

should it change the way you pursue potential dating relationships and preparation for marriage?

Or, if you're a woman, how should these instructions inform the kind of person you look to befriend and/or pursue a relationship with?

PEEK AT THE GREEK

As Peter turns his attention to husbands in verse 7, he calls them to respect their wives as the “weaker partner.” At first glance, that phrase can sound quite offensive, as it seems to suggest inferiority on the part of the woman. In Greek, the phrase *asthenestero skeuei* literally means “weaker vessel” and the New Testament describes men as “vessels” elsewhere (Acts 9:15; Rom. 9:21–23). It also uses the term to denote physical objects like a lamp or dish (Luke 8:16; John 19:29; 2 Tim. 2:20). Clearly, the comparison here suggests that women are weaker than men, but in what way? Nowhere else does Scripture describe women as weaker intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, or morally. The most obvious use of the phrase has to do with physical strength. On the whole, men are typically stronger than women. Certainly, there are exceptions, but Peter is simply commanding husbands to be mindful of how they use their strength around their wives. Rather than cultivating habits that could become abusive, he tells them to care for their wives and respect them.

Horizontal lines for writing.

As Kyle pointed out, not only does poor treatment of wives hinder husbands' prayers, but it also weakens their ability to be a light of the gospel to the world. **What does the way you treat your wife communicate about your faith to others? Or if you're single, what does the way you treat the women around you communicate about your faith?**

If you're a woman, how have you experienced obedient men provide an opportunity for you to live as a "co-heir" of God's grace, whether it be your husband or otherwise?

Now, let's turn our attention to the first part of this paragraph where Peter gives instructions to wives.

How do you react to Peter's words in verses 1-6? What feelings do they prompt in you?

As we learned last week, the idea of submission is not one of forced obedience. Rather, it is a voluntary choice made out of joy in Christ. And in this case, it's specifically meant in the context of marriage. In no way should this be understood as a general command for women to submit to men. Even more importantly, Kyle stressed the importance of remembering that this isn't something we do simply for the sake of having a good marriage, but to honor Jesus Christ.

How might that truth change the way you think about this command?

Beyond his instructions on submission, Peter also encourages women to place their hope in God as opposed to any material hope, like that of clothing, jewelry, or hairstyles. While there's nothing wrong with external beauty, it does not last. As Kyle pointed out, it's the inner life that endures and communicates true beauty.

If you're a woman, what are some of the ways you've been tempted to place your hope in external beauty today? How are these temptations ultimately enslaving rather than freeing?

If you're a man, in what ways might you have contributed to that enslaving picture of female value?

Where can you improve in terms of cultivating your inner beauty, as Peter describes in verse 4-5?

LIVE IT OUT

Pray: Whether you are married or single, spend time this week asking the Lord to continue shaping you to treat members of the opposite sex in ways that are faithful to his Word.

Evaluate: Set aside some time over the course of the next week to consider your marriage in light of Peter’s instructions. As you do, resolve to make whatever changes necessary to align your marriage with God’s Word.

Listen: Reach out to a couple that has been married more than twenty years. Ask them about their relationship and listen to the advice they have to offer.
