

Text: 1 Pt 3.3-4

A little review tonight to start with.

- 1 Pt opens with a long sentence (1.3-12) where Peter extols our glorious salvation.
 - ♦ Based on that salvation, several imperatives flow, commanding our Christian life in general. (1.13-2.3)
- Next, we have an extended section describing our function in Christ's building – we are living stones, fitted together to proclaim God's excellencies (2.4-10)
 - ♦ And from this flows a general imperative: abstain from fleshly lusts/keep your behaviour excellent ... all this as a testimony (2.11-12)
 - ♦ And the submission section: command, submit to human institutions (2.13-3.7)
 - ♦ Submit to kings and governors (13-17)
 - ♦ Submit to masters [slaves] (18-20)
 - ♦ Imitate the submission of Christ (21-25)
 - ♦ Submit to husbands [wives] (3.1-6)
 - ♦ Respect your wives [husbands] (3.7)

We are still in the “submit to husbands” section.

Last time we took the topic of submission to this closing point:

“Understanding submission in terms of worship”

Verse 3, literally, ““while [the husband's] observe the in fear chaste behaviour of you.”

In other words, the chaste behaviour = submission, and the chaste behaviour is towards the Lord, it is for his sake and for his glory.

That instructs us all — the submission to kings, to masters, all of it has the same character.

In our verses tonight, we will see Peter expand on the topic, but he steps away from speaking of submission directly. He turns his attention to adornment, which informs us about submission.

Again, I think that informs us all, though the first application goes to the ladies.

Read 1 Pt 3.1-7, text 3-

Proposition: The way to please God in our relationships is to make pleasing God our goal.

I. Not moralism

A. The word for “adornment” – *cosmos*

1. This is the one place in the Bible where the word is used in its literal sense
2. Means “an orderly arrangement” → cosmetics derived from it
3. Elsewhere translated “world” as an ordered system

B. The tendency to take this passage incorrectly

1. Many have taken a moralistic sense from passages like this – “no frills, no jewels, plain dress ... you know how frivolous women are”
2. This view debases the Scripture to mere moral fault-finding, something even the pagans do

“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).”¹

¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 153.

- a. It is true that decorating one's person is an almost universal trait, especially among women (but not exclusively)
 - b. It is true that individuals can become obsessive or ostentatious about personal decoration
 - c. But to take the Scripture here as saying this kind of thing makes it say no more than what unbelieving men might say
3. Notice the word "merely" in our translation
- a. It is in italics, so not original
 - b. (Actually, "jewelry" is not in original either, and "dresses" should be "garments")
 - c. The presence of *merely* implies no sanction against adornment

In other words, there is nothing wrong with adornment, but if that is all there is to adornment, you are missing something.

The word *merely* is justified as we look closely at the translation

C. How verse three connects to verses 2 and 4

1. Lit. TRANS: "of which let it not be the outward braiding of hairs and wearing of gold things or putting on of garments [kind of] adornment"
2. "of which" — points back to the "chaste and respectful behaviour" of v. 2
 - a. Peter is further defining the behaviour (remember behaviour of worship)
 - b. Peter is saying let your behaviour not be that characterized by an outward focus on material things
3. "let it not" — this is the negative, so a positive is to come in v. 4
4. All these considerations justify the insertion of the word "merely" — Peter isn't prohibiting adornment

By the way, just running your comb through your hair is a kind of external adornment — if you just "let it be natural" matted and tangled would be the way to go.

D. One last comment:

1. Notice this quote from Schreiner

“His point was that they should not wear clothing that is exorbitantly expensive or immodest.”²

2. Many commentators follow this line

3. Peter isn't making a comment on the expense of the adornment, he is commenting on the focus

II. Rather, deep spirituality

A. Not the external but the internal: the hidden person of the heart

1. The best way to adorn your person is to cultivate the hidden person of the heart

2. In other words, grow in your inner man, put on Jesus Christ (to use Paul's language)

3. You cannot display this by your externals: dress, jewelry, hairstyles communicate nothing about your inner self

4. Peter calls to women (and to all Christians ultimately) to ornament their lives with a godly spiritual life

B. Further described: the imperishable adornment

1. Gentle and quiet: not given to

a. Ostentation

b. Boldness

c. Immorality

2. Rather:

a. Meekness

b. Servant-heartedness

c. Other's oriented focus

Everyone struggles with the self-seeking self. We need to cultivate the others-seeking mind. The more we can live this way, the more valuable our testimony is.

² Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 154.

- C. The context is still the marriage context with the focus on wives
1. Saying: “you get more bees with honey than with vinegar”
 2. The wife who cultivates this spirit will have more influence than the wife who asserts her will
 3. The Christian who cultivates this spirit will gain respect and influence in the world

III. Motive: God’s valuation

- A. The word “precious” implies very costly, very valuable
- B. Our ultimate goal isn’t our influence with men, but our approval by God
1. I mentioned above how women with a quiet spirit can gain much influence with their husbands... but that isn’t our real goal
(we aren’t adopting meekness to manipulate)
 2. Rather our goal is to please God, to honour his name, bring credit to his gospel

Conclusion:

Proposition: The way to please God in our relationships is to make pleasing God our goal.