



These past few months have given us plenty of things to increase our anxiety: COVID-19, race relations, the election, isolation, economic instability and more. But there is one segment of society that has been hit hard regardless of political views, race or economic status: married couples.

Studies tell us that divorce rates have increased in the year 2020. This has been a hard year for everyone and some marriages have buckled under the pressure. In the passage we're studying this week, Peter gives us a vision for how the marital relationship can function in a fallen world. To our modern ears, Peter's words about marriage can seem out-of-touch or even shocking. Surprisingly, Peter's words would have been just as challenging to a 1<sup>st</sup> century audience, meaning the picture of marriage given to Exiles has always been different than the world's standards.

**Read: Galatians 3:28**

What do point do you think Paul is making here?

**//Context Cues: Sometimes, when we read the words of the New Testament, we can view them as "out-of-date". But we need to remember the revolutionary nature of the early church. These people were giving equal value to men and women, workers and managers, foreigners and citizens. And as we have seen in recent times, these ideas are still just as important today. So as we read the next verses, let's remember how God uses His word and His church to remind us of our value as image-bearers.**

**Read: 1 Peter 3:1-7**

1 Peter 3 starts out with these 4 words: "in the same way." What is Peter referencing back to from chapter 2?

As you read these verses, what makes sense to you? What do you struggle with? Why?

What point do you think Peter is trying to make about the idea of submission? What does he say the purpose is?

Do you think this idea would apply to men who are married to an unbelieving wife? How would it look similar?

Does Peter's commentary on beauty apply to a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience? How so?

Peter states that women are co-heirs with men. Why does that matter? (Think back to our context clues from Galatians 3)

What do you think of a husband's prayer life being affected by how he treats his wife?

Could you see a way for that to apply to wives as well?

**Make it Personal:**

Husbands, what can you do to be more considerate of your wife?

Wives, what in your heart, or in your past, makes it most difficult to submit to your husband?

If you are single, what habits could you take from this passage to improve any of the relationships in your life?

To both men and women, how much stock do you place in your outward appearance? How much value do you place on your character? In what ways might God lead you in this?

**Prayer:**

*Father, thank you for the gift of marriage. For those of us that are married, we ask that you help us see our spouse through your eyes. Lord, deepen our individual relationships with you so that we are better able to selflessly love and serve each other. May the fruit of your Spirit be evident in our lives and in our marriages. Amen.*