

Relationships

(1 Peter 2:9–3:9)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Today I want to talk about relationships because they are a major part of our lives.
 - A. We deal with them with brethren, at home, at work, and at school.
 - B. Of course, the dominant relationship of our life is to be the one we have with our God through Jesus, which in turn affects all other relationships we might have.
 - i. Therefore, our text begins with this foundation (1 Pet. 2:9-10 – “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you **may proclaim the excellencies of Him** who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;¹⁰ **for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**”).
 - ii. So, because we have received mercy and are now God’s possession, part of His holy nation, we are to use our lives, which includes our relationship’s, to “proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”
2. So, what we are going to do this morning is consider what the Spirit has said concerning how to proclaim the excellencies of God in our relationship:
 - A. With the world
 - B. With our work
 - C. With our mate

BODY:

I. With the world (1 Pet. 2:11-17): “Aliens and strangers/sojourners and exiles”

- A. We show the excellencies of Christ to the world by abstaining from fleshly lust (2:11 – “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.”).
 1. We are appealed to us as “aliens and strangers,” or as temporary residents of this world, those who know we have no true home here (Phil. 3:20 – “For **our citizenship is in heaven**, from which also **we eagerly wait for a Savior**, the Lord Jesus Christ”).
 2. Because we have a *heavenly* citizenship we are urged, which is actually a very strong appeal, to stay away from, or resist, fleshly lusts, the sinful desires of this fleshly body connected to **this world**, because these **wage war against the soul**.
 3. Paul, in calling these the deeds, or works, of the flesh explains what these are and the danger they hold (Gal. 5:19-21 – “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that **those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**”)!
- B. As “aliens/strangers” we show the excellencies of God by living exemplary lives (2:12-17).
 1. We must behave excellently before the Gentiles (2:12 – “Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”).
 - a. Our lives are to be characterized by excellence, or what is good, beautiful, virtuous, and praiseworthy (**Thayer, Mounce**) before the Gentiles.
 - b. If you wonder why Peter says “Gentiles,” it not because all the readers were Jews or because it does not matter how we act in front of Jews, but because Christians are the “true Israel of God,” and therefore non-Christians are Gentiles.
 - i. So, we must live with excellence before the Gentiles, the *natives/citizens* of this world, which is not our home, because they tend to scrutinize and criticize the “stranger.”
 - ii. When evil is done by a foreigner, one not a citizen here, we must admit that we take special note of that!

- iii. So, as God's people, we must give them **no cause to accuse**, while giving them **every reason to be saved and glorify God**.
- 2. We must seek to be model citizens (2:13-17).
 - a. A proper attitude toward the government and submission to those in authority are things required of God's people "for the Lord's sake" (2:13-15 – "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. ¹⁵ For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men."").
 - i. We submit for Christ's sake to authorities at all levels, seeing they are there for the punishment of evil and the praise of what is right (2:13-14).
 - ii. So, I cannot pick and choose what officials or laws I will submit to, like whether I will pay taxes, or obey the speed limit, or follow local/national law, etc.!
 - iii. Righteousness is hated and maligned enough in this hostile world without Christians giving credence to it by unnecessary civil disobedience!
 - b. Instead, as aliens/strangers who serve God our job is to choose to do what is right (2:15-17 – "For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. ¹⁶ Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king."").
 - i. So, doing what is **right** is how God intends for us to silence those who are ignorant of Christ and the truth.
 - ii. Therefore, though we are free in Christ, that freedom is to be used to serve God (2:16).
 - iii. For, what evil can be justly said of those who honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honor the king (2:17)?

II. Our relationship to our work: "Respectful Servants" (2:18-25):

- A. Servants show the excellencies of Christ by being submissive to their masters, or those over them (2:18-20).
 - 1. Respectful, reverent, submission is demanded whether one's master is "good and gentle" or "unreasonable" (2:18 – "Servants, be submissive to your masters **with all respect**, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable."").
 - a. It is hard for us to grasp what this truly demands because we have never been slaves—someone owned by another person who could treat us as they will!
 - b. If God demands this of slaves, how much more so of us.
 - i. For, we **choose** for whom we work! We can change employers if we want!
 - ii. Therefore, I am simply presenting an ungodly and unacceptable example to the world when I badmouth my employer while choosing to continue to work there.
 - c. We should be the best employes, seeing we work to serve Christ the King of Kings (Eph. 6:5-7 – "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as **slaves of Christ**, doing the **will of God from the heart**. ⁷ With good will render service, **as to the Lord**, and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good thing each one does, **this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free**."").
 - 2. Submissive service while suffering brings favor from God (2:19-20 – "For **this finds favor**, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when **suffering unjustly**. ²⁰ For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God").
 - a. When we care enough about how Christ is viewed through our lives that we will suffer wrong and injustice from sinners with patience, that is when God's favor comes.

- b. If we suffer for our sin, because of our complaining and reviling, there is no credit to be gained if we endure the consequential suffering patiently!
- B. We must do this because we have been called **for this purpose** of suffering (2:21-25).
 1. Again, it is very difficult for us to grasp the context here considering that none of us live as physical slaves with our lives being totally in the hands of another person.
 2. We have this purpose because we follow a *suffering* Savior (2:21-23 – “For you have been called for this purpose, **since Christ also suffered for you**, leaving you an **example for you to follow** in His steps, ²² who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; ²³ and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously”).
 - a. Despite being God’s perfect, holy, and righteous Son, Jesus chose to face great suffering by the hand of sinful men without reviling or threats that he had every right to make.
 - b. Instead, He entrusted his life and its end, its reward, to the Father who judges righteously.
 - c. When we feel we are *above* such treatment by the world because we have *done nothing wrong*, we should think again about our Savior and what He did for us.
 3. For, Jesus faced such suffering in righteousness so that sinners, or those responsible for His suffering, which includes us, might live (2:24-25 – “and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might **die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.** ²⁵ **For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.**”).
 - a. He did not choose to be mortally wounded because we deserved such a sacrifice from Him, but so that we would leave our rebellion and *return to Him* our Creator and Lord!
 - b. When our “rights” have been violated and we want vengeance on those responsible, remember that patiently enduring mistreatment without “letting them have it” may be the only way that the harsh, malevolent person will ever be brought to Christ!
 - c. Is this hard? Yes, without question! But, with Christ all things are possible (Phil. 4:13).

III. Our relationship with our mate: “Wives and Husbands” (1 Pet. 3:1-7).

- A. In the like manner to Christ, wives show the excellencies of Christ by being *submissive* to their husbands (3:1-6).
 1. This must be true whether one’s husband is a Christian or not (3:1-2 – “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, ² as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.”).
 - a. Why is this so important? Because, again, God’s people must not only give the world no cause to accuse, but also give them every reason to come to Christ and be saved.
 - b. So, like Christ who endured trials and tribulation for our salvation, the godly wife will submit to her husband, whether he is a Christian or not, so that her light might shine through her chaste and respectful behavior in hopes that he might be won to Christ.
 - c. Again, I know submission is hard, especially when you may think he is not making the best decision, or when God’s will is not his desire.
 - d. Yet, when Christ’s will is contrary to his will, you must obey God!
 2. To show the excellencies of Christ, Christian wives and women should see their beauty as shining from the inside out (3:3-6). (And Christian men should appreciate that as well.)
 - a. So, the focus of a woman’s beauty is not to be merely external, but focused more so on her internal beauty (3:3-4 – “Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; ⁴ 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.”).
 - i. A woman should strive to have a spirit that is:
 - 1) Gentle - meek, mild of spirit, having her power under control

- 2) Quiet - peaceable, tranquil, calm, which in this case comes through the assurance she has found in Christ
 - ii. Contrary to the ungodly views of today, a woman having a gentle and quiet spirit is of great value, seeing it is the *imperishable quality* that is precious to God.
 - b. Ladies, you want to do these things because this is how the holy women who hope in God have always adorned themselves (3:5-6 – “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**; ⁶ 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.”).
- B. In the manner shown us in Christ, husbands show the excellencies of Christ by seeking the very best for their wives (3:7 – “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. Husbands, who have headship in the marriage relationship, are commanded to “live with your wives in an **understanding** way.”
 - a. The Greek here literally commands the man to live together with his wife *according to knowledge*.
 - b. In other words, husbands need to be diligent students of their wives and of the marriage relationship.
 - i. I think this is commanded of men because, unlike wives, we tend to be less attuned to our wives.
 - ii. So, God commands husbands to be students, to seek out knowledge that would be beneficial to the husband-wife relationship: knowledge of God’s purposes and principles for marriage; knowledge of the wife’s desires, goals, and frustrations; knowledge of her strengths and weaknesses in the physical, emotional, and spiritual realm; etc.
 2. This requires that he show “honor to the woman as the weaker vessel” (ESV).
 - a. First, there is no derogatory intent here, seeing the man is also a vessel.
 - b. Also, I used the ESV because the NASB says husbands are to show honor to their wives as “someone weaker” (NASB), which is a poor translation.
 - i. For, this literally says for a husband to honor his wife as a “vessel made,” or as a clay vase, pitcher, or pot.
 - ii. Therefore, the idea is that a husband must handle his wife with care.
 3. It is of utmost importance that husbands do this because:
 - a. Your wife is “a fellow heir of the grace of life.”
 - i. So, she may be your wife and must submit to you, but she is God’s daughter.
 - ii. And you know what? Like a loving father, God is watching that relationship!
 - b. If a husband ignores this, it will affect his relationship with God, causing his prayers to be hindered, meaning God is not going to listen!
- C. So, our relationship to our mate as a wife or a husband must be fulfilled in godly fashion, or according to God’s will, so that we might show to the world the excellencies of Christ our Savior!

CONCLUSION:

1. In conclusion, I give you the Spirit’s summation of it all (1 Pet. 3:8-9 – “To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.”)
2. So, in the end, we see that the relationships we have as Christians matter to God so much so that our inheriting of God’s blessing rides on how we deal with them.

- A. So, whether it concerns our relationship to the world as aliens and strangers, our relationship to work as respectful servants, or our relationship to our mate as a wife or husband, how we deal with them will affect our standing with God!
 - B. Therefore, we had better use these relationships to bring glory to God!
3. If you are not a Christian, the relationship that you must address first and foremost is your relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Will you come to Jesus in F-R-C-B?
 4. If you are a Christian but have fallen away, will you return to God in repentance and confession of your sin seeking God's forgiveness?