

1 PETER CERTAINTY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Study 6 - 1 Peter 3:1-12

Given we live in a 21st century democracy with an election around the corner, why do Australians value equality?

What would be your top three reasons from the list to the right? Is there anything else you would add?

- control
- being seen as the same
- self-determination
- It's fair
- submitting
- it depends upon my merit not social status
- to show human solidarity
- freedom from oppression
- I get to have a say
- It's my right
-

Previously Peter asks people in a number of different life situations to submit.

Look back at **2:13-17** how would you define submission? (maybe look up some definitions) Who's decision is it to submit?

Read 1 Peter 3:1-12

What is asked or said about wives and husbands on the following topics?

What does the passage say? Who is being addressed? What is the purpose?	How does the mind wander on this subject? What comes to your mind? What do others in Canberra think? (does the passage back up these thoughts?)
Submission	
Beauty	
Power	
Equality	

Did Jesus, Peter and Paul always submit to the governing authorities? Can you think of any situations when a wife would not be bound to submit to her husband's authority? (how might this principal protect a wife? How might this also lead to sin?)

Why do you think Peter hones in on Beauty and physical strength when talking to wives and husbands respectively? Why is what is asked of husbands a 'likewise' of what was asked of wives (they too have 'likewise' v.1)?

How does Australian culture suggest the best way for a man and a woman to live in marriage? How do they express equality in their aspirations and behaviour? (What parts sound like God's desire for marriage Gen 2:22-25? What parts show how sin has affected marriage Gen 3:16b) What still tugs at our attitudes and behavior?

How does the Holy Spirit prompt Christians to think differently about marriage? How can the way husbands and wives relate to each other point to Jesus and his glory?

Read **1 Peter 3:8-12** What is the picture of unity in the gospel life?

Attitudes	Actions

What seems good and right and beautiful about these attitudes and behaviours?

Which seems easiest to do?

Which one is the hardest?

What situations seem the most difficult to think and act that way?

How does knowing who we are as God's people help us change?

How does knowing Jesus and our future help us?

If we worked as these things as a community, how would it protect us from our fears?

Prayer:

Confess our failures and thank God for new birth in Jesus.

Pray for the marriages at church – for courage to live God's way in them. Pray for those thinking about getting married.

Pray that our certainty as heirs in Christ would be shown by our trust in him and the outworking of that in our behaviour

This would be a good week to consider breaking up into men and women for different parts of the study (even come back later and share some insights together). This might assist with sharing - particularly if there are specific concerns of people in the group and they might feel vulnerable speaking up about certain issues in front of the opposite sex. If you know that some people in your group struggles in this area you may want to warn them that the topic will be discussed in advance.

Background:

The building blocks of a worldview on marriage come from Genesis 2-4 (Gen 2:22-25; 3:16b; 4:22-25). Genesis 2 talks of the joy of two becoming one flesh. Genesis 3 speaks of the curse as a result of sin. The desire of the wife to dominate but that the husband will rule over her. Genesis 4 shows the ugliness of how marriage has developed with Lamech (4:22-25) parading his power, strength and hostility towards his *two wives* for his own glory (two becoming one flesh has disappeared). New birth in Christ helps us to consider what God wishes for marriage and how Christ redeems it.

Discussion

Some people love talking about biblical ideas and workshopping them. For some in your group this may not be a hypothetical issue so be alert but not alarmed as you steer the discussion. You may choose, depending upon the vibe in the room to move quickly through some parts so that the whole of the passage is covered. It may be hard to move from the section about wives onto the section about husbands let alone to the end of the passage but it would be helpful to do so. And in some cases it may be helpful to move swiftly through to help put things in context.

Cracking open some of the misconceptions that spring up when talking about the submission of wives to their husbands could be helpful as you determine what the passage says and doesn't say (you could also have a look at Ephesians 5 to fill out submission but also to help people notice what is unique to Peter's contribution. It is so easy to import ideas from elsewhere without noticing). This is not about the dynamic of men and women in general. It is important to stress that this is talking about one wife submitting to her one husband. It is also asking the wife to submit to her husband. It is not telling the husband to make sure his wife submits to him. It is a reversal of the consequences of sin and, because Peter has to say this, it is still part of our Christian experience.

There are a few ways you could sharpen discussion at different points of the study if needed. During the discussion around the following questions you might want to ask some supplementary questions.

From the study:

Why do you think Peter hones in on Beauty and physical strength when talking to wives and husbands respectively? Why is what is asked of husbands a likewise of what was asked of wives?

How does Australia suggest the best way for a man and a woman to live in marriage? How do they express equality in their aspirations and behaviour? (What parts sound like God's desire for marriage? What parts show how sin has affected marriage Gen 2:22-25; 3:16b)

Supplementary questions: (these could be added to the time you allocate to men and women chatting separately)

Why does Australia need a campaign on domestic violence?

How can and do men use their strength/power in relationships without being violent (for good or bad)? An example of passive power is to do nothing and so express that a wife can't make a husband do what he should.

What do the following statements say about marriage? How do they affect our way of thinking? How do they show 21st century views and concerns about equality? How do they inform our views of marriage?

- I better check with the boss
- They're useless around the house
- They're under the thumb big time
- They've got a tongue on them the ball; and chain
- ___ who must be obeyed