

To Inherit a Blessing

Intro: As we read the passage did you hear all the instructions for good behavior? Be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kind-hearted, and humble. Don't be evil, or speak evil, or think evil. Be nice, kind, circumspect, loving, submissive. Does that not really describe us? Mostly? What we intend? The problem is our inconsistencies, the little flies in the milk of our behavior. Even if practically perfect, the lapses spoil the good. And if we were perfect, then pride would spoil it. Let's examine these instructions, first to wives, then husbands, and then to everyone.

Instructions to Wives (1-6)

- Context (2:11-12 & 2:21-25)
 - Excellent behavior in Christ evidence of new birth, living stones in Jesus, a witness to the pagan world.
 - Example of Christ in committing no iniquity under undeserved duress and death—for our sake.
 - Gospel: *You were straying, but now have returned to Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.*
- *You wives, be submissive to your own husbands...* Is the idea of submission threatening? Why so?
 - *In the same way*, also to governing authorities, masters, even as Jesus submitted to cross.
 - What does that look like? *Chaste and respectful behavior.*
 - The overriding purpose: *If any are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word. Winning!*
- Where's the grace that makes it possible? Pleasing God!
 - Not external beauty (adornment) alone, but the imperishable quality of a quiet and gentle spirit which is precious in the sight of God. Trusting in the goodness of God in His love for us.
 - Note: Holy women in former times who hoped in God. Also, Sarah in doing right w/out fearing any fear.

Instructions to Husbands (7)

- *You husbands likewise live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is woman.*
 - Likewise suggests mutual submission, but with a higher level of responsibility to God for her.
 - Weaker vessel, not inferior but rather more precious, valued, honored, cared-for.
- *Grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life.* Again: equality before God, complementary functions.
- *Lest your prayers be hindered.*
 - Our lives are spiritually entwined, in marriage, but also in the broader sense.
 - Our relationships impact prayers. *If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.* Ps. 66:18
 - It is only in communion and by His gracious power that we love—including confession and forgiveness.

Summary Instructions (8-12)

- Excellent behavior characterized by kind humility and our reactions: *Not insult for insult but instead, giving a blessing.* [Next time you are snubbed, say something nice. "Say three nice things about your sister."]
- Receiving a Blessing: Back to example of Christ who when reviled did not revile in return.
 - Back to the grace for us, won at the Cross.
 - *You were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.*
- Giving a Blessing: How do we give a blessing? *Not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but...*
 - *Keep tongue from evil and lips from speaking guile.*
 - *Depart from evil and do good*
 - *Seek peace and pursue it.*
 - The promise of divine help:
 - The eyes of the Lord upon the righteous; His ears attend to their prayer.
 - But the face of the Lord against those who do evil.

Conclusion: All Peter's exhortations, calling us to submission as citizens, as workers, as people in relationship are really calling us to submit our lives to Jesus. When we surrender to Him, we receive an eternal inheritance. That puts our difficulties and trials here in a new light, with assurance that our godly trust in Jesus is actually demonstrating to the world something of the blessedness (the happiness and joy) that we have received. In a nutshell: we can bless others because we have been blessed.