

**CCF Study Notes**  
**Tuesday 7 AM Study**  
**28 November 2006**  
**1 Peter 3**

Before beginning to read from 1 Peter, let us spend time in prayer, considering how we ought to live in these trying times. Let us ask God to help us do the following:

1. **Submit** to God's will in the context of marriage,
2. **Pray**, understanding and honoring our wives as joint heirs to the grace of life,
3. **Be** compassionate, loving, tenderhearted and courteous, not avenging wrongs done to us,
4. **Continue** always in doing good, even when we receive evil in return,
5. **Be ready** to defend the faith even in times of persecution,
6. **Suffer long** that the gospel might go forth even as Jesus did, and
7. **Answer** with a good conscience toward God.

How we can best give witness to the work of Christ in our lives? We must show the world what God has done. Marriage is a great place to demonstrate the work of Christ in our lives. The body of Christ is a wonderful place to show God's work in us by demonstrating our love for each other. Even in the midst of a world that often persecutes Christians we can find peace and blessing. As always, our model and leader is none other than Jesus Christ!

(3:1-6) As Peter writes to wives commanding submission he connects the thought with the command that slaves submit to masters – good or harsh. Wives are to submit even to ungodly husbands. In submitting to their husbands wives demonstrate the love and humility of Christ. A woman glorifies God not so much by outward adornment as by the inward beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. Many women of the Old Testament exemplify such submission. Ought not New Testament wives to be all the more submissive? Submission is evidence of our faith in Jesus Christ – as is good behavior.

(3:7) The little word “likewise” ties the command to husbands back to the idea of slaves submitting to masters. When the husband dwells with his wife in understanding, he is submitting his will to her needs. When the husband honors the wife he lays aside his own pride and competitive nature and

strength to strengthen his wife's fragile soul. The husband and wife, being one flesh, are heirs together of the grace of life – theirs and the lives of their children. When the weaker vessel is not properly protected and cared for our prayer life is hindered. Could this be why so few people seem to be interested in prayer today? Could their marital relationship be interfering with their prayers?

(3:8-12) Division had already begun to creep into the church. Peter had seen it and spoke openly of it. Peter not only called believers to be agreeable – of one mind – but to be compassionate, considering the needs and feelings of others. Love is to be brotherly, tenderhearted, and courteous. Love must rise above mere reciprocity, no merely returning in kind what we receive. We are to quench fights by refusing to return evil for evil, by refusing to return harsh rhetoric for harsh rhetoric. We are always to be blessing people – even when they are cursing us. Why? God's eyes are always on us, to bring us blessing. God sets His face against those who do evil – whether they feel justified in doing evil or not.

(3:13-14) Even the most wicked people know good deeds when they see or hear of them. Few people have any desire to punish good deeds. Even when we are punished for good deeds we are still blessed, for God knows what has really happened. The one thing that is most likely to keep us from being a good witness in this world is fear. We are often afraid to do what we know is the right thing, the thing that God is calling us to do in a given situation. Threats should not trouble us, because we know who we are and where we are headed.

(3:15-18) How do we deal with fear and anxiety? As we move out into the world we experience increasing persecution. How do we keep from being overcome with fear? First, we are told to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts. We should have greater respect and fear of God than of any earthly entity. Second, we are told to be ready to give a defense for what we believe. If we are ready, we won't freeze when we are put on the spot. Third, we are to have such a good conscience that no accusation will stick. Lastly, we must consider that it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil – for being a good witness, rather than for concealing the work of Christ in our lives.

(3:18-20) In each of the first three chapters Peter supports his arguments by pointing to what God is and does. Jesus suffered unjustly – can we do any

less? Jesus put to death the flesh – so must we. Jesus was made alive by the Spirit – as are we. Jesus was a good witness to those who were in darkness – so must we be witnesses. Jesus suffered long that a few might be saved – so we must not get so caught up in counting souls that we save none. Jesus, ministering through Moses, experience ministry that seemed almost fruitless. We are not to be discouraged if there is ministry that bears no fruit today.

(3:21-22) The experience of Noah is contrasted with our experience in baptism. Noah experienced a fleshly salvation. Noah's physical life was saved as he passed over the waters. We experience spiritual salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ – as pictured in baptism. Our conscience is cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus has risen to a place of ultimate authority – having suffered the ultimate muliation for our sake. Those authorities which give us trouble here on earth will one day find themselves under Jesus' authority.

P.S. Recordings and notes for these studies are available at <http://www.jstoker.name> . A podcast is available at <http://feeds.feedburner.com/CCF-T-Podcast> .