

“FAMILY Harmony”

1 Peter 3:1-8a

September 17, 2023

INTRO: Let me give you a couple considerations to ponder:

*“Don’t let what you don’t know...
interfere with what you DO know. - Pastor Mike Gilliom*

and at the same time...

*“Don’t let what you do KNOW...
lead you to forget what others don’t know. - JDP*

Are you able to harmonize those two thoughts?

Ephesians 3:7-10a

*7Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. 8To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, 10so that **through the church** the **manifold wisdom** of God might now be made known...*

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

- ~ 1st Peter: “No Matter What!”
- ~ 2 parts of 1st Peter...
- ~ 3 aspects of HARMONY (*Finally, Family, Finding*)

harmony

[hahr-muh-nee]

noun, plural har·mo·nies.

1. agreement; accord; harmonious relations.
2. a consistent, orderly, or pleasing arrangement of parts; congruity.
3. *Music*.
 - a. any simultaneous combination of tones.
 - b. the simultaneous combination of tones, especially when blended into chords pleasing to the ear; chordal structure, as distinguished from melody and rhythm.
 - c. the science of the structure, relations, and practical combination of chords.
4. an arrangement of the contents of the Gospels, either of all four or of the first three, designed to show their parallelism, mutual relations, and differences.

BIG IDEA: Holy families
are harmony families...
(because righteous heads, hearts, & hands
unify in righteous oikos/homes!)

PREVIEW: 3 keys to Family Harmony...

1. **Thankful Likewise**

2. **Total Lordship**

3. **Truthful Loving**

TEXT:

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, 2when they see your respectful and pure conduct. 3Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— 4but 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. 5For this is how the **holy women** who hoped in God used to **adorn themselves, by submitting** to their own husbands, 6as 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**.

8**Finally, all of you, have unity/harmony of mind,**

I. Thankful **LIKEWISE**

A. **Likewise, wives...** v.1

~ Same as 1:1 – 2:10

~ Same as 2:11 – 2:25

B. **Likewise, husbands...** v.7

~ Same as 1:1 – 2:10

~ Same as 2:11 – 3:6

C. **Finally, ALL of you...** v.8

~ Same as 1:1 – 2:10

~ Same as 2:11 – 3:7

VIDEO: *“4 Fold Family of God”*

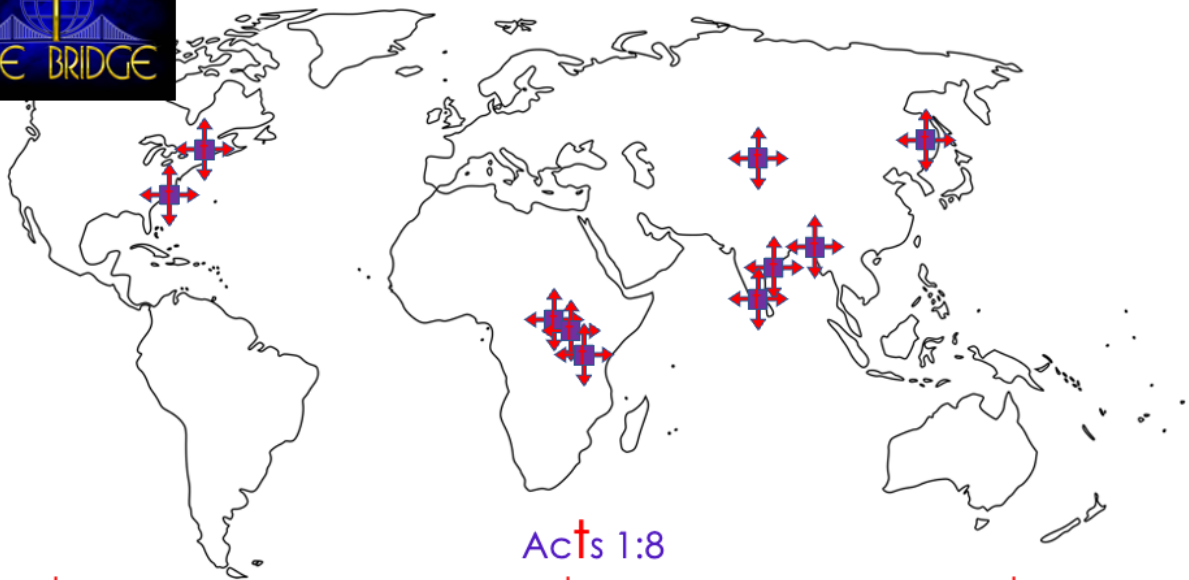
Ephesians 4:1-7

Unity in the Body of Christ

1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, **2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, **3** eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **7** But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.

II. Total LORDSHIP





Acts 1:8

"But you will receive power when My Holy Spirit comes on you and you will BE My witnesses...
locally, regionally, and globally." – Jesus the Christ

VIDEO: *"100 Plus Beloved Blessings"*

III. Truthful **LOVING**

John 14:15

***"If you love Me you will OBEY
My commandments."***

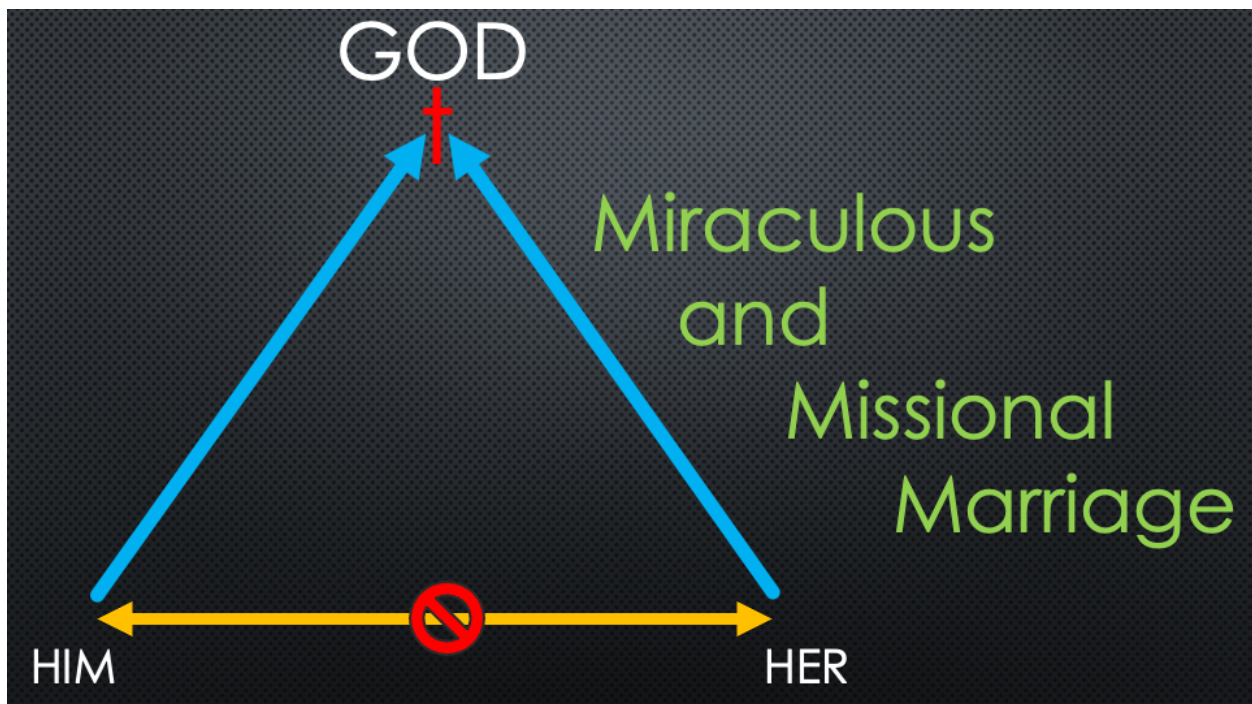
A. **WIVES:** BE... Submissive, Missional, Respectful, Pure, Modest in motives and appearance... have a Christlike heart... BE meek and peace-filled, holy... Put your hope in God... BE obedient to your husband, fearless... and harmonizing!

B. **HUSBANDS:** BE... wise, compassionate, respectful and honoring to your wife... BE a family leader... protective, prayerful... and harmonizing!

Ephesians 5:1-2

Walk in Love

1Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.



Remember: the absence of a fight is not the same as the presence of peace.

-JDP

REVIEW:

Holy families
are harmony families...
(because righteous heads, hearts, & hands
unify in righteous oikos/homes!)

The 3 keys to Family Harmony...

1. **Thankful Likewise**
2. **Total Lordship**
3. **Truthful Loving**

CLOSE:

*The family that truly pursues
biblical-holiness together...
will find and live in God's
promised and treasured
harmony together.*

PRAYER

WORSHIP: *"Defender" & "If The Lord Builds The House"*

harmony

[hahr-muh-nee]

noun, plural **har·mo·nies**.

3. agreement; accord; harmonious relations.
4. a consistent, orderly, or pleasing arrangement of parts; congruity.
5. *Music*.
 - a. any simultaneous combination of tones.
 - b. the simultaneous combination of tones, especially when blended into chords pleasing to the ear; chordal structure, as distinguished from melody and rhythm.
 - c. the science of the structure, relations, and practical combination of chords.
6. an arrangement of the contents of the Gospels, either of all four or of the first three, designed to show their parallelism, mutual relations, and differences.

[Ephesians 3:7-10](#)

What is the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10)?

The apostle Paul never missed a teaching opportunity. In [Ephesians 3:1–13](#), he interrupted his own prayer to expound on the divine mystery of God revealed in the New Testament church of Jesus Christ. The previously hidden secret was now made known—both Jews and Gentiles would share equally in the [gospel](#) of salvation (verse 6). God had a specific purpose for using the church in this way: “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord” ([Ephesians 3:10–11](#)).

The word translated “manifold” in [Ephesians 3:10](#) means “many and varied; having many features and forms; wrought in various colors; diversified, intricate, complex, many-sided.”
God’s wisdom in His extraordinary plan of salvation, as seen in the new and mysterious creation of the church, is a multi-faceted, many-colored, culturally diverse, rich, and beautiful community of believers. There is no other human co-op like it in the world.

According to Bible commentators, “the manifold wisdom of God” is a poetic and artistic expression suggesting the intricate nature of an embroidered pattern as in Joseph’s “tunic of many colors” ([Genesis 37:3](#), NKJV). Each member of the body of Christ manifests a different aspect of God’s image ([Genesis 1:26–27](#); [James 3:9](#); [Ephesians 4:24](#)). Together, believers form a perfect blend of harmony and diversity. The many features, forms, and colors of fellowship in the church reflect the manifold wisdom of God.

For the earliest Christians, and particularly the Jews, the up-to-that-time secret mystery of the church was truly a mind-blowing revelation. Even “the unseen rulers and

authorities in the heavenly places” were learning about it for the first time. To the Romans, Paul declared, “Oh, how great are God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways!” ([Romans 11:33, NLT](#)).

Paul referred to the church as “the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people. To them, God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory”
(Colossians 1:26–27).

God’s mystery is Christ “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” ([Colossians 2:3](#)). Jesus possesses the manifold wisdom of God ([1 Corinthians 1:24, 30](#)) and reveals it to the world through [His body, the church](#). We have Christ in us—the hope of glory.

It still astonishes and overwhelms that God has chosen to package the treasure of His manifold wisdom in fragile, human

"jars of clay" (2 Corinthians 4:7–11).

The Bible reveals the manifold wisdom of God as unsearchable, deep, and beyond measure ([Isaiah 40:28](#); [Psalm 92:5](#); [147:5](#)). James describes it as "wisdom from above," which is "first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere" ([James 3:17, NLT](#)). On the other hand, human wisdom has no merit of its own ([1 Corinthians 1:19–21](#); [Isaiah 29:14](#)). Nevertheless, [God gives His wisdom](#) to humans as a gift ([Proverbs 2:6](#); [1 Corinthians 2:6–16](#); [James 1:5](#)), and His followers are to continue praying and asking Him for spiritual wisdom ([Colossians 1:9](#)).

As believers, we can picture the manifold wisdom of God as a global, body of Christ-shaped tapestry. Our individual lives are the various colored threads woven together in unity of purpose—to display God's manifold wisdom through the church. We do this by taking the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ to all the people of the world.

The word manifold in the original language means to be multi-colored. It was used when describing the many colors of a painting or a tapestry in the ancient world. When speaking about God's wisdom it describing the many angles, hues, and dimensions of God's knowledge and its application to all things.

NASB Commentary: Schreiner

Wives, Submit to Husbands (3:1–6)

¹Wives, 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 behavior of their wives, ²when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. ³Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. ⁴Instead, 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.⁵ 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,⁶ 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.

Peter concentrated in the household code on those in the relationship who have less power. For instance, masters are not addressed at all, and wives receive an exhortation of six verses, whereas husbands are addressed in one verse. It is probably also the case that the "weaker" member of the pair is addressed because their vulnerable stance is representative of the church as a whole. **Just as slaves and wives lived under the rule of masters and husbands, so too the Petrine believers were subject to persecution from other members of their cultural circle.** Achtemeier may be correct in suggesting that the exemplary role of slaves and wives, which fits the suffering in the Petrine churches, explains why masters are not addressed at all and husbands are instructed in one verse.

Wives are enjoined to submit, and it is evident from v. 1 that the wives of unbelievers are particularly in view, although it is likely that all wives are in view as well.

Peter hoped that submission and godly behavior would become the means by which unbelieving husbands would be converted to the Christian faith.

In vv. 3–4 Peter gave advice that was quite typical for moralists in the Greco-Roman world. Wives should repudiate expensive attire and ostentatious and expensive hairstyles and jewelry. **God desires inner beauty consisting of a gentle and quiet spirit.**

The exhortation to wives is supported in vv. 5–6 by an appeal to godly women of the Old Testament era. Such women obeyed and respected their husbands and focused on inner adornment.

Peter concluded by saying that the women of the Petrine community were truly daughters of Sarah if they pursued a life of goodness and conquered any fear of others.

3:1 Peter continued to address various segments of the church, concentrating on those with less power, and so now he turns to wives, introducing the discussion with the words ***“in the same way” (homoiōs)***. The term does not suggest that the relationship between wives and husbands is like that of slaves and masters. Instead, it should be understood as “a connective” meaning no more than the conjunction “and.”¹²³

The address is not to women in general but to wives as the words “your own husbands” (NASB, *tois idiois andrasin*) demonstrate. **Wives are exhorted to submit (hypotassomenai) to their husbands, just as citizens should submit to ruling authorities (2:13) and slaves to their masters (2:18).**

*Voluntary submission is in view here.*¹²⁵
Husbands do not have the responsibility to ensure that wives submit to them.

The participle **“submitting” (translating literally) functions as an imperative here.** It is difficult to see, against Achtemeier, how the participle could modify the imperatives in 2:17, for the latter verse is quite distant from the present verse. Peter did, however, continue in the vein of the instructions in 2:13–25.

Peter’s words are addressed in particular to wives with unbelieving husbands—“even if some of them do not obey the word” (NRSV). Still, **all wives are addressed, not only**

those with disobedient husbands, for the words “even if” (NASB) may indicate that the majority of the husbands were believers.¹²⁹

The NIV wrongly translates with the words “do not believe” instead of “do not obey,” but the verb in question (*apeitheō*) focuses on disobedience rather than unbelief.

In fact, it is a favorite term of Peter’s. First Peter 2:8 also refers to disobedience to the word; 4:17, to those who disobey the gospel; and 3:20, to those who disobeyed during the days of Noah.

The “word” (*logos*) here, as in 2:8, refers to the gospel. All disobedience, of course, stems from unbelief, but the emphasis here is on the rebellion of husbands who refuse to adhere to the gospel. Again the parallel to what is said about slaves is **noteworthy, for just as slaves are to submit to morally bankrupt masters (2:18), so Christian wives are called on to submit to unbelieving husbands.**

Many commentators argue that Peter’s advice to wives should be understood within the same framework as his counsel to slaves. In both cases he commends submission, but in neither instance does he endorse the patriarchal institution that enforces submission.¹³² Wives are to submit to unbelieving husbands because this is the means by which husbands can be “won”

(*kerdēthēsontai*) for the faith. Peter knew, according to this view, that it would be futile to try to overturn the social structure of his day, and his primary concern was the conversion of unbelieving husbands, not the pursuit of female rights.

Hence, submission is commended for the sake of the mission of the church, but Peter, these scholars insist, did not actually sanction the idea that wives should submit to their husbands. He addressed a particular situation in which he explained how wives should relate to *unbelieving* husbands.

It is certainly the case that the wives of unbelieving husbands are addressed in these verses, and their primary objective is to win their husbands to the Christian faith. Peter engaged in a play on words, saying that those who are disobeying “the word” (*logos*) may be converted “without words” (lit., “without a word,” *aneu logou*) by their wives’ behavior. By “without a word” meant wives should refrain from badgering their husbands about their need for conversion.

The spoken words of wives had not had an effect, and so they were called upon to live out the gospel before their husbands. The primary influence on

husbands will not be the speech of wives but their godly behavior.

The word “behavior” (*anastrophē*) was a favorite of Peter’s, summarizing the godly conduct required of believers (cf. 1:15; 2:12; 3:2, 16 and by contrast 1:18).

We can agree, then, with those scholars who emphasize that Peter addressed specific circumstances. The question is whether we should infer from this text that wives should submit to husbands in today’s world. Is Peter’s advice limited to a missionary situation and a culture that is quite different from ours? Indeed, **some would argue that in our culture such advice would hinder the mission of the church rather than enhance it.** Achtemeier summarizes well the view of women among the educated in the Greco-Roman world: “Dominant among the elite was the notion that the woman was by nature inferior to the man. Because she lacked the capacity for reason that the male had, she was ruled rather by her emotions, and was as a result given to poor judgment, immorality, intemperance, wickedness, avarice; she was untrustworthy, contentious, and as a result, it was her place to obey.” What is remarkable about this list is that **nowhere did Peter or the rest of the New Testament teach that women are inferior to men, that they are intellectually substandard, or that they are more prone to wickedness. Indeed, Peter emphasized that wives are coheirs with husbands of eternal life (1 Pet 3:7),** implying the fundamental equality of men and women.

The equality of men and women is also proclaimed in Paul's affirmation in Gal 3:28.

The New Testament was countercultural, therefore, in promoting the equality of women. Indeed, Jesus' treatment of women was revolutionary in that he treated them with dignity and respect, and hence his stance toward women was paradigmatic for the early church.

The question, therefore, is not whether women are equal with men, for the New Testament is clear on this matter. The issue is whether such equality is compatible with the call for wives to submit to husbands. One answer, as we have seen, is to argue that such submission represents an accommodation to ancient culture for the purpose of evangelism. Such a reading of the text is certainly possible, and it might even be preferable if the only text we had on this matter were in 1 Peter. When we read the Scriptures canonically, however, it is doubtful whether the accommodation view can be sustained. **It is clear from Eph 5:22–33 that submission of wives to husbands is grounded in theology—in Christ's relationship with the church. It is not an accommodation to culture.**

The submission of wives to husbands mirrors the church's submission to Christ, and hence it should be accepted as a norm that transcends the culture of the first century.

We should also note a crucial difference between slavery and the admonition given to husbands and wives. **Slavery, as argued above, is an evil institution developed by human beings, while marriage, on the other hand, was instituted by God at creation.** It does not follow, therefore, that those who believe in the **submission of wives would also endorse slavery.** We must be careful to observe the distinctions between the two institutions, so that we do not confuse the human practice of slavery with the institution of marriage that was ordained by God.

It must also be said that **Peter gave no indication that the submission of wives is a temporary accommodation to the culture of his day.** He firmly rejects, as we have seen, the notion that women are unequal to men. Nor is there any indication that he equates submission with inequality. **The same Paul who trumpeted the equality of women in Gal 3:28 also commanded them to submit to their husbands in Eph 5:22–33 (cf. Col 3:18; Titus 2:4–5).** **Peter's words to women are remarkably similar, in that he teaches the equality of women (v. 7) and counsels submission (v. 1).**

*It seems fair to conclude that differences
in role or function do not cancel
out equality.*

*Men and women are equally made in God's
image (Gen 1:26–27), have equal access to
salvation (Gal 3:28), and share the same destiny
(1 Pet 3:7).*

Similarly, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is equal to the Father in essence, but he submits to the Father (1 Cor 15:28), revealing that he has a different role. The submission of wives, therefore, does not imply their inferiority. A different function does not suggest that they are lesser beings. Those who argue that a different function implies inequality betray a secular worldview that identifies worth with stature and the exercise of authority.

3:2 Verse 2 elaborates on what is involved in bringing unbelieving husbands to faith. Wives should not focus on speaking words to their husbands in attempting to persuade them to believe. Husbands are apt to be impressed with the Christian faith “as they observe your pure conduct” (my translation). Peter commended “seeing” (*epopteusantes*) rather than “talking” as the means by which wives should influence their husbands. The same term for “seeing” also appears in 2:12, and in both verses Peter also used the word “conduct” or “behavior” (*anastrophē*, “lives,” NIV in 3:2). **Unbelieving husbands may be alienated by wives who constantly beg them to become Christians. A better course is to live a faithful Christian life, and as they see the transformation of their wives,** they are more likely to be inclined to adopt the faith of their wives.

When Peter spoke of the “reverence of [the wives’] lives,” it should be noted that the word translated “reverence” is not actually an adjective, but in the Greek we have a prepositional phrase “in fear” (*en phobō*), so that a literal translation would be “as they observe your pure conduct in fear.” What should be emphasized here is that the fear is not directed to the husband, but as we saw in 2:18 (see commentary) “fear” in 1 Peter is always directed toward God. Peter was not suggesting, therefore, that wives should fear their husbands (cf. 3:6), nor was he even suggesting that wives should respect their husbands (though Paul commended such in Eph 5:33). Instead, **Peter’s point was that the good conduct of wives should stem from their relationship with God.**

Slaughter rightly says that

wives do not submit in order to satisfy a husband's vanity or to promote his reputation. Neither do they submit to show how godly they are, nor to avoid conflict, nor to impress the neighbors, nor to manipulate their husbands, and not even because she thinks he is wise. She submits because of her relationship with and trust in God.

We can also infer from this that the submission of wives is not absolute. If husbands require wives to disobey moral norms or follow another religion, then wives should disobey.

The exception implied here would be extraordinarily important to Peter's readers, for wives were expected to adopt the religion of their husbands in the Greco-Roman world. Plutarch said: "A wife should not acquire her own friends, but should make her husband's friends her own. The gods are the first and most significant friends. For this reason, it is proper for a wife to recognize only those gods whom her husband worships and to shut the door to superstitious cults and strange superstitions." The wives Peter addressed, then, would be considered socially radical in Peter's day since they had adopted a different religion from their husbands.

They are encouraged to submit to their husbands wherever possible, but there are limits to their submission. Even if it causes their husbands displeasure,

they should continue to be
part of the church
of Jesus Christ.

3:3 The NASB represents a literal translation of the verse, “Let not your adornment be merely [added for clarity] external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses.”

The admonition here is quite similar to what we find in 1 Tim 2:9–10.

We should also note that **it was common in the Greco-Roman world to admonish women to dress modestly instead of ostentatiously or seductively**. Writers such as Seneca, Dio Chrysostom, Juvenal, Plutarch, Epictetus, Pliny, and Tacitus wrote about this matter (cf. also *1 En.* 8:1–2; *T. Reu.* 5:1–5). For instance, Juvenal writes, “There is nothing that a woman will not permit herself to do, nothing that she deems shameful, when she encircles her neck with green emeralds and fastens pearls to her elongated ears; there is nothing more intolerable than a wealthy woman” (*Satires*, 6.457–60). Juvenal goes on to say about the hairstyles of women, “So important is the business of beautification; so numerous are the tiers and storeys piled one upon another on her head” (*Satires*, 4.501–3). In Plutarch we find a negative assessment of outward adornment and then the statement, “It is not gold or precious stones or scarlet that makes her such [i.e., decorous], but whatever invests her with that something which betokens dignity, good behavior, and modesty” (*Mor., Con. pr.* 141E). **What Peter wrote here, therefore, would not come as a shock to his readers. His admonition was in accord with the standpoint of many within the Greco-Roman world.**

Peter did not prohibit women from wearing their hair nicely or from wearing any jewelry at all. He prohibited them from spending an excessive amount of money on their outward adornment or from wearing clothing that is seductive.

Indeed, the Greek literally forbids the wearing of clothing at all (“the putting on of garments,” *hē endysis himatiōn*). Obviously, Peter was not recommending that women wear nothing at all. **His**

point was that they should not wear clothing that is exorbitantly expensive or immodest. Neither is there any contextual warrant for the notion that such adornment is forbidden because it was associated with idolatry, even though braiding of hair was featured in the cults of Isis and Artemis of Ephesus.

3:4

The adornment God desires is not external but internal.

Wives should not focus on hairstyle, jewelry, and clothing but on who they are in relationship to God, on their “inner self” (lit., “the hidden person of the heart,” *ho kryptos tēs kardias anthrōpos*).

What matters to God is not what people look like on the outside but their godly character. An echo of [1 Sam 16:7](#) may be found here:

“The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

Goppelt remarks,

“‘The hidden person’ is not the inner side of the person, but the whole human being as it is determined from within.”

In other words, what a person is on the inside does not remain hidden (as if Peter thought about some private and interior Christian life hidden from the world) but manifests itself in the way wives behave in everyday life. **In particular, women should strive for “a gentle and quiet spirit” inasmuch as these qualities are “incorruptible” (*aphthartos*, cf. 1:4, 23), whereas clothing, jewelry, and braided hair are transitory and will fade away.**

A “gentle” (*praus*) spirit is not only incumbent upon women but all believers (cf. Matt 5:5; 11:29; see esp. 1 Pet 3:16).

“Quietness” (*hēsychios*) is also required of women in 1 Tim 2:11 and is linked with submission.

Gentleness and a quiet spirit evidence the kind of godly behavior that will attract husbands to the faith, and they contrast with a verbal witness, which unbelieving husbands tend to view as irritating.

The word “which” may refer back only to the word “spirit,” but it likely includes the whole thought of v. 4.

Peter emphasized that a focus on internal adornment is not only attractive to husbands but is also “of great worth in God’s sight.”

The words “great worth” translate a term (*polyteles*) that comes from the financial realm, indicating that such godly qualities are “costly” (cf. Mark 14:3; 1 Tim 2:9; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.191; *J.W.* 1.605). Peter likely used this word to distinguish these qualities from the expensive clothing and ornamentation

desired by women in the Greco-Roman world. His use of the term is another indication that he opposed ostentatious clothing, hairstyles, and jewelry instead of forbidding such things altogether.

3:5 Verses 5–6 provide an example from holy women of the past to encourage the women of the Petrine churches to submit to their husbands with a gentle and quiet spirit.

These women are called “holy” (*hagiai*) because they lived in a way that was pleasing to God; they were set apart for his purposes (cf. Matt 27:52; Mark 8:38; Eph 3:5; 2 Pet 3:2). The reference to Sarah suggests that the women in view were Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, just as the patriarchs were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.¹⁵¹

The most important comment in the verse is that these women “put their hope in God” (*hai elpizousai eis theon*).

This comment is instructive, for it informs us that these women did not submit to their husbands because they believed their husbands were superior to them intellectually or spiritually.

They submitted to their husbands because they were confident that God would reward all those who put their trust in him.

A major theme of 1 Peter is sounded here, for...

the eschatological hope brings consolation in persecution (1:3–9), and believers are to set their hope completely

on the future revelation of Jesus Christ (1:13; cf. also 1:21; 3:15).

Such hope characterized the lives of the women of old, for they continued to hope in God during the vicissitudes of human existence. These holy women “used to adorn themselves” (NRSV, *ekosmoun heautas*) with the virtues of a gentle and quiet spirit (v. 4), and hence **they showed that their focus was not on external “adornment” (v. 3, NASB, *kosmos*) but on that which is internal.** We should note here the contrast between the two different kinds of adornment, and **the imperfect tense of the verb, reflected in the words “used to,” demonstrates that their adornment represented ongoing and habitual action in the past.**

The next phrase is wrongly translated by the NIV as an independent clause, “They were submissive to their own husbands.” The NRSV rightly sees that the participle is instrumental, explaining *how* the women adorned themselves, “by accepting the authority of their husbands.” **A better translation would be “by submitting [*hypotassomenai*] to their own husbands.”** Peter meant, of course, that they submitted to their husbands with the gentle and quiet spirit extolled in v. 4.

3:6 Verse 6 becomes even more specific, for now Sarah, the wife of Abraham, is introduced as an example for the women of Peter’s day. We should notice the logical connection between v. 5 and v. 6.

The holy women of old “submitted” to their husbands “as” (*hōs*) Sarah “obeyed” (*hypēkousen*) Abraham. The comparison demonstrates that the word “submit” includes the idea of obedience

(cf. Luke 2:51; Rom 8:7; 10:3; 13:1; 1 Cor 14:34, etc.).

Some object that obedience is an example but not a definition of submission.¹⁵⁵ Surely submission includes more than obedience, for the right spirit and attitude are also commended in v. 4. What must be noticed, however, is that nothing less than obedience is required. In other words, submission does not merely involve being considerate or adapting to one's husband. It is crucial to note that obedience and submission are different in various spheres. Peter was hardly suggesting that wives submit and obey in the same way as children, for the relationship is between two

adults. We also learn from Paul that mutuality also characterizes the marriage relationship (1 Cor 7:3-5). Reading the whole marriage relationship through the lens of submission is liable to distort significantly the Scriptures. Nevertheless, what cannot be washed away is the responsibility of wives to follow their husbands' leadership.

The example of Sarah's obedience cited is when she called Abraham "master" (*kyrios*). What is interesting is that the text alluded to is Gen 18:12, and it reflects an off-hand comment by Sarah to the idea that she will become pregnant by Abraham. What Peter found remarkable was that she still referred to him with respect and dignity instead of merely calling him an old man (though she did note his age!).

We see from this that even in casual situations Sarah respected Abraham's leadership, revealing thereby that her honor of him was part of the warp and woof of her life. Hence, we do not find here an arbitrary exegesis foisted upon the text but a reflection of Sarah's true character. Kiley and Spencer argue that Peter's words here should be interpreted in light of Genesis 12 and 20, where Sarah followed Abraham's advice even when it placed her in an unfavorable situation.

We can agree that Sarah's behavior in those chapters matched what Peter praised here, but the text clearly alludes to Gen 18:12.

The wives in the Petrine community have become Sarah's daughters if they imitate her godly behavior. The past tense verb "you have become" (NRSV, *egenēthēte*) is obscured by the NIV's "you are." The time of conversion was likely in Peter's mind, though some think Peter simply referred to the kind of character required of wives.¹⁶⁰ But how should we understand the two participles that follow? The NIV takes them as conditional, "if you do what is right and do not give way to fear."¹⁶¹ The NRSV introduces a temporal idea, though it is also implicitly conditional, "as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you." Some scholars reject a conditional idea, arguing that such a notion does not fit with the idea of conversion in the past and violates the teaching that conversion is God's work. The participles could be construed as instrumental, "You have become her children by doing good and not fearing."¹⁶³ Or they could be understood as temporal, "You have become her children when you did good and did not fear." The conditional notion is most likely in context. A conditional element does not sit awkwardly with conversion in the past. In fact, **there are many statements in the New Testament where a past conversion is noted and then a conditional statement follows (e.g., Rom 11:21–22; 1 Cor 6:9–11; Col 1:21–23; Heb 3:14).** What Peter said here is not unusual at all.

Peter followed the standard New Testament view that perseverance is needed to obtain eternal life (cf. 2 Pet 1:5–11). Those who are Sarah's children "do what is right" (*agathopoieō*).

The term "*doing good*" (literally) is a favorite of Peter's (2:15, 20; 3:17; cf. 2:14; 3:11, 16; 4:19), expressing the Christian character of believers.

Not only should believers do good but they should "not give way to fear." An echo of Prov 3:25 may exist here. In particular, wives of unbelieving husbands would be prone to fear their husbands, who could treat them rather harshly and perhaps even violently because of their

faith.¹⁶⁷ **Believers are exhorted to fear God (cf. 1:17; 2:17–18; 3:2), but any fear of human beings, even in persecution (3:16), is to be avoided.**

The implication is that believing wives will not always behave in a way that pleases their husbands because at times their loyalty to God will transcend their duty to submit to husbands.

In such cases they are not to fear but hope in God, trusting that he will vindicate them on the last day. The response of women to oppression by unbelieving husbands is exemplary and paradigmatic for all believers, just as the behavior of slaves points to the way all believers should react to persecution.

Husbands, Live Knowledgeably with Your Wives (3:7)

⁷ 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.

Husbands are exhorted to treat their wives with knowledge, according to the will of God.

Women are physically weaker, and the wise husband considers the biological difference between his wife and him in the relationship.

Husbands should honor their wives because they are coheirs of the eschatological gift of life.

Both husbands and wives can expect the same heavenly destiny.

The seriousness of bestowing honor upon one's wife is evident, in that

husbands who refuse to do so will find that their prayers are hindered.

3:7 Only one verse is addressed to husbands, presumably because Peter focused on those who were liable to experience oppression from authorities (whether rulers, masters, or husbands) rather than those who actually exercised authority. As noted above, the conduct of the oppressed functions as an example for all the Petrine churches as they face persecution. Nevertheless, husbands are also addressed briefly in this verse.

The words “in the same way” (*homoioōs*) do not suggest that husbands are to submit to wives, as people submit to rulers (2:13), slaves to masters (2:18), and wives to husbands (3:1). The connective is loose, indicating that a new group is addressed.

The New Testament nowhere counsels husbands to submit to wives, and such an idea is not implied here. Instead husbands are

to (literally) “live together with them according to knowledge” (*synoikountes kata gnōsin*).

The participle *synoikountes* should be understood as an imperative. Most English versions translate the verse so that husbands are exhorted to be considerate and kind in their relationship with their wives.¹⁷² Such a reading is not incorrect, but it shifts the focus slightly away from the meaning of the text.

I understand the phrase “according to knowledge” (*kata gnōsin*), like “in fear” (literal translation) in 3:2 and “conscious of God” in 2:19, to refer to the relationship of husbands to God.

Husbands, then, should live together with wives informed by the knowledge of God’s will, of what he demands them to do.¹⁷⁴

The wife is described here as the “weaker vessel” (NASB; *asthenesterō skeuei*). The word “vessel” can also refer to men (Acts 9:15; cf. Rom 9:21–23), and the comparative form suggests that women are weaker than men.¹⁷⁷

In what sense are women “weaker”? Nothing else in the New Testament suggests that women are intellectually inferior, nor is it clear that women are weaker emotionally, for in many ways the vulnerability of women in sharing their emotions and feelings demonstrates that they are more courageous and stronger than men emotionally. **Nor did Peter suggest that women are weaker morally or spiritually than**

men. Such a view would suggest that men are actually better Christians than women, which is not taught elsewhere in the Scriptures, nor is it evident in history. **The most obvious meaning, therefore, is that women are weaker than men in terms of sheer strength.**¹⁸⁰

Peter used the word for “female” or “woman” (*gynaikeios*) rather than “wife.” He directed attention to what is uniquely feminine about women, pointing husbands to the knowledge that God would require them to have of the female sex.

A husband who lives according to God’s requirement shows “respect” (*timēn*) for his wife (and by extension to all women). The reason he does so is that women are “heirs with you of the gracious gift of life,” showing that women are fundamentally equal with men.¹⁸³ Bechtler says that the admonition to husbands to honor their wives is unique in Greco-Roman literature. The language of heirs points toward the eschatological gift (cf. 1:4; 3:9) that both men and women who believe will receive on the last day. **Men should honor women because they share the same destiny—an eternal inheritance in God’s kingdom.**¹⁸⁶ Any suggestion that women will receive a lesser reward is repudiated. The “life” in the phrase “gift of life” should be understood eschatologically (cf. 3:10), referring to the life that will be ours in the coming age. **Husbands who ignore such a command will find that their prayers are hindered, which means that God will refuse to answer their prayers.**

God does not bless with his favor those who are in positions of authority and abuse those who are under them by mistreating them. Perhaps this verse anticipates v. 12, where the Lord

attends to the prayers of the righteous but turns away from those who practice evil.

(5) Conclusion: Live a Godly Life (3:8–12)

⁸ Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ For,

“Whoever would love life
and see good days
must keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from deceitful speech.

¹¹ He must turn from evil and do good;
he must seek peace and pursue it.

¹² 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.”

The conclusion to all of 2:11–3:7 is now drawn in these verses.

Verse 8 in a chiasm (see p. 164) summarizes appropriate relationships in the community, emphasizing particularly the need for brotherly love.

Verse 9 addresses how believers respond to those who inflict evil upon them. They are not to respond by inflicting evil in return but by praying that God will bless their tormentors. The reason believers are called to bless others is so that they themselves will inherit the eschatological blessing of eternal life on the last day.

The Old Testament citation commencing in v. 10 confirms that blessing others is necessary to receive eternal life, being linked to v. 9 by “for.” The life and good days of v. 10 are nothing other than eternal life and the future inheritance. Those who wish to enjoy such must refrain from speaking evil, make a clean break with evil in their lives, and live in the realm of goodness. They must be people who seek out peace and live peaceably.

Verse 12 confirms the interpretation proposed. The Lord’s favor rests on those who are righteous, but he turns his face forever against those who practice evil.

3:8

The conclusion to all of 2:11–3:7 is introduced with the word “finally” (*telos*).

Now **the whole community is addressed as
“all of you” (*pantes*).**

It seems that Peter addressed relationships within the church in v. 8 and relationships with unbelievers in v. 9, though certainty on this matter is impossible.

In the Greek of v. 8 there are five adjectives
without any verb.

The NIV supplies the verb “live,” which captures well the implied imperative.¹⁹³ Probably the implied imperative comes from the “to be” (*eimi*) verb, and the text would read, “You must be harmonious,” etc.

When we look at all five words together, we

see that obeying these
exhortations would lead to
smooth relationships within
the church (and with
outsiders in most cases).

A. The call to **“harmony”** (*homophrones*) is common in the New Testament, even though this term only appears here (cf. Rom 15:5; 1 Cor 1:10; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 2:1–2; 4:2). Presumably this admonition and others would be unnecessary if churches were not prone to suffer from division and dissension.

B. Believers are also to be **“sympathetic”** (*sympatheis*), caring deeply about the needs, joys, and sorrows of others (cf. Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 12:26).

C. The admonition to brotherly love (*philadelphoi*)— **“love as brothers”** in the NIV—is an indication that Peter

addressed relationships among believers. The family love of believers for one another was important for Peter (cf. 1:22; 2:17; 5:9 and 2:11; 4:12). Their common relationship with Christ inducts them into the same family, and one evidence of genuine Christian faith is a warm love for others as brothers and sisters (cf. also Rom 12:10; 1 Thess 4:9; Heb 13:1; 2 Pet 1:7).

B2. Believers are also to be full of *compassion* (*eusplanchnoi*) to those who are experiencing pain. In Eph 4:32 such compassion is rooted in the mercy experienced in the forgiveness of sins. Again, one of the marks of the Christian life is compassion (cf. 2 Cor 6:12; 7:15;

Phil 1:8; 2:1; Col 3:12; Phlm 7, 12, 20; 1 John 3:17).

A2. Finally, believers are also summoned to be “humble” (*tapeinophrones*). Humility means, of course, that others are considered more important than oneself (Phil 2:3–4) and that pride does not fill one’s life (cf. Acts 20:19; Rom 12:16; 2 Cor 10:1; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; Jas 1:9; 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5). Humility was scorned in the Greco-Roman world, and hence the distinctiveness of Christian vision for the moral life emerges. It seems that there is an A B C B’ A’ pattern in this verse, so that the verse functions as a chiasm.¹⁹⁶

A Harmony

B Sympathy

C Brotherly Love

B' Compassion

A' Humility

Harmony and humility belong together, for the primary means by which harmony is disrupted is pride and self-assertion. Sympathy and compassion are closely related and even hard to distinguish from each other. Brotherly love is the middle term, showing that it is the most important of all the virtues and that the other virtues are embraced in the call to love one another as a family.

3:9 If v. 8 focuses on relationships among fellow believers, it seems that v. 9 directs attention to how believers should respond to unbelievers who mistreat them, one of the central themes of 1 Peter.

On the other hand, it is possible that both believers and unbelievers are in view, and in any case the admonition remains the same. **Those who inflict evil or hurl insults at believers should not be repaid in kind, as tempting as it might be to strike back.** The use of the word “insult” (*loidoria*) hearkens back to 1 Pet 2:23, where the verbal root of the same word is used.

When Jesus was “insulted,” he did not respond in kind.

The first part of the verse is similar to Paul’s injunction in **Rom 12:17, “Do not repay anyone evil for evil.”** Similar wording is found in **1 Thess 5:15, “Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong.”** The Pauline formulation in **1 Cor 4:12 is quite similar to Peter’s: “When we are cursed, we bless”** (*loidoroumenoi eulogoumen*). These admonitions, of course, are rooted in the teaching of Jesus himself. For example, in **Luke 6:28–29 we find this exhortation: “Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic” (cf. Matt 5:38–42).** Peter’s wording does not match the Pauline or Jesus tradition exactly, but it is closer to the Pauline than the Matthean or Lukan tradition. Perhaps Paul and Peter drew upon the same Jesus tradition here.

Instead of insulting others or responding in kind, believers are called on to bless others.

By “blessing” Peter means that believers are to ask God to show his favor and grace upon those who have conferred injury upon them.

The reason believers should bless is now explained (“because, *hoti*). They have been “called” to bless others. The words “to this” (*eis touto*) could point forward or backward. If they point forward, then the idea is that God has called believers to inherit the blessing of eternal life. More likely, though, as in 2:21, the pronoun “this” when attached to the verb “called” is retrospective. Believers have been called by God to bless others, so that they would inherit the blessing of eternal life (cf. also Gal 5:13; Eph 4:1, 4; Col 3:15).

Peter’s logic may seem strange at first glance. Christians are called to bless so that (*hina*) they will inherit the blessing of eternal life. **Is there the danger of works righteousness here, of suggesting that the blessing will be obtained by the merit of believers?**²⁰⁵ Peter had already explicitly taught that God has begotten believers to new life (1:3, 23) and that he will preserve them to the end (1:5). Now he stressed the behavior that is necessary for those who identify themselves as Christians. He continued in the same vein in the subsequent **verses (3:10–12), where good behavior is deemed to be necessary to obtain eternal life. Nor is such teaching foreign to the rest of the New Testament since good works are often introduced as evidence that one is truly redeemed (Rom 2:6–10, 27–29; 1 Cor 6:9–11; 2 Cor 5:10; Gal 5:19–21; 2 Pet 1:5–11; 1 John 2:3–6; Rev 20:11–15).**

3:10

In vv. 10–12 Peter cited Ps 34:12–16 (LXX 33:13–17).

He did not use an introductory formula, but the wording is clearly dependent upon the Septuagint. The main difference is that Peter altered the text from the second person singular to the third person singular. It is difficult to know whether the change is intentional or whether the

text is cited from memory. It is also imperative to note that Psalm 34 focuses on suffering and the Lord's deliverance of those who are afflicted. Peter already had alluded to it in 2:3 and now returned to it again.

The psalm was not selected arbitrarily since it addresses the issue faced by Peter's readers. The psalmist reminded his readers that the Lord rescues his own when they suffer and that he will judge the wicked.

Meanwhile the righteous display their trust and hope in the Lord by renouncing evil and pursuing what is good. It is not difficult to see that:

themes that are central in 1 Peter are evident in the psalm:

1. the suffering of God's people,
2. their ultimate deliverance,
3. the judgment of the wicked, and
4. the notion that a godly life is evidence of hoping in God.

The most important feature for understanding the structure of the text is the **"for" (gar)** linking **vv. 10–12 to v. 9.**

I summarize the logic of the text as follows:

You were called to bless so that you will inherit the blessing of eternal life (v. 9).

For anyone who wishes to experience the life of the age to come must shun evil speech and do good to all, in order to receive that blessing (vv. 10–11). For the Lord's favor is on the righteous, but he will judge the wicked (v. 12).

In the historical context of the psalm, “life” (*zōēn*) and “good days” (*hēmeras agathas*) refer to life and blessing in this world. But for Peter this language almost certainly referred to the *eschaton*, to end-time salvation.

We have already seen in 1:4 that the “inheritance” refers to eschatological salvation.

The language of the psalm, therefore, is understood typologically in that the promise of life and good days in the land points toward and anticipates life in the world to come.

Similarly, the language of 3:7 also demonstrates that Peter thought of the coming reward since “joint heirs of the grace of life” (RSV) signifies life in the future age. It is doubtful, contrary to some, that a reference to *both* this life and the age to come is intended. **Peter was not promising good days in this world since persecution and troubles are to be expected (1:6–7; 3:13–17; 4:12–19).**

He was providing a motivation for believers to bless those who persecute them and to live in a way that pursues peace. They are to refrain from speaking evil and from guile so that they will obtain the eschatological reward, eternal life itself.

We must insist again that such a theology is not works righteousness, nor does it compromise the theme that salvation is by grace.

Peter believed that those who have received new life from God will live transformed lives and that such lives provide evidence (necessary evidence!) that they have been converted.

Michaels rightly says that the blessing *“is not earned by the performance of good works, it nevertheless*

belongs to those who demonstrate good works.”

To sum up,

the good behavior enjoined in **2:11–3:7** is crucial for experiencing the eschatological inheritance of **1:3–9**.

That the tongue would refrain from speaking evil hearkens back to 3:9, “Do not repay evil with evil.” And the exhortation to avoid deceit (*dolon*) reminds us of 2:1, where believers are enjoined to put aside “all deceit” (*panta dolon*).

3:11

The Christian life is not one of passivity for Peter.

We have seen that he gives all the credit to God for the new life of Christians (1:3, 23). They have been begotten by the Father, and

no one can take any credit for being born. Yet the priority of God's grace can never be used to deny the need to take action. A life of goodness does not simply happen as believers meditate quietly in their rooms. Believers must make a conscious effort to "turn" (ekklinatō) from evil. They must devote themselves to what is "good,"

and we have seen often in 1 Peter that goodness was especially prized by Peter (see commentary on 2:18).

Peace can easily be disrupted, especially when others mistreat and even abuse us. Hence, believers must "seek" (zētēsātō) and "pursue" (diōxātō) peace. Such peace will only be preserved if believers do not insult and revile others, if they extend forgiveness to those who injure them.

3:12

Verse 12 differs from the Old Testament citation only in the addition of "for" (*hoti*) to the text. Peter explained why good behavior is imperative. The reason is the same that we have already seen in v. 9 and in the relationship between v. 9 and vv. 10–11. **Achtemeier**

wrongly and surprisingly, given his recognition of the logic of the text, says that believers may be included in those who practice what is evil. But the point of the text is that the Lord's favor is on those who live in such a righteous way.²¹⁵ In other words, he will bless them with the inheritance promised in vv. 7, 9 and with the future life of the age to come noted in v. 10. The hearing of their prayers (cf. v. 7) reveals that they are truly members of God's people.

Conversely, the Lord will turn away his face from those who practice evil, which means they will not obtain an eternal inheritance but God's punishment.

Indeed, in the very next line of Psalm 34, which Peter did not cite here, it is said that those who are wicked will be destroyed by God.

Peter's omission of this line does not indicate that he diverged from the meaning of the psalm. What he included has already made that point clear. *We have now seen on numerous occasions that living a godly life does not earn salvation but is an evidence of it.* Peter was hardly suggesting that believers will live perfectly and that such perfection is necessary to obtain an inheritance. But he was insisting that a transformed life is necessary to obtain the inheritance.¹

¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 147–168.