

1 Peter 3:1-6, Part F

1Pe 3:1 (NKJV) **Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,² when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear.³ Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel--⁴ rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.⁵ For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.**

In our last study we looked at three critical truths for a healthy marriage:

- (1) **God has a divinely purposed order for marriage.** It is a functional order, an organizational order.
- (2) **A woman's inner beauty ultimately will make a much more significant impact on her husband than her physical beauty.** Her inner beauty greatly complements her physical beauty.
- (3) **The inner beauty that a woman displays is what matters the most in her marriage as it relates to improving the husband's spiritual condition.**

In this study, we want to look specifically at v4 which speaks about three distinct attributes that Peter is going to emphasize as it relates to the wife.

- (1) The first is what he calls “**the hidden person of the heart**”.
- (2) The second is what he calls “**the incorruptible beauty of gentle and quiet spirit**”.
- (3) The third is what he says is “**very precious in the sight of God**”.

The first thing that we want to see is that this verse begins with the conjunction “**rather**” – a conjunction that creates a contrast with what was previously said. What that one word is doing in this verse is identifying for the wife that **choosing to develop her inner beauty is far more valuable of an asset to the marriage than being pre-occupied with her physical beauty.** That is not in any way to diminish the importance of the wife remaining physically attractive to her husband, but it simply highlights that developing her inner beauty ultimately has a greater value and will create a greater impact on her husband. As we discerned in the last study, this is not a verse that denigrates or diminishes her physical beauty, but a verse that actually supports it. However, the inner beauty and the inner expression of a woman's godly spirit is so powerful that it is difficult to even define its impact. For God to say that something is “**very precious**” in His sight is no small comment that can be ignored.

So, just what is “**the hidden person of the heart**”? Well, it is the actual character that resides in the woman's “**heart**”. The character is described here as something that is “**hidden**”, or the Greek word “*kryptos*”. It simply means that it is secret, concealed, private, an inward condition.¹ In this particular context, it is speaking specifically of the woman's deep-seated character.² The real adornment that God

¹ Strong, 1200.

² Liddell, *kruptos*, ep.

is after is that which is found in the wife's heart because what is in the heart will always reveal itself in a person's life. [1 Samuel 16:7](#) says this about what and how God sees when it says,

1Sa 16:7 (NKJV) **But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For *the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*"**

If I can say it this way, it does not really matter what we may look like on the outside because our character and virtue are ultimately the qualities that God sees. The issue, though, is that **what is on the inside will display and manifest itself on the outside**. Our life consists of what people can see and what they cannot see, but the reality that we all have to face is that for the most part what they see on the outside is just a reflection of what they cannot see on the inside. Stated another way, what is in our heart will always manifest itself in our life. What you truly are in your heart, in your character, in that deepest part of your being is what will always manifest itself to other people. You cannot hide character – either good or bad. We become what we think. For instance, Jesus spoke in [Luke 6:45](#) about how we talk and where it comes from,

Lk 6:45 (NKJV) **A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**

Our overriding tendency is to just say what we are thinking in our heart. Unfortunately, and I say this from too many experiences, but our tongue is prone to betray us if we are not careful, and that is why [James 3:8](#) says,

Jas 3:8 (NKJV) **But no man can tame the tongue. *It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.***

I think it is important to appreciate that what this phrase in v4 is not saying is that this “**hidden person of the heart**”, this internal character that a woman has is actually NOT something that can be hidden. It may not be outwardly visible, but it is clearly manifested through the wife's life – through her words, through her attitudes, and through her actions. I.e., this is not some kind of mystical spiritual attribute that is so secret, so hidden, and so disguised that no one ever sees it. That is the opposite of what Peter is saying. What he wants people to be drawn to is not the wife's outward beauty, but her inward beauty. That is the kind of wife and the kind of woman that will ultimately make the greatest impact on her husband, her family, and the people that God brings into her life.

This is just my personal opinion, which makes it virtually worthless, but I believe it is the wife's spirit that ultimately has the greatest impact on the home and on the children. She is the one that brings and creates peace and calmness to the home environment. If a woman is always yelling at her kids, always contending with her husband, and always complaining about everything under the sun, then those kinds of words and actions will invariably be conveyed to everyone in the family. However, if she is a wife who has the strength to exercise self-control and restraint in her speech, in her attitudes, and in her spirit, then those qualities will have a strong, sustaining impact and influence on her family – and especially her husband.

The second area that we want to address is what Peter calls “**the incorruptible beauty of gentle and quiet spirit**”. However, we must first deal with the preposition “**with**” that initiates the phrase. It is the

Greek word “*en*” and is called a preposition of manner. I.e., it is used to introduce either a person’s manner or their method. It is used to introduce the instrument and the means that someone employs to complete a task. This is the kind of behavior and demeanor on which God wants the wife to focus and concentrate. She is the one who stabilizes the marriage by her spirit alone. She is the one who ultimately creates the atmosphere in the home for it to function properly. She is the one who strengthens her husband with her strength and with her spirit. There is no substitute on the planet for a wife who has a deep and abiding spiritual strength about her. Just read about her impact in [Proverbs 31](#). Listen to some of the ways that a virtuous wife is described in that chapter.

1. Her value is far above rubies
2. The heart of her husband safely trusts her
3. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life
4. She willingly works with her hands
5. She rises early to provide food for her family
6. She is an entrepreneur and buys land
7. She has a garden
8. She is strong
9. She is gracious to the poor and needy
10. She clothes her family well
11. She makes and sells clothes
12. Her clothing is strength and honor
13. She is wise
14. Her tongue is kind
15. She is not idle, but industrious
16. Her children love her and called her blessed
17. Her husband praises her
18. She fears and reverences God
19. Her works are praised among men

That is quite a listing of the results that are created by a woman of virtue and character. Without me overstating it, **the impact she has on her family cannot be measured**. So, what Peter is saying through that little preposition is that what God wants the wife to do is to develop something in her life, to pay attention to a very specific area of her life – what he calls a “**gentle and quiet spirit**”. This is not a phrase that means that the woman is always acquiescing or always silent or cannot provide meaningful input – not at all. This is simply the character quality that God wants the woman to value in her functional role as a wife, and I would add, as a mother as well.

The word “**gentle**” is the Greek word “*praus*” and it means mild, and by implication humble.³ It is the

³ Zodhiates, 1209.

idea that she is not loud and overbearing, but is forbearing and patient. The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament defines it as kindness, modesty, mildness, and gentleness.⁴ The word means that the wife is not always insistent on having her way, not pushy, not selfishly assertive, not someone who is demanding her own way.⁵ This particular Greek adjective is only used three other times in the New Testament, and two of those times it speaks of Christ. For instance, Jesus used this same word in [Matthew 11:29](#) when He spoke of Himself and said,

Mt 11:29 (NKJV) Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

I love the connotation of this verse for the wife (and anyone else for that matter) because one of the things that it is saying is that a gentle spirit creates rest and peace for our life, as well as for others. I love being with people who have a kind of sustained peace about their life, people who are not agitated and upset at every little thing that happens in life. They are gentle people and do not feel threatened by people or their circumstances. It is as if they have this great strength knowing that God is their Father. [1 Thessalonians 2:7](#) uses this word and uses an amazing picture of a mother as an example.

1Th 2:7 (NKJV) But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children.

That is the picture right there – a mother nursing her new born. She is always gentle when she is feeding her baby – always. That is the kind of deportment that reflects the meaning of this word and the quality that God uses in the wife.

The second word to describe the wife’s life is the word “**quiet**”. It is the Greek word “*hesychios*” and means not to be disturbed, to be peaceable. It refers to a kind of tranquility that rises above a difficulty.⁶ It is the idea that difficult moments can come in her life, but her deportment and behavior do not become overly anxious and fretful. She simply is not disturbed by things that inevitably make their way into her life and into her home. The picture here is one of a wife who is strong and still on the inside. She is not easily flustered by everything that creeps into her life. This is her strength – not to be overwhelmed and agitated by stressful moments, but to demonstrate a kind of quietness that helps to resolve the difficulty rather than agitate it. We have all met people who simply cannot handle stress, and who cannot handle problematic and challenging moments in their life. They make everyone else around them uncomfortable because of their lack of self-control and restraint. This is the wife who is not like that, the wife who maintains her tranquility in the stressful moments and does not create disturbing moments for others.

The third area is that this kind of spirit, “**a gentle and quiet spirit**”, is “**very precious in the sight of God**”. This is what gives value and meaning and substance to this passage. I keep saying it week after week, but we must see life the way that God sees life. We must think the way that God thinks, and this is the manner of life for a wife that is important to God. The word for “**very precious**” is the Greek word “*polyteles*” and is translated in the Greek Interlinear as “**of great worth**”. It is a word that refers to things that very costly, extremely expensive, and therefore have great worth.⁷ It is the New Testament

⁴ Balz, *praus*, ep.

⁵ Grudem, 140.

⁶ Strong, 1132.

⁷ Zodhiates, 1197.

word that is used to refer to things that are highly valuable. It is not just that something is expensive, but that it is expensive because of its value and worth. It is the same word that was used of the ointment that Mary used to anoint the head of Christ. That perfume was worth about one year's wages – what [John 12:5](#) described as 300 denarii. A denarii was about what the average person received for one day's wages. Ultimately, the reason that this kind of spirit is so valuable to God is because **it always means that the wife is actually placing her trust and her confidence in God**. That is clearly expressed in v5 which says,

1Pe 3:5 (NKJV) **For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,**

So, what do we want to take away from this passage?

1. First, a wife **choosing to develop her inner beauty is far more valuable of an asset to her husband than always focusing on her physical beauty**. That is not to diminish the value of her physical beauty in any way, but simply to place it in perspective.
2. Secondly, **what is on the inside will display and manifest itself on the outside**. We cannot escape the spiritual fact that our life will always reflect what is in our heart, so godly life cannot be ignored. It always makes an impact on those with whom we are the closest.
3. Thirdly, **the impact that a wife has on her family cannot be measured**. Wives, please take great comfort in your role in the family. In many ways, you are the strength of your family because of the tremendous impact that you have on everyone.
4. Fourthly, **the life of a godly wife is of great value to God because it means that she is trusting both Him and His ways in her life**. That is what He uses to work through her life.

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