender affection, hence to act kindly towards one another in a courteous way.

Titus 3:4 [NIV] *“But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared,”*

The same word is used in this scripture showing God’s relationship with human beings, a tender affection.

Matthew 23:37 [NIV] *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”*

Jesus Christ’s tender attitude towards the very people who in a few days would be calling out for Him to be crucified.

John 11:35 [NIV] *“Jesus wept.”*

Jesus Christ wept because even those close to Him had little faith in Him.

4) **Compassionate** – the Greek word “*ēusplagchōs*” meaning being full of pity, **not** judgemental of a person who is in distress or suffering.

Psalms 103:13-14 [NIV] *“As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.”*

Shows the attitude that God has towards all humanity.

Matthew 18:21-27 [NIV] *“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. ‘Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. ‘The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go.’”*

The same Greek word is used in this scripture, translated pity.

These verses bring out a certain quality of character, we have to have to be part of the created family of God.

We are to extend pity towards others who have hurt us to the extent of it being very costly to do so.

God the Father did this when He allowed His Son, who is part of the Triune God, to become Jesus Christ the Son of Man.

God the Father saw this beloved part of Him suffer in order to extend pity on rebellious human beings.

John 3:16-17 [NIV] *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did **not** send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

No condemnation but pity in this wonderful act of love.

5) **Humility** – the apostle Peter was well aware of what the lack of humility can do in relationships.

Peter developed humility the hard way.

In Peter’s early days with Jesus Christ he was impulsive, strong-willed and full of pride.

[See **Mark 8:31-33; John 13:6-9**]

But the Holy Spirit changed Peter, moulding him into a man with a strong personality but also showing great tenderness and humility.

Where can such humility come from?

a) **The awareness that we are a creature in the constant presence of our Creator God.**

Isaiah 64:8 [NIV] *“Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. **We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.**”*

If we are to become something that God wants to preserve for eternity, we have to allow Him to mould us into His *“likeness.”*

Isaiah 45:9-12 [NIV] *“Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. **Does the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you making?’ Does your work say, ‘He has no hands’? Woe to him who says to his father, ‘What have you begotten?’ or to his mother, ‘What have you brought to birth?’** “This is what the LORD says, the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands? **It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshalled their starry hosts.**”*

To question what our Creator God is doing as He moulds our life is dangerous.

When we realise who God is and what we are, it is prudent to have a humble attitude of mind.

b) **Realising our constant dependence on our Creator God.**

John 15:4-5 [NIV] *“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. **Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.** “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.**”*

Unless Jesus Christ dwells in us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, we can accomplish nothing of lasting value.

Galatians 5:22-24 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.”*

These fruits are the only things that we can take with us when we die physically.

c) **Realising the constant presence of our Creator God.**

Psalms 139:1-6 [NIV] *“O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. You hem me in, behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.”*

God is aware of every thought, word and action we make.

Such knowledge will help us to remain constantly humble before our Creator and will also reflect in our relationships with other human beings like ourselves.

The true Christian has a new standard of comparison.

If we compare ourselves with other human beings we may feel we are as good as them, and we have **no** fear in that comparison.

When we compare ourselves with Jesus Christ then we experience humility and awe, a fearful respect towards our Saviour and Maker.

1 Peter 3:9 [NIV] *“Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.”*

In this Satan-influenced society it is often deemed acceptable by some, to tear people down verbally or to get back at them if we feel we have been hurt.

Peter encourages us to avoid such a reaction to hurt or any other evil act against us.

Peter is following the teaching of his Master Jesus Christ.

Matthew 5:39-42 [NIV] *“But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”*

Whatever the hurt or insult we are **not** to seek revenge, for this would be becoming like our adversary.

Such action takes great patience and humility, which are “fruits” of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Matthew 5:43-47 [NIV] *“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?”*

Jesus Christ extends this same non-revengeful attitude of mind towards even those who are our enemies, persecuting us for our faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

This is the **only** way we can become children of our Creator God, having His very “likeness.”

This attitude of mind and action in our lives will set us apart from those who do not know, as yet, their Creator God.

This will allow Jesus Christ to bring His message of grace from the Father God to others through our example.

Matthew 5:48 [NIV] *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

We do **not** have to be discouraged by this statement if we understand the meaning of the Greek word translated “*perfect*.”

The Greek word is “*télōs*” which means **attaining the goal that is set before us**, ultimately a place in the created family of God.

We can “*be perfect*” in many ways during our life as we accomplish minor goals along our path to this ultimate goal of the Kingdom of God.

When I come to the end of this article I will have become perfect!!

1 Peter 3:10-12 [NIV] “*For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

To help us control our tongue re-study our article on **James 3:2-18**.

Too often we consider peace as being merely the absence of conflict, and consider peacemaking as a passive role, which is misleading.

An effective peacemaker actively pursues peace.

A true peacemaker builds up good relationships with other people, knowing that **peace is the by-product of commitment between two people or groups of people**.

John 14:25-27 [NIV] “*All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

The ability to become a peacemaker is dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit within us, teaching us and reminding us of the very words of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 9:6 [NIV] “*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*

One of the titles of Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace.

Eventual world peace will **only** come under the rule of Jesus Christ after His return, when all people will submit to His rule or be rejected and face oblivion.

Shouldn't we now be active in seeking peaceful relationships between all we meet with in our day-to-day life?

This would be a sign that we “*love life and long for good days*” as Peter expresses a goal we should have in our life.