

## Introduction: Reality vs. Perception

### The early Church was slandered – Christians were accused of:

- Burning down ROME.
- Being CANNIBALS.
- Being sexually PERMISSIVE.
- Being anti-PATRIOTIC and SUBVERSIVE.

### The Church today is being slandered –Christians are accused of:

- Being NARROW and BIGOTED because we believe in ABSOLUTES.
- Being Bible-thumping ANTI-INTELLECTUALS.
- Being HYPOCRITES.
- Being a WEAK-WILLED and PASSIVE bunch of wimps.

## 1. The appeal:

I'm your brother and we live in a HOSTILE world.

## 2. A negative command:

Maintain personal PURITY to silence the critics.

- Galatians 5:13-21
- Perpetual practice of the flesh is evidence that the Spirit of God is NOT AT WORK in your life.
- Attitudes of the HEART.
- 1 John 2:15-16 – “The world”
  - The lust of the FLESH.
  - The lust of the EYES.
  - The boastful PRIDE of life.

Matthew 4 – How did Satan tempt Jesus?

Jesus' answer: The Word of God – to distinguish Reality vs. Perception

### 3. A positive command:

Provide a powerful **PUBLIC** testimony.

How we live, the way we behave, is on trial.

What do we do? Submit to:

- Government
- Boss
- Wife/husband
- Relationships

### 4. The reason:

“...that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.”

#### Keywords:

- ✓ Aliens – to have one's home alongside of.
- ✓ Stranger – to settle down alongside a pagan.
- ✓ Abstain – hold yourself back from fleshly lusts.
- ✓ War – the act of carrying on a military campaign.
- ✓ Slander – speak against; literally, to “speak down.”
- ✓ Observe – to view carefully as a personal witness.
- ✓ Visitation – to observe, to inspect, to oversee.

Introduction: How to overcome the negative slanderous view

The text and its structure:

The command:

1 Peter 2:13

*“Submit yourselves (for the Lord’s sake) to every authority instituted by men...”*

- **Submit** – A Greek military term meaning “to arrange (troop divisions) in a military fashion under the command of a leader.” In non-military use, it was a “voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden.”
- **Biblical submission** – The courage and the strength to be so secure that you see the value of the big picture so you willingly, voluntarily, and graciously give up your rights.

The motive:

1 Peter 2:13

*“...for the Lord’s sake....”*

**The scope of the command:**

1 Peter 2:14

*"...to the king (emperor), as the supreme authority, or to governors who are sent by him..."*

**The purpose of civil authorities:**

1 Peter 2:14

*"...to punish those who do wrong and commend those who do right."*

**The reason for the command:**

1 Peter 2:15

*"For it is God's will..."*

**The result of obedience:**

1 Peter 2:15

*"...that by doing good, you should silence (muzzle) the ignorant talk of foolish men."*

**The burning questions this command raises:**

**What about our freedom in Christ? Why should we obey man's rules?**

**The answer:**

1 Peter 2:16

*"As free men you should never use your freedom as a 'cover up' (cloak or excuse) for doing evil; but you are at all times servants of God."*

**The summary:** (2 couplets, 4 commands)

1 Peter 2:17

*"Respect (honor) all men (everyone);"*  
*"Love the brotherhood of believers,"*  
*"Fear God,"*  
*"Honor the king."*

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What concept or truth from this message and/or passage was most helpful to you personally? Why?
2. How does this passage (2:13-17) relate to last week's passage concerning "enhancing our image." (1 Peter 2:11-12)?
3. What is the believer's motive for submitting to authorities from v. 13 and from v. 15? How could this "help us" in situations where submission is difficult?
4. Is there any authority (law, etc.) set up by men that you have a difficult time submitting to? List the reasons that are hard for you to comply with this authority (or law); then list how God might be able to enhance His reputation through your submission.
5. Are there ever times when as a Christian you should not submit to human authority? Develop if you can, some basic guidelines that a new Christian could understand in knowing when and when not to submit to human authority.
6. How should the fact that we are "free men" affect how and when we submit to others (and/or rules and regulations established by men)?
7. Read Acts 4:18-20 and Acts 5:27-29, Acts 5:41-42. How does Peter "model" for us the key balance between "fearing God" and "honoring men?"
8. Is there any area of your life with regard to the state, laws, or human authority that you need to either submit (with regard to behavior) or submit (with a more gracious attitude) in order to "silence" the accusations of critics against the Lord and His church?

## **Introduction: Getting the bigger picture**

### **1. A very difficult command**

1 Peter 2:18

*<sup>18</sup> Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.*

- In Peter's day
- In our day

### **2. The explanation for such a command**

1 Peter 2:19-20

*<sup>19</sup> For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God.*

*<sup>20</sup> But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.*

- The thesis of this passage is God is pleased when His people trust Him in the midst of unjust suffering.



### 3. The reason and purpose of this command

1 Peter 2:21-25

*<sup>21</sup> To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps.*

- We were **CALLED** to this kind of lifestyle.

*<sup>22</sup> “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth.” <sup>23</sup> When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed.*

- Christ's example:
  1. He was **INNOCENT**.
  2. He didn't **RETALIATE**.
  3. He **SACRIFICED** His life so others could live.
- The principle at work – Substitutionary suffering

*<sup>25</sup> For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

### 4. The how and why for “Christ's reputation”

- We endure unjust suffering by trusting God in the midst of it.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Imagine yourself as a slave (non-person, piece of property) in Peter's day. Why would this command to submission be difficult for you?
2. Discuss in your group the whole concept of "our rights" as individuals and relate how this passage addresses that concept in certain situations.
3. When, according to this passage, is it not commendable to endure suffering (v. 20)?
4. What is the primary motivation in this passage to endure unjust suffering? How does the example of Christ move you to endure what is unfair in some areas of your life?
5. Jesus endured because He focused on the goal of His suffering (Hebrews 12:2 and 1 Peter 1:13). What was the goal of Jesus' suffering?
6. This passage has been misapplied in some situations and done immeasurable harm.

Answer the True and False statements by examining the listed passages to keep a clear balance on this teaching of "enduring suffering."

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| T | F | You should never try to escape from unjust suffering (Luke 4:28-30; Acts 9:23-25, 28-30. Also Matthew 2:13-15; Acts 12:6-11, 23:1-10)                    |
| T | F | God intends any suffering you experience and does not want you to pray for or seek escape from it. (Psalm 109:21-31; 116:1-11; Matthew 26:39, 41.)       |
| T | F | You may always seek to know what purpose God might have for your suffering. (Proverbs 16:4; John 15:15.)   |
| T | F | There is no such thing as unjust suffering; you are a sinner, so you deserve your suffering. (Matthew 2:16, Luke 13:1-5, John 15:18-19, 2 Timothy 3:13.) |
7. What would "obedience/trusting God" look like if you were enduring some unjust suffering with some authority figure in your life?

**Question 1: What one thing would you like to change?**

- The pious response –
- The “grocery list” response –
- The hope of salvation response –

**Question 2: What one thing would be written about you?**

- What the women may have written –
- What the men may have written –

**The premise:** If my partner would only **CHANGE**, THEN we'd have a quality relationship.

**The games we play to manipulate the change:**

- Leave the book out and open –
- The silent treatment –
- Withholding affection –
- The bribes and presents –

**The conclusion:** We have very little, if any, **POWER** to change our mate.

**For the women:**

*<sup>1</sup> In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, <sup>2</sup> as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.*

1 Peter 3:1-2

- The Jewish wife –
- The Greek wife –
- The Roman wife –

*<sup>3</sup> Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses;*

*<sup>4</sup> but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.*

1 Peter 3:3-4

- What it doesn't mean -
- What does it mean -

The battle is in the HEART.

*<sup>5</sup> For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands;*

*<sup>6</sup> just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.*

1 Peter 3:5-6

Hope in GOD.

Reference: Beloved Unbeliever by Jo Berry

**For the men:**

*<sup>7</sup> You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.*

1 Peter 3:7

- Living with her in an **UNDERSTANDING** way.  
The woman is physically weaker and more sensitive.
- Grant her **HONOR** as a fellow heir and equal of the grace of God.  
God truly liberated women from bondage.

If you don't, God will put you on **HOLD** when you pray.

**The conference:** (Rules – no interruptions, no problem-solving)

1. What are you concerned about?
2. What do you wish?
3. What are you willing to do?

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What does the phrase “in the same” or “likewise” (v. 1, 7) shed on marital relations?
2. What reasons does Peter give for a wife to submit to her husband? (Define submission Biblically, what does it mean?)
3. What does submission “look like” in everyday life for a woman in marriage? (i.e. attitudes, actions, etc.) How and why could God use this type of behavior to change a man's heart?
4. Discuss the concept of “fear” brought out in v. 6. What are some common fears a woman (or you) might have in obeying this command to submit? Why? (Women) Share how you've learned to obey this in some area of your marital life and share the results with your group.
5. What two things does God command of men in v. 7? Why do you think these two things are specifically outlined? Why is it so important for a man to obey this command?
6. Describe what an “understanding” man looks like in everyday life. (i.e. attitudes, actions, etc.) What steps would a man have to take to become understanding?
7. Much is written about self-esteem in our day. According to this passage, what is one of the primary sources of a woman's self-esteem? Wives, tell your husband three things that make you feel honored.
8. What specific step of faith would make you a more submissive wife/understanding husband?

## Introduction: What we pursue for fulfillment

### Three essentials of happiness:

1. CONTENTMENT

Personal peace – with GOD and with YOURSELF.

2. COMMUNITY

Enriching relationships where mutual love is exchanged.

3. A CAUSE

A significant reason to get up every morning.

### Happiness is the byproduct of:

- A relationship with God that brings personal PEACE.
- Mutual enriching relationships where love is EXCHANGED.
- Working and sacrificing your life for something that has MEANING.

### The context:

How believers have a positive reputation in the midst of adversity.



**The text:**

**Five commands – How to live in Christian relationships**

*<sup>8</sup> To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;*

1 Peter 3:8

**Two commands – How to live with those who are difficult**

*<sup>9</sup> not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead...*

1 Peter 3:9a

**The reason**

*...for you were called for the very purpose...*

1 Peter 3:9b

**The purpose**

*...that you might inherit a blessing.*

1 Peter 3:9c

**The justification**

*<sup>10</sup> For, "The one who desires life, to love and see good days,*

1 Peter 10a

**Three conditions**

1. *...must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.*
2. *He must turn away from evil and do good;*
3. *he must seek peace and pursue it.*

1 Peter 3:10b-11

**The reason**

*<sup>12</sup> For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears attend to their prayer,*

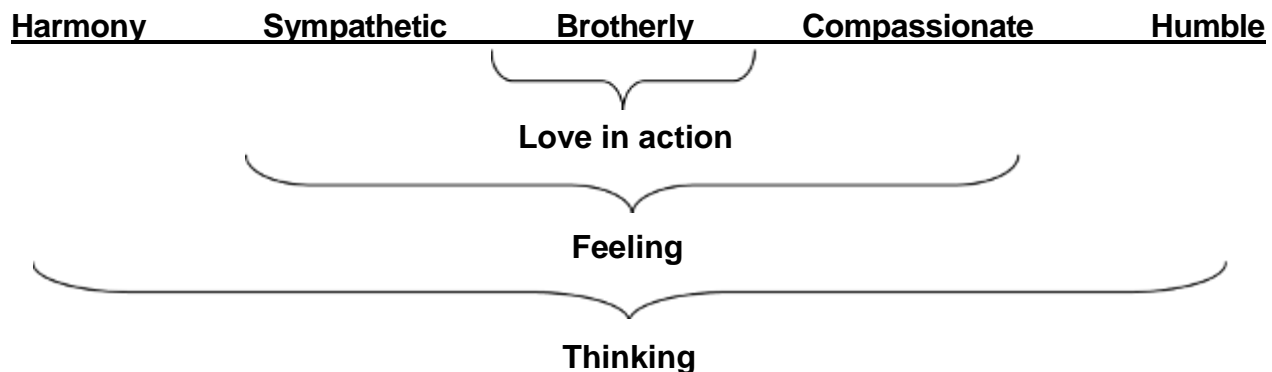
1 Peter 3:12a

**The flip-side**

*...but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."*

1 Peter 3:12b

How to be a blesser:



How to be a blesser when it's difficult:

Don't repay evil with **EVIL** or insult with **INSULT**.

Romans 12:14-21

The three conditions:

1 Peter 10b-11

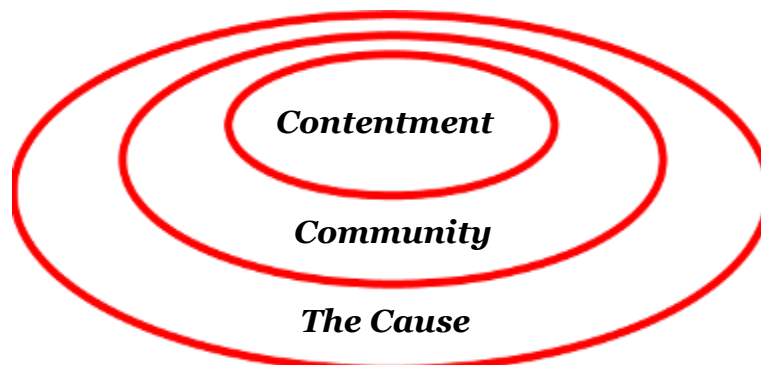
1. Look at your speech.
  - Purity of **HEART** is a prerequisite for happiness.
2. Turn from evil and do good.
  - **REPENTANCE** is a prerequisite for happiness.
3. Seek peace and pursue it.
  - **RECONCILIATION** is a prerequisite for happiness.

Two buckets that are always full:



Three questions that all begin with Christ:

1. Are you happy?
  - It begins with **CONTENTMENT** – Do you have peace with God?
  - Starts with FAITH
2. Do you have deep friendships?
  - It begins with **COMMUNITY** – Become a blessing.
  - Starts with LOVE
3. Is there still something missing?
  - It begins with taking up the **CAUSE** – Become a player.
  - Starts with HOPE.



**Discussion Questions:**

1. Share one of the happiest times in your life with the group. What was it about you or that time that made it so positive?
2. Peter lists five commands in 1 Peter 3:8 to outline how believers are to treat one another. Which of these characteristics is most attractive to you? Why? Which is the hardest for you to live by?
3. Verse 9 tells us to “bless those who insult us” and commands us not to pay back evil for evil. Read Romans 12:14-21 and explain why this counsel is not as foolish as it first appears. Also, read Matthew 5:38-48 – Jesus’ example.
4. How does the teaching of this passage (1 Peter 3:8-12) “fit in” with the overall theme of this section (1 Peter 2:11-3:12) about Christians’ reputation in society?
5. What conditions are found in 1 Peter 3:10-12 that must be met to receive this promised blessing of “good days” and “love life”?
6. What have you learned from this portion of God’s Word that you could immediately put into practice to become a “happier” more blessed person? When will you do it?