

## Sermon: God's Greater Design for Marriage

Text: 1 Peter 3:1-7

### Discussion Questions:

When you think about the people who led you to the Lord (or who are currently sharing the love of Christ with you)—what are some of the qualities that come to your mind when you think about their character?

- Were/are they gentle—or were they aggressive?
- Were they compassionate—or were they a bit harsh and uncaring?
- Was there something ABOUT them that was different from what you generally expect to see in other people? If so, what?
- Did they strike you as kind, compassionate and sacrificial? If so, did these qualities matter when it came to your choosing to put your trust in Christ? Why?

How long did you “watch” people who claimed to be Christians before you decided to become one yourself? What were you looking for? If you watched for a long time—why?

What difference would it have made if the people that you knew prior to coming to faith were pushy, aggressive, unkind people? Do you think you would be a Christian today if the people who called themselves Christians lacked mercy and kindness?

Did you (or another person in your discussion group) come to faith in Christ as the result of a believing spouse? If so, what was it about them that attracted you to Christ? Did your spouse pray for you? Did they tell you they were praying for you? How long were they praying for you prior to your coming to faith? Would you attribute their kindness, patience and gentle spirit as a reason that you eventually chose to follow Christ? What if they had been pushy or “preachy”—might that have kept you from deciding to follow Christ?

### Examination:

Peter is addressing three major issues in this letter: 1) Who am I in Christ? (Identity); 2) How do I live my life in the face of opposition and persecution? (Response); and 3) Where is my true home—or where am I headed after this life is over? (Future).

In our text today (1 Peter 3:1-7), Peter is focusing his attention on the proper way for wives to respond if their husbands are unbelievers—and how husbands (saved or unsaved) are to treat their wives. But in order to fully understand Peter's words, we have to go back to what Peter states in **1 Peter 2:11-12**:

*“Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.”*

Specifically, Peter is writing directly to Turkish wives (it wasn't Turkey then, but it is now) whose husbands were not yet saved. He is addressing them as friends (with great dignity and equality!), and is CALLING them to live extraordinary lives. He is reminding them that life is short, and heaven is long. He acknowledges that sinful desires (which would include contempt, jealousy, vengeance and spite) literally wage war against our souls. And Peter makes it clear, as he does over and over again, that the ultimate purpose of living a pure, reverent and gentle life is so that unbelievers will take notice of our lives—and want the same power to be present in their own lives (and in so doing bring glorify to God).

• Read **1 Peter 3:1-7**

- Peter's words to wives begin with the phrase: "*In the same way...*". This links what he now shares with what he has just said. We saw back in chapter 2, that Peter was speaking first to citizens in the Roman empire—and then to household servants who were owned (and often mistreated) by others. What was Peter's message to Christian citizens whose lives were in danger under Nero's maniacal rule, and Christian servants whose well-being was in danger under their owner's brutality?
- Based on **1 Peter 2:21-25**, whose life was the example that citizens, servants, and now wives were to follow? What was it about this person's life that they were to emulate?
- Peter talks about unbelieving husbands being "won over." What do you think this means? Why do you think Peter puts it this way?
- Look closely at verse 3. Is Peter saying that jewelry, clothing and hairstyling are wrong? What IS Peter saying?
- Why do you think Sarah's life (Genesis 12-23) was lifted up as an example for all women to follow?
- What might Sarah—or the wives that Peter is addressing—have been afraid of (v. 6)? Why is Peter calling them to fearless living?
- Peter's words to husbands also begin with "*In the same way...*" Why is that worth noting? In the same way as who?
- How are husbands to treat their wives—and what is the ultimate result of treating them in this way (v. 7)?

**Application:**

In an age and time when "Your truth" is the absolute truth, Peter is calling us to submit "our truth" to God. Look for an opportunity this coming week to give up your right to be right, and respond with extraordinary gentleness, consideration and kindness.