

Virtual Vestry: 16 August 2025

1 Peter: 3

I have long believed that some of the more difficult passages in the bible are about the treatment of women. Mainly because they have been used to oppress women and give men an undeserved privilege. These passages at the beginning of 1 Peter: 3 are a case in point. It's possible that, in Peter's time, he was saying something quite groundbreaking in support of women, at least that's my assumption. But they have not necessarily been used in support of women since.

I am tempted to simply write them off, after all, the bible is not perfect. But then, I was reading an article I came across that discussed an ugly online fight between a group of women who were Christian Nationalist social media influencers. One of the group had posted a picture of an engagement ring on her finger with the words "I won". What followed was anything but Christian as the other members of the group began to tear her down, flinging ugly racist and misogynistic taunts at her. It was clear that this was a fight for status and if you couldn't win yourself then you have to make sure no-one else did.

Somewhere in all of this, I began to wonder if Peter had a point. I began to wonder if what Peter was addressing was not a blanket statement to unfairly restrict women but an attempt to address something more specific. Was there something going on in the church(s) Peter was writing to. Was there a principle here about not competing with each other in regards to status? If there is, then the principle also applies to men and not just women.

I believe that Peter's words were both culturally and situationally bound, but there is a point about not competing for status and treating each other with love and respect. I also believe these principles apply to both men and women.

Husbands and wives (vs 1-6)

Much of Peter's advice to husband's and wives, if taken literally and with an agenda in mind, may be harmful. However, there are some things I would like to discuss.

- What cultural and situational factors are we aware of relating to Peter's advice?
- What are your takeaway principles?
- Is there a broader discussion about the misappropriation of scripture? Should we care?

All Christians (vs 8-12)

- Verse 9 advises us to repay evil and abuse with a blessing or good. Discuss
- Verses 10-12 implies that those who do good will have a long happy life while God is against those who do bad – Discuss.

Suffering for doing good (vs 13-22)

The theme of suffering is an important one for us to deal with and Peter doesn't shy away. Verses 13-18 was written to a church that is small, struggling and likely suffering persecution.

- If you were in that situation, what would these words mean to you?
- How might these words be applied (or misapplied) when we are not under persecution?

Peter then discusses a few things that seem a little confusing to me. In particular, verse 19.

- Discuss

Finally

- What are your takeaway messages from 1 Peter: 3?