

## 1 Peter 3

We are continuing on in our conversation about how we interact with each other, as part of a interwoven tapestry of believers. We are much more connected and dependent than we realize. We are like giant redwoods that hold each other up. The giant redwoods reach up to 300' high, but their roots only go down 6'. Their secret is that hold each other with interlocking roots. Without our brothers and sisters in Christ, we would fall.



**Read 1 Peter 3:1-6:** We see our role differently than others see it. We can think that what we *bring to the table* is one thing; but it is often something else altogether. Our self-awareness may not match up with what we are needed for. Peter jumps into family relations. He begins with wives. The father of each family typically confirms *the identity* of the children and sets them on a lifelong quest. The mother *keeps it all together*. Without mothers we would not have family units. We would be more like loosely affiliated teams with roles and responsibilities. It is love that compels us the most.... not fear.

*And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her.” (Genesis 17:16)*

Our society thinks of a wife in a number of ways. A wife can be referred to as *a trophy*, if she is attractive. Peter is telling us here that all of her pearls, and her figure and her hair and clothing and jewelry don't have a high value in the Kingdom. That stuff may impress her husband and her friends, but it does not advance the cause of Christ all that much. Her value to the body of believers is found in her character and her heart. People who have been hurt need a loving and quiet voice and tenderness. They need a healing nurse to attend to their spiritual wounds; to nurse them back to health. God has given women an added level of sympathy and connectedness.

Peter seeks an example of a *spiritually-based trophy wife*. He uses Sarah, instead of Mary. Sarah is an interesting choice. Her husband Abraham is our example of men's faith; but she laughed when God told her that she would become pregnant in her old age.

*By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. (Hebrews 11:11-12)*

Genesis 18 tells us that Sarah referred to her husband as *lord* (master or prince). She was obedient and supportive as Abram pursued God all over the middle east. He walked away from his extended family for points unknown; and she did not give him a hard time about it. There is not a lot of obvious information as to why God used Sarah. God loves to use the unusable. Physically, she was already used up. She was as good as dead. It was ridiculous to think that she could have a baby. Apparently the leaps of faith that Abram was making were being made by Sarai too.

*(as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.” (Romans 4:17-22)*

For every visionary, there is a support team. For every spokesman, there is all of the logistical support. Abram could not have been our example without Sarai in his corner. Not everyone who serves in the body of Christ has a microphone. Some are completely hidden.

Adam was a bit lost and empty without Eve. Adam and Eve were looking for a little more out of life, though they had it all at their fingertips. They could not see it for what it was. Abram and Sarai saw that all they had were not enough as well. They turned to God for answers, and they got a better result and a better legacy. Adam was less than one before Eve came. He was an incomplete unit.

*And the LORD God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.” Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one*

*flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:18, 22-25)*

A solid wife can sometimes be best viewed by looking at the husband. That is the epitome of meekness and selflessness. Like a solid redwood, a good wife embraces her husband and steadies him as the winds of change try to push him around. She is also a great PR ally. I am one of those rare lucky guys who truly has a Proverbs 31 wife. Any friends and family who gravitate to me eventually meet Jean. It is not too long before she becomes the main attraction. She just does it all, with a lot of grace and dedication and love.

*Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil All the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax, And willingly works with her hands. She is like the merchant ships, She brings her food from afar. She also rises while it is yet night, And provides food for her household, And a portion for her maidservants. She considers a field and buys it; From her profits she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, And strengthens her arms. She perceives that her merchandise is good, And her lamp does not go out by night. She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hand holds the spindle. She extends her hand to the poor, Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of snow for her household, For all her household is clothed with scarlet. She makes tapestry for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, And supplies sashes for the merchants. Strength and honor are her clothing; She shall rejoice in time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her: "Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all." Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, And let her own works praise her in the gates. (Proverbs 31)*

**Read 1 Peter 3:7-12:** Husbands are firstly asked to bless their wife in a way that she can appreciate. Many husbands think they are encouraging their wife; but it is not according to the right *love language*. I heard about a husband who gave his wife a weed eater. I don't recall if it was for Christmas, her birthday, anniversary or Valentines Day. For most women, this would not fit the expectation. Men tend to be fixers, and solution based. Women tend to want to share the experience and discuss it. Men tend to use an economy of words; while women want to get into the details.

We are to minister to all people where they are. Jesus ministered to a woman at the well who had been rejected from her society. She had been making bad choices for a long time; and she lived in shame.

*So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. (John 4:5-9)*

Be a fixer, not a critic. Let yourself be the one who does not weaken others or return fire. People really do not have an open mind when they are arguing anyway.

**Read 1 Peter 3:13-17:** I have seen the value in having improved decision-making as I get older. Younger men see more about the value of their effort and energy. I have friends who have life predicaments that seem to follow them. Sometimes it has a lot to do with their decision-making process and follow through. They go from one compromised situation to the next. It can be hard to help a person who makes self-defeating decisions. Somehow their hope exceeds their logic.

God has made us to judge ourselves; that is why we have a conscience. There is an old adage that says *there is no need to accuse a guilty conscience*. We even unknowingly tend to punish ourselves. We can feel like we had it coming. We can feel like we are overdue.

**The use of self-punishment to reduce feelings of guilt has been well documented.** People in compromised situations are merely trying to assuage fairly mild feelings of guilt. They can willingly subject themselves to painful or undesirable situations. They feel like they are due, or that they had it coming.

We criticize ourselves, others accuse us, and the devil accuses us. The Bible tells us that fighting our critics is not worth the energy and detraction. It may be off-based, but it is ultimately might be true (if we dig around in introspection) in some respect. We should be able to laugh when people strike out at anything righteous that we do. We should be able to say with confidence: "*That is not even the half of it!*".

Character assassination is very popular right now. Everything is *weaponized* and about winning a war of words. The 6:00 news, radio talk shows and the newspapers reflect that. The news is all about the Presidential re-election process. Many things are editorialized; and commandeered for a hidden agenda. Being a *fair trader* who can take a hit and own up to failures is rare.

As Christians we are not selling ourselves. We are advocates for something better than ourselves. We tend to get more attention from others when we reach out and help them. We were not really made to engage in an endless war of words. There is a place for public debate and apologetics.

**Read 1 Peter 3:18-22:** Jesus is our ultimate example of a person willingly being wronged for the team's benefit. He did not deck the fake priests and scribes who fabricated stories to destroy his character. He did get in the face of those who were abusing the weak.

There has been a lot of debate about verse 19. It may mean that when Jesus died, he went to the place called Paradise or Abraham's Bosom to bring all dead believers with him to heaven. There are also verses that describe him walking into hell and death and completely dominating the situation.

*Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) (Ephesians 4:8-10)*

*"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. (Acts 2:22-24)*

*...having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:14-15)*

Rising from the dead leads into the idea behind baptism. Peter also talks a little bit about baptism; and how that relates to Noah. Noah's flood killed many unrighteous, and it saved a few righteous. We do not think about the flood as a blessing; but it removed a world full of evil men. The dinosaurs had become man eaters, and the society became full of dangerous warlords. Noah's family was saved in the act that also caused death. Baptism is both a funeral and a birth announcement. If Noah was able to spare a few unsaved neighbors, they would have terrorized him and compromised his sanctified family even further. We are so worried about losing our freedom to live for Christ. In reality it is like worrying about taking a full trash can out of your family room. Afterwards you can't think of why you wanted to keep the garbage and rejected things that repulsed you over the years.

There is a better version of us in Christ. It is coming from a different world view, and it has the power to back it up. We need to let the Holy Spirit have his way in us.