

“A Holy and Happy Marriage” (1 Peter 3:1–7)

Abraham Lincoln once said, “Love is blind, but marriage is a real eye-opener.”¹ Abe certainly knew what he was talking about, didn’t he? One of the primary reasons that marriage is such an eye-opener is because men and women enter marriage with very different expectations. To summarize: A woman marries a man expecting he will change, but he doesn’t. A man marries a woman expecting that she won’t change and she does. Howard Hendricks likes to say people get married with a picture in their minds of a perfect marriage. Then after a few trials, they discover they aren’t married to a perfect picture, but an imperfect person. When this realization occurs, they will either tear up the picture or they will tear up the person.²

One of the great needs of every marriage is to tear up our picture of the perfect spouse and work toward becoming the perfect spouse ourselves. This will require an enormous amount of time, energy, and effort. But the reward of a holy and happy marriage is one of the greatest rewards in all of life. So, how can you have this kind of marriage? Follow God’s directions. When you come down with a cold, you take a cold medication. Before doing so you read the directions. If you are healthy, you take vitamins. Again, before using any supplements, it is critical to read the directions. This is common sense! So, why do so many Christians with sick or healthy marriages frequently neglect reading the directions? Perhaps if we were more attentive to the instructions of the Designer we would find that marriages work much better. God, the Maker of marriage, has given us clear directions in 1 Pet 3:1–7.³ His bottom line is: *Honor begins at home*. Peter’s first direction for a holy and happy marriage is . . .

1. Wives, honor your husbands by submitting (3:1–6).⁴ Peter argues that the greatest way a wife can honor the Lord is by submitting to her husband.⁵ In 3:1–2 Peter writes: **“In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own⁶ husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word,⁷ they may be won⁸ without a word by the behavior of their⁹ wives, as they observe your chaste [pure] and respectful behavior.”** Peter begins with the phrase: “In the same way” (*homoios*), which refers back to 2:18 where he exhorted servants to “be submissive” (*hupotasso*) to their masters.¹⁰ To “be submissive” means to come under the authority of another. Submission has nothing to do with the wife’s intelligence or capacity. Her intelligence may be fifty IQ points above her husband. Her personality may be more vivacious and engaging than his. She may be far more spiritual than he will ever be. The issue is not ability, the issue is role! In any organization, there must be authority. This principle applies in business, school, and the military. We can’t even drive down the street without noting the authority of traffic signals and signs. Life is made up of principles of authority.¹¹ So it is in marriage as well. The person who submits isn’t weak but strong because he or she honors God’s ordained authority.

Wives are to “be submissive” and win their husbands to Christ “without a word.”¹² So, don’t blare Christian music, leave gospel tracts, or preach at your unbelieving husband. Instead, win your husband by maximizing works and minimizing words.¹³ Peter says husbands will be won by the “behavior” (*anastrophe*) of their wives, particularly, by respecting their leadership in the home.¹⁴ Is this a guarantee? No. This is a principle, not a promise. Yet, God often uses godly wives to influence their husbands for Christ. The reason is obvious: A husband who is “disobedient to the word”¹⁵ will judge Jesus by his wife. If she has a sharp tongue, a hankering for gossip or an uncontrollable temper, that is his view of the Christian life. If his wife is pious, judgmental, and selfish, this is how he will envision Christ. But, the wife who is pure and respectful will win her on-looker husband. The word “observe” (*epopteuo*) means “a keen looking into something,” as you would watch a replay on a close call in sports.¹⁶ The husband takes careful notice of his wife’s behavior, and she “wins” him with kindness.¹⁷

In 3:3–4 Peter then discusses what really sets the Christian wife apart: **“Your adornment must not be *merely* external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses;¹⁸ but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle¹⁹ and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.”** The word “adornment” is the Greek word *kosmos*, which means order. Sometimes this word is translated “world.” *Kosmos* is a system where order prevails. We get our English word cosmetics from *kosmos*. Cosmetics can help bring order to a face. Peter’s point here is that a woman doesn’t win her husband by outward order. Rather, inward cosmetics or order win the husband. *Honor begins at home*.

Does this mean that a Christian woman can’t fix her hair, wear jewelry, or use makeup?²⁰ Let’s take a careful look at 3:3. The word “merely” isn’t in the Greek text, so Peter may be suggesting that he is opposed to external adornment. Many Christians argue this view. However, I have never heard anyone say, “And women should not put on a dress,” even though that is also on the same list. (The NIV adds the term “fine,” but this adjective is not in the Greek text.) Peter isn’t some ogre opposed to women looking good. His point is: Don’t limit your life to the external. Don’t neglect internal character for the sake of external adornment. Virtue rather than adornment should be a woman’s focus.²¹ Character trumps cosmetics.

If you look at a picture and your eyes are drawn to the frame surrounding the picture the artist made a big mistake. The frame of a picture is only there to accent the painting, not take attention away from it. Our body is simply the frame which encloses our spirit, and it is upon our spirit that God is trying to portray the image of Christ. Our body and clothing should help in this purpose, not hinder. Does your physical appearance accentuate or hinder your inner character? If you are a teenager, have you asked your father or mother what they think about how you are presenting yourself? They are your authority. If you are an adult, do you ask friends and family members to hold you accountable to a lifestyle of modesty?

Peter shares with women two truths about “a gentle and quiet spirit”: (1) It is an “imperishable quality.”²² This word “imperishable” (*aphthartos*) is used two other times by Peter (1:4, 23) and always refers to an eternal entity. So, Peter is saying: Devote yourself to pursuing godly character because it will stand the test of time. When your outer beauty fades, your inner beauty will still be present. A woman’s inner beauty will last the duration of our “imperishable and undefiled” inheritance (1:4) and the “imperishable” seed of God’s Word that resides within us (1:23). Hence, even though we grow old physically and lose most of our physical beauty, we can become more beautiful throughout our lifetime. After all, inner beauty will never age, and over the course of time, men appreciate internal character above external beauty. (2) God is pleased with a gentle and quiet spirit. Most Christian women long to please God more with their lives. If God plainly says that this is “precious in His sight,” nothing else needs to be said. Wives, do you want God to bless your marriage? Do you want your unsaved husband to trust Christ? Do you want your complacent, critical, cranky, carnal Christian husband to become a true man of God? Then, begin manifesting a gentle and quiet spirit.

When I was eighteen years old, I heard a story I will never forget. Dawson McAllister, at that time one of the greatest youth speakers in the world, was speaking on dating and marriage and the overemphasis that youth place on looks. He talked about the recent Miss America who was fulfilling her reigning tour when she was thrown through the windshield of her vehicle. The most beautiful woman in America instantaneously became a vegetable. McAllister asked the young man in the audience if we would still be interested in having this woman as our wife. He then made the riveting point that we must marry for more than physical attractiveness because it could be taken away in a matter of seconds. What ultimately matters is the eternal character and godliness of the person that you marry.

Peter next provides an illustration to back up the importance of submission. He writes: **“For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord,²³ and you have become her children²⁴ if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear”** (3:5–6).²⁵ Peter refers to “women” (plural) who exemplified in the Old Testament submission. His language implies that all the “holy women . . . who hoped in God” were submissive to their husbands. It is an assumed fact. But here Peter singles out Sarah as his primary example. His selection requires a brief bit of background. Sarah followed Abraham from the city of Ur. God eventually changed her name from Sarai (“bitter,” Gen 16:6) to Sarah (“princess,” Gen 17:15). Before her name change, however, she was a contentious wife. She constantly fought with Abraham. Even though Sarai was strikingly beautiful, she was ugly on the inside. She was bitter because she did not have a son. God, in His grace, gave her a son (Gen 17:15f; 18:12f). She relaxed in God’s grace (Rom 4:16f). What eventually happened to Sarai? God said, “I promise.” Sarah believed that promise, and the anxious, bitter woman became a beautiful woman. Peter shows us how Sarah became an example of a woman who developed inner beauty.

How was Sarah able to obey Abraham and call him “lord?”²⁶ Sarah had learned to distinguish personality from position. Submission comes out of a response to another’s position and not their personality.²⁷ The phrase “without being frightened by any fear”²⁸ suggests an emotional state that is easily rattled by problems and quickly alarmed by the “what ifs” of life: What if things don’t work out? What if we run out of money? What if my husband makes a bad decision? What if I lose my job? What if our children get sick? What if we can’t find a place to live? Wife, if you are not careful, those legitimate questions can become so huge in your mind that they completely destroy your gentle and quiet spirit that God esteems in you. You can give in to fear or you can have a gentle and quiet spirit, but you can’t have both at the same time.²⁹

Perhaps you’re thinking: It’s too late for me. I’m already married to the wrong man. Have hope and leave room for the grace of God. If you operate on the grace of God, you can change your situation. Your responsibility is to follow Sarah’s example and become one of her daughters. In our churches today we need to form some “Sarah Societies.” The purpose of a Sarah Society would be to develop inner beauty by following Sarah’s example. This occurs when mothers and grandmothers tell their children and grandchildren that *honor begins at home*. This occurs when older women mentor younger women in how to be a godly wife and mother. I recognize that this may seem old-fashioned to some readers; however, the godly family is the foundation of society. When the family falters, society fails.

[Peter’s first directive is: “wives honor your husbands by submitting.” His second directive is . . .]

2. Husbands, honor your wives by understanding (3:7). Men, I know you’ve been enjoying my words to your wives, but now pay attention as the shoe is put on the other foot. Peter is going to serve you up some strong medicine as well! In a single verse³⁰ he insists that the greatest way a husband can honor the Lord is by living with his wife in a sensitive and thoughtful manner. Peter puts it like this: **“You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”**³¹ Peter once again uses the conjunction “in the same way” (*homoios*) this time in reference to husbands. In this case he links back to 2:21–25 where he paints a magnificent portrait of Christ as our suffering Redeemer. Notice especially how relevant these verses are to the marriage relationship. Christ “suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps” (2:21). So husbands who are suffering with their wives can’t go around thinking, “Yeah, well that’s Jesus. If I were Jesus I

could live with my wife too.” No, we are to follow “in His steps.” It gets even better in 2:23: “and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously.” Jesus could have said, “I’m not going to have any human beings talk to Me this way. I’m not going to have them treat Me this way. Don’t they know who I am? I could take them out with a word.” Jesus could have done that, but, He didn’t retaliate or make threats. Instead, “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross” (2:24). When you are willing to bear stripes for someone else, that’s when you start to understand the meaning of love. Husbands, are you will to bear stripes for your wife?

Peter’s first exhortation to his readers is to “live with your wives.” The phrase “live with” (*sunoikeo*) joins the Greek words “house” and “together.” In other words, husbands are to be homemakers too! Peter is saying that husbands are responsible for the intimacy thermostat in the home. Husbands will have to answer for the “close togetherness” of the marital relationship. Therefore, make spending time with your wife a top priority. And, when you are together ensure that you share your life with your wife. It’s been said if people are books, then some people let themselves be read from cover to cover while others reveal only their title page. Many women know the pain of living with a husband who is a closed book. Men, your wives want to know you for the intimacy and closeness that fosters in your relationship. If you shut them out they will either become bitter and nag you or become hurt and distant themselves from you.

So, how are husbands “to live with their wives?” By relating to them “in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman.” The phrase “in an understanding way” literally means “according to knowledge” (*kata gnosis*). Peter is calling husbands to study the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of their wives. Husband, do you know your wife’s hopes, dreams, and goals? Do you know what her specific needs and desires are? Do you know what the greatest stress is in her life? Do you know how your economic situation affects her? Do you know the challenges that she is having with your children or her job? Do you know your wife’s monthly cycle? Do you know how this cycle affects her physically, mentally, and emotionally? Are you acquainted with her past? A lot of you men don’t realize that when you married your wife, you married your wife’s history as well. Some women enter marriage deeply bruised and broken from abuse or neglect from previous relationships. Although these scars may be hidden, they exist, and sooner or later, they will reveal themselves. Men, you must study your wife and know her issues.

Husband, is there anything or anyone in your life (with the exception of Christ) who receives more careful and consistent study from you than your wife? In other words, are you a faithful, lifelong learner of your vocation, your hobby, or a particular interest while your wife takes a backseat? Does the Bible’s study project (e.g., “understanding your wife”) suffer because of all your other interests? If so, you are failing in the most important area of all. The Bible tells husbands to study the Word and their wives. Both can be difficult to understand and interpret, but both yield the greatest returns in time and in eternity. Unfortunately, the sad truth is, we as husbands, give little time and energy to these two most significant pursuits of our life. But if we, as men of God, make the study of the Word and our wives our passion, we will transform our families, churches, and nation.

Peter says we are to understand and study our wives because they are a “weaker vessel.” In what sense is the wife weaker than the husband? Is she weaker mentally? Obviously not. Many women are more intelligent than their husbands. Is she emotionally weaker? Many women are stronger emotionally than their husbands. Is the wife physically weaker? There are some aspects of physiology in females that are stronger than males. Women seem to be able to take more pain than men. If men had to bear children mankind would have ceased to exist millennia ago! They would talk about the pain of childbearing for the rest of their lives! The immediate context seems

to indicate that Peter has in mind the emotional aspect of a woman's makeup.³² The secret is long out: God created men and women differently. With that in mind, a woman can be likened to a soft-boiled egg (while men are of the hard-boiled variety). That precious soft-boiled egg needs to be nurtured and protected because it is extremely fragile and tender. Husbands, this requires recognition on our part. We must understand that our wives are emotional creatures who we may not always understand.

Husbands are also admonished to "show" honor to their wives.³³ The word "show" (*aponemo*) has a special significance. Classical Greek writers always used it in reference to what was due from one person to another. Showing honor to your wife is not simply a "nice guy" thing to do. It is the husband's recognition of her because it is her due. This emphasis is reiterated in the word "honor" (*time*), which is sometimes translated as "price" or "precious." The word is used to describe something which is a great treasure, such as a precious stone. Such treasures should be granted the ultimate in care and protection. Honor indicates value and esteem. It suggests the giving of respect because a wife is precious to her husband. How can you honor your wife?

First, give your wife time. There is no greater gift you can give your wife than the gift of your undivided attention. Did you know that women file for divorce twice as often as men do? The most common reason women give for leaving their husbands is "mental cruelty." When legal grounds for divorce are stated about half feel they have been emotionally abused. But the mental cruelty they describe is rarely the result of their husband's efforts to drive them crazy. It's usually a feeling that their husband doesn't talk to them or doesn't seem to care much about what they say. Another reason for divorce which is reported almost as much as mental cruelty is "neglect." It involves emotional abandonment and physical abandonment. Husbands whose work may take them away from their wives for weeks at a time fall in to this category. Astonishingly few women choose divorce because of physical abuse, infidelity, alcoholism, criminal behavior, fraud or other serious issues. It is always amazing how many women stay in a marriage that jeopardizes their physical safety. The number one reason is: "My husband is no longer my friend." "The only time he pays attention to me is when he wants sex." "He is never there for me when I need him the most." "He lives his life as if we weren't married; he rarely considers me." "I hurt all the time because I feel alone and abandoned." "We're like two ships passing in the night—he goes his way and I go mine." "My husband has become a stranger to me, I don't even know who he is anymore." "He doesn't show any interest in me or what I do."³⁴

Secondly, speak well of your wife. Some husbands criticize everything their wives do. Their insecurity is the driving force behind this. They bolster their own insecurity by minimizing their wives. They criticize her cooking. They belittle her dress. Instead, husbands ought to speak kind and affirming words both privately and in public,³⁵ building her up for everything that she does big or small. Make sure as well, husbands, that you affirm your love and commitment in front of your children. If dad is a great lover, his boys will be great lovers too. If dad does not show much love for their mother, they will behave the same way toward their wives. Like begets like.

Our verse closes with a threat. As husbands, we are to carry out the above two responsibilities or risk our prayers bouncing off the ceiling. The word translated "hinder" (*egkopto*) means "to strike" or even "to cut off." This closing phrase packs a punch: Husbands who fail to live with their wives in an understanding way, giving due honor to her will face an interruption in their spiritual lives. We may illustrate this by a telephone conversation. The husband begins praying, "Hello, God. I appreciate all you have done for me this past week. Thank you for blessing my business. I have a need. I would appreciate it if you will hear my petition?" At this point he hears a click. God hangs up the phone on him. He has not dealt with a central issue—his relationship with his wife. God will not hear him as long as that domestic problem is there.

To put it bluntly, you can't ignore your wife and get through to God. The Almighty takes the side of the weaker vessel! So, many husbands need to get up off their knees because their prayers are being hindered. First, you need to make things right with your wife. To put it another way, a husband's spiritual health depends, in significant measure, on the way he treats his wife.

This leads to the question, why such severity? The answer is found in how the Bible understands the marriage relationship. In the Old Testament, Israel is the wife of God. In the New Testament the church is the bride of Christ. Therefore, there is a whole lot riding on how husbands (Christ) treat their wives (the church). When our society looks at our marriages, do they see Jesus Christ? Do we as husbands love and cherish our wives in such an obvious manner that the unbelieving world stands up and takes notice? If not, this may attest to why there are so many Christian marriages and families in America and so little impact and influence. By God's grace may we turn the tide and make a difference in our families, churches, and nation.

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Scripture References

1 Peter 3:1–7
1 Peter 2:21–25
1 Peter 3:8–12
1 Timothy 2:8–15
Ephesians 4:17–32
Titus 2:1–8
Proverbs 31:10–31

Study Questions

1. In what specific ways am I submissive to my husband (1 Peter 3:1a)? Would my husband say that I am generally “submissive?” Why or why not? How has God used my behavior to spiritually influence my husband? Have there been any notable improvements in my character in the past twelve months? Am I as short tempered as I always was? Am I still as critical as I was? Do I nag like I used to?
2. How much time do I spend on my physical appearance vs. my spiritual growth (1 Peter 3:3–4)? Am I more beautiful outside or inside? How would my husband answer this question? Would those who know me best indicate that I have a “gentle and quiet spirit?” What steps can I take this week to ensure that I cultivate this type of spirit?
3. What Old Testament women do I look up to (1 Peter 3:5–6)? Why are these women so impressive to me? What can I learn from their successes and failures? Who are some of my contemporary female examples? What character qualities do these women possess? Is there a woman who I deeply respect that I can ask to mentor me in a Titus 2:3–5 type relationship?
4. As a husband, how have I lived with my wife in an “understanding way” (1 Peter 3:7)? Give concrete examples. How have I failed in this area? How have I considered my wife’s weakness? How have I honored her? What can I do to grow in these areas? Will I contact a godly husband that I look up to this week and ask for some prayer and direction?
5. In what ways have my prayers been hindered when I have been out of fellowship with my wife (1 Peter 3:7)? Martin Luther once said, “Let the wife make her husband glad to come home and let him make her sorry to see him leave.” Does this describe my marriage? Why or why not? How can I take personal responsibility to fulfill my role in my marriage?

Twelve Rules for a Happy Marriage by Ann Landers

1. Never both be angry at once.
2. Never yell at each other unless the house is on fire.
3. Remember that it takes two to make an argument. The one who is wrong is the one who will be doing most of the talking.
4. Yield to the wishes of the other—as an exercise in self-discipline, if you can’t think of a better reason.
5. You have a choice between making yourself or your mate look good—choose your mate.
6. If you feel you must criticize, do so lovingly.
7. Never bring up a mistake of the past.
8. Neglect the whole world rather than each other.
9. Never let the day end without saying at least one complimentary thing to your life partner.
10. Never meet without an affectionate greeting.
11. When you’ve made a mistake, talk it out and ask for forgiveness.
12. Never go to bed mad.

Notes

¹ Quoted in Dwight Edwards, “The Life that Lasts: A Verse by Verse Study through 1 Peter”: www.bible.org; accessed 26 September 2011.

² Kent Crockett, *The 911 Handbook* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), 86.

³ Evidently Peter took his wife along on some of his missionary travels (1 Cor 9:5). We don’t know a lot about Peter’s marriage, but we can assume that it wasn’t easy to be married to an apostle—especially one with Simon Peter’s temperament.

⁴ Peter recognized that in the majority of cases, it is the husband who is unsaved. Yet, the same principles apply in the reverse situation of a Christian husband married to a non-Christian wife.

⁵ It is unfortunate that the male gender has abused the biblical concept of submission. Those men who use and abuse the biblical mandates of submission are obviously ignorant of their responsibility to place themselves in full submission to Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself showed us what biblical submission looked like in His earthly relationship with His Father. In John 10:30 Jesus said, “I and the Father are one,” yet later Jesus said, “The Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). How can this be reconciled? Quite simply: In John 10:30, Jesus claimed to be God (John 8:24, 58). In John 14:28, Jesus spoke of His official mission as the second person of the Trinity in human flesh, of which Paul said, “He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8). There is a logical chain of submission, which husbands, are most definitely a part of. Jesus submitted to His Father, the church submits to Christ, husbands submit to Christ, and wives submit to their husbands for Christ’s sake.

⁶ Peter says that wives are to be submissive to their “own husbands.” He is not asking women to submit to their best friend’s husband or any other man. Women are solely responsible for the respect (or lack thereof) they give their own husband.

⁷ The use of the word “disobedient” (*apeitheo*) is a strong term which often refers to a refusal on the part of an individual to believe the gospel (1 Pet 2:8; 3:20; 4:17; John 3:36). Grudem, *1 Peter*, argues: “Those who *do not obey the word* are husbands who are unbelievers; the present tense verb (*apeithousin*) suggests a pattern of life characterized by disobedience not only to the gospel but also to God’s standards in other areas of life. The word means not just that they ‘do not believe the word’ (NIV), but has a much stronger sense of active disobedience to the standards of Scripture and even rebellion against them (see note at 2:8 on *apeitheo*, ‘disobey’).”

⁸ The term “won” (*kerdaino*) is used frequently to describe success in missionary endeavors (Matt 18:15; 1 Cor 9:19–22).

⁹ Grudem remarks: “The Gk. text includes no word for ‘their’ (Peter could have made it clear with *auton*), leaving open the possibility that Peter intends to say that unbelieving husbands will be won not simply by seeing the submissive behaviour of their own wives but by observing the pattern of Christian marriage exemplified by wives generally within the Christian community.”

¹⁰ Grudem notes: “The form of expression is exactly the same in the Gk. text, with the comparatively unusual use of a participle to express a command in both cases . . . The similarity intended is apparently in motive (‘for the Lord’s sake’, 2:13), in extent of application (to good or harsh masters, 2:18, or husbands, 3:1), and in attitude (with healthy apprehension of their displeasure [or fear of God], 2:18 and 3:2), as well as in the main concept of submission to an authority (2:18 and 3:1).” Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988), Electronic ed.

¹¹ Grant C. Richison, “1st Epistle of Peter,” in *Grace Notes*.

¹² Eaton writes: “Most men are powerfully influenced by feminine submissiveness. I can certainly testify that (other things being equal) any woman—wife, daughter, friend, church-member—could probably get what she wants from me if she is sweet and feminine. But aggressive ‘toughness’ is likely to rouse masculine resentment.” Michael Eaton, *1 Peter*. Preaching Through the Bible (Kent: Sovereign World, 2010), 64-65.

¹³ Edwards, “The Life that Lasts.”

¹⁴ Peter loves the word *anastrophe* (“behavior”). He uses it eight times out of its thirteen NT occurrences (1 Pet 1:15, 18; 2:12; 3:1, 2, 16; 2 Pet 2:7; 3:11).

¹⁵ I’m not certain that this refers only to “unbelieving” husbands. It seems to be more general, referring to those who are disobedient to the word. They are “won” to obedience, which may or may not include salvation. In any case, if Peter’s words apply even to a hostile, unbelieving husband, surely they apply to all other husbands as well.

¹⁶ BDAG s.v. *epopteuo*: “to pay close attention to, *watch, observe, see.*”

¹⁷ Charles R. Swindoll, *The Grace Awakening* (Dallas: Word, [1990] 1996), 256.

¹⁸ Marshall comments: “Warnings against feminine vanity and sexual provocation expressed in cosmetics and dress are well known in Scripture (Isaiah 3:18-24; Prov 3:25-27; 1 Tim 2:9-10; Rev 17:4), and can also be paralleled from contemporary literature.” I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter*. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, [2003] 2006), Electronic ed. Davids provides additional insight into the culture of the time: “Yet both Jewish and pagan writers often advised men to prohibit their wives from dressing up. The Jewish *Testament of Reuben* 5:5 states: ‘...order your wives and your daughters not to adorn their heads and their appearances so as to deceive men’s sound minds.’ With this sentiment the Stoics Seneca and Epictetus agreed. Epictetus said: ‘Immediately after they are fourteen [i.e., at puberty, when they were eligible for marriage], women are called ‘ladies’ by men. So when they see that they have nothing else but only to be the bedfellows of men, they begin to beautify themselves, and put all their hopes in that. It is worthwhile for us to take pains, therefore, to make them understand that they are honored for nothing else but only for appearing modest and self-respecting.” Peter H. Davids, “1 Peter” in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*: Volume 4, Hebrews to Revelation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 136.

¹⁹ The adjective “gentle” (*praus*) only occurs three other times in the NT (Matt 5:5; 11:29; 21:5), twice referring to Christ.

²⁰ Since men often displayed their wealth and social status in the dress of their wives, some “outward adornment” might be the wishes of a husband, and thus, an expression of submission. Richison, “1st Epistle of Peter” writes: “Women of the Roman Empire were addicted to ridiculous extravagance with their hair. They were afraid to touch their hair because it took so long to do. Many had wigs, often blond. Archaeologists found some of these wigs in the catacombs. They made their hairstyles of ivory and gold studded with gems. Women in the Roman world would spend many hours braiding their hair. Sometime they would pile their hair three feet high. Hair that high is hard to carry around all day! They had to constantly keep themselves in balance. At night they had to prop themselves up so as not to disturb their hair. They could not put their head on a pillow. They put fantastic emphasis on outer beauty.”

²¹ Davids, “1 Peter,” 136.

²² Since Peter uses the adjective *aphthartos* (“imperishable”) without a noun following it, some noun must be supplied by the reader from the context. E.g., “imperishable quality” (NASB; HCSB); “imperishable beauty” (ESV); “lasting beauty” (NET; NRSV); “unfading beauty” (NIV).

²³ Davids, “1 Peter,” 137 writes: “This refers to Genesis 18:12, ‘After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?’ The Hebrew word for ‘master’ (*’adonai*) can mean that, but it is also a typical Hebrew word for husband (‘husband’ is probably the better translation in Genesis). In the Greek version of the Old Testament, *’adonai* was translated by *kyrios*, a word meaning ‘sir,’ ‘master,’ or ‘lord,’ which allows Peter to make his point that Sarah thought of her husband respectfully (even if in Genesis she is laughing at God’s promise when she does so).” However, it is more likely that Jobes is correct when she writes: “In Gen. 18:12 LXX Sarah refers to Abraham as her κύριος (*kyrios*, master, lord), though she does not directly address him by that term. This noun is the only lexical connection between the story of Sarah and Peter’s claim, for the LXX does not use any verb meaning ‘obey’ with respect to Sarah’s relationship with Abraham. To the contrary, the Genesis story has Abraham obeying his wife three times (Gen. 16:2, 6; 21:12), which apparently embarrassed both Philo and Josephus, Jewish writers living in Greco-Roman society (Sly 1991). Nevertheless, the submission of Sarah to Abraham was a long-standing element of Jewish tradition . . . The apostle Peter is most likely simply drawing on Jewish interpretive tradition and would not have intended a choice of any one passage from Genesis or any other text in order to understand his reference to Sarah. In Jewish tradition Sarah is a virtuous woman, and virtuous women are understood to be obedient to their husbands.” Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 205.

²⁴ For the thought of being the offspring of Abraham see Matt 3:9; Rom 4:11–12; Jas 2:21.

²⁵ Davids, “1 Peter,” 137 writes: “The allusion is to Proverbs 3:25–26 (‘Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared’), which uses two of the same Greek words as 1 Peter 3:6.”

²⁶ Peter does not seem to be referring to any one specific incident here, for the main verb and both participles in 3:5 all indicate a continuing pattern of conduct during one’s life. Grudem, *1 Peter*, writes: “The aorist tense here for ‘obeyed’ need not refer only to one incident, for the aorist indicative is frequently

used in a ‘constative’ sense simply to say that something ‘happened’, with no implication of whether it happened at one point in time or over a very long period of time (cf. the aorist indicatives in Eph. 5:25, ‘Christ loved the church’; Rom. 5:14, ‘death reigned from Adam to Moses’; Rev. 20:4, ‘they ... reigned with Christ a thousand years’; also BDF, sec. 332). Selwyn (p. 185) and Kelly (p. 131) say that Peter is referring to Gen. 18:12, but this is hardly likely since no obedience to Abraham is mentioned in the passage, and Sarah is there speaking to herself, not to Abraham.”

²⁷ Edwards, “The Life that Lasts.”

²⁸ This is the only occurrence of this word translated “fear” (*ptoesis*) in the NT.

²⁹ Ray Pritchard, “Inner Beauty” (1 Pet 3:1–6): www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/2005-02-06-Inner-Beauty; accessed 1 October 2011.

³⁰ Verse seven, which deals with the husband’s role in marriage, is loaded with as much content as the previous six.

³¹ Grudem, *1 Peter*, notes: “The NIV unfortunately obscures the evident reference to God’s discipline in the passive verb [‘be hindered’ in the Greek] and imports another idea, ‘so that nothing will hinder your prayers’—suggesting to the reader, perhaps, that human interference is in view, from interpersonal conflict or emotional turmoil, etc.)”

³² Davids, *1 Peter*, 122–23. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 143–44 writes: “Peter does not specify the way in which he understands the woman to be *the weaker sex*, but the context would make it appropriate for him to have in mind any kind of weakness of which husbands would need to be cautioned not to take advantage. This would certainly include the idea that, by and large, women are physically weaker than men (i.e. if men tried they usually could overpower their wives physically). But the context also shows that women are ‘weaker’ in terms of authority in the marriage (3:1, 5–6), and Peter therefore directs husbands that instead of misusing their authority for selfish ends they should use it to ‘bestow honour’ on their wives. Yet there may also be a third sense of ‘weakness’ which would fit the context (because it is something husbands should not take advantage of), namely, a greater emotional sensitivity. While this is something which is also a great strength, it none the less means that wives are often more likely to be hurt deeply by conflict within a marriage, or by inconsiderate behaviour on the part of the husband. Knowing this, Christian husbands should not be ‘harsh’ (Col. 3:19) or fill their marriage relationship with criticism and conflict, but should rather be positive and affirming, ‘living together in an understanding way’, and ‘bestowing honour on the feminine one, as the weaker sex’.”

³³ Honoring the wife was a radical innovation in the ancient world. This was foreign to their thinking because women were next to cows in esteem. The Greek and Roman religions did not allow women to attend worship services in their temples. The only exception was the prostitute because she was the center of religion in the temple. Even in Judaism women had to sit behind a lattice or screen in the Synagogue.

³⁴ Willard F. Harley Jr., “Why Women Leave Men,” in *New Man* July/Aug 1996, 69.

³⁵ The NIV’s “treat them with respect” is too weak—one can treat someone with detached, formal “respect” and yet give no special honor to the person at all.