

# Do Not Be Surprised at the Fiery Ordeal Among You

## An Expositional Journey Through 1Peter 1Peter 3:1-7

### 31- The Imperishable Quality of a Gentle and Quiet Spirit

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September 2, 2018

#### 1 Peter 3:1-7

**1** 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.

**3** 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.

**5** 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.

**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.

To the Glory of God

Women are a glorious and wonderful Gift from God. Without Women, this world would be a very drab and ugly place. The Female sex adds so much to this life to make it to be sweet and kind and lovely. Part of God's Kindness toward a fallen and sinful world is the "Gift of Beauty" that He gave to every Woman. Every single Woman on earth, no matter what culture or nationality or ethnicity, no matter if she is rich or poor, educated or uneducated, and no matter how old she might

be, every single Woman on earth has a very *natural* and a very *pervasive* Beauty about her that radiates out from her to a very dark and violent world.

And most Men know that. Most Men see the Beauty that God has given to the daughters of Eve. And they like what they see. Most Men, if they are honest, will tell you that they don't quite understand a Woman. How can something so beautiful be so strong? Isn't Strength and Beauty mutually *exclusive*? How is it that, in *some* ways, a Woman can be so delicate and so fragile, and yet, in *other* areas, be so steadfast and capable? To most Men, Women are an amazing and puzzling and intriguing Mystery.

And yet, most Women do not know or do not believe they are very special, let alone beautiful. Most Women think they are anything *but* beautiful. And so, Women spend about \$25 billion dollars every year to try to *become* beautiful. And that's just here in America.

But the strange phenomenon of Women, who already possess a normal and natural and God-given Beauty, either not knowing or not believing they are beautiful, and then going to great lengths to try to *become* what they already *are*, didn't start with the current generation. About ten centuries before Jesus was born, God the Holy Spirit "moved along" King Solomon to ask a Question:

### **Song of Solomon 6:10**

**Who is this that grows like the dawn, As beautiful as the full moon, As pure as the sun, As awesome as an army with banners?'**

... and the Answer is:

"A Woman"

And, 30 centuries later, we are still asking Questions like this:

*"Who else but God could design something that combines blinding Beauty and vibrant Strength?"*

... and ...

*"Where else but in the Scriptures could we find a vision of Womanhood that is as glorious as this?"*

Two Books, “**the Psalms**” and “**Proverbs**”, contain nothing but Words that were “exhaled”<sup>1</sup> by the very Mouth of God. They contain not merely “True Words”, but Words that are the most *unique* Words in all the world, in that they are “Inspired” and “Inerrant” and “Infallible”. These two Books are a *part* of the only Library<sup>2</sup> on the face of the earth where anyone can read the actual Word and Will of the Owner and Creator of the Universe.

We stand amazed that God took very common and ordinary men, men who, for the most part, would never stand out in a crowd, and God made them to be Apostles and Prophets. And God “moved along” 40 of these very ordinary men to write down Words that changed the world. But we also need to wonder after a God, Who took very common and ordinary tools of language, like nouns and verbs and prepositional phrases and adjectives and adverbs, and He *anointed* these Words to be without any error.

And as you read these inerrant Words in the **Psalms** and **Proverbs**, you see a *completed* vision of what is, perhaps, the single greatest example of when this Beauty is combined with a heart that has experienced the miracle of the New Birth. And that completion is: a “*godly Woman*”. For example, in **Proverbs 31**, we see Fortitude clothed in Splendor, a Woman, who presides over her domain with strong arms and resourcefulness. And, in **Psalms 144:12**, we see Daughters that are “**corner pillars**”, whose strong support could only be matched by their exquisiteness.

The wisest man in all the ancient world understood the great Value that a godly Woman is to a Man, and he said:

#### **Proverbs 12:4**

**An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who shames *him* is like rottenness in his bones.**

... so, an “*Excellent Wife*”, a Wife, who has attained “*true Excellence*” in this life, is a married Female, who has been gifted to behold the Glory of God in His Son, Jesus Christ, through the Wonder of Salvation, and *loves* what she sees, and who has been *transformed* into what she sees.

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<sup>1</sup> Greek- *Theopneustos*

<sup>2</sup> The English Holy Bible is actually a small Library of 66 Books

And Solomon says that a Wife like that is the very “pinnacle”, the “glory”, the “crown” of her Husband.

Nothing else fills that place. There is not anything else in all of God’s Universe that can do that for a Man. Not any animal, not success, not money, not achievements. *Only* an Excellent Wife. And my Question is this:

Since it is true that *only* an Excellent Wife is the “Crown” of her Husband, how much is a Wife like that *worth*? How *important* is a Wife like that?

How *valuable* is a Wife like that? How *vital* to the success of, not only the Man, but of all Humanity, is a truly “Excellent Wife”?

And yet, the Vision of Womanhood that our American culture promotes and holds up and offers and glories in is a very sad consolation from the Vision that Solomon saw. And it is a vision that *exchanges* the glory of this amazing and mysterious biblical “Feminine Strength” for a treadmill race to nowhere. And this is true, because the modern Vision of “American Womanhood” *belittles* and *squanders* and sadly, many times, completely *eliminates* the kind of Influence on Humanity that flows out, *primarily* from Excellent Wives, and is found *primarily* in the soil of the “Home”.

The Home (we used to know what that word meant), the Home, that “Center of all Learning”, the very “Heart of nation-building”, the “Dispenser of Love and Stability”, the “Venue for Gospel Hospitality” (for single and married alike), the Home is, in short, the very “footings” of all Humanity. And, yet to many, the Home is of little or no importance and is really nothing more than something that we all need to be in a hurry to abandon.

And yet, because of Jesus Christ, it is this “Home-based Influence”, the Influence that, *almost exclusively*, flows out from Women, *that* is what will last for a thousand generations. But those who tell us what is important today either don’t know that or don’t believe that, and so they urge us to cast the Home aside for the pursuit of shiny trinkets that they say will make us happy, and that will *not* require diapering.

But what does the mad rush to push Women out from their Homes and away from all that the Bible tells us will happen in the Home with Excellent Wives; what does this radical and utterly unbiblical effort

offer us in return? Well, it offers Women, who strive against *themselves*, in a never-ending war with the seeming redundancy of two X chromosomes. It offers an ongoing competition that Women were never supposed to engage in, and one that, in their heart of hearts, they really don't want to win.

Because, you see, when a Woman sets herself up alongside a Man, as though she was made for the *same things* as a Man, When she seeks to live her life as though God *didn't* create any unique distinctions between her and a Man, the result is *not* the coveted "Equality" that everyone says is the Goal; the result is *not* "Uniformity" that supposedly makes her happy. The result is a very odd and strange "reverse order" where now Women are *leaving* what is the very *best* about being a Woman (bringing forth life through birth), and doing what is the very *worst* about being a Man (taking life in war).

So, in order for her to become more and more like a Man, the Man has to become less and less like one. And that's something that most Women, even the most ardent Feminists, recoil at in their heart. Not because Femininity is, in itself, detestable, but because when it is placed on a Man, it is grotesque.

My friends, those who seek to rule over us in this day, and who go about to inform us about what we should be concerned about, are just wrong about this. "Feminine glory" is *not* "universal" any more than "Male glory" is. "Male glory" is suitable only to a Man, and "Feminine glory" is suitable only for a Woman. And that is true, *not* because Men are "better" than Women, or because Men and Women have *nothing* in common. No, we have *everything* in common as being bone of the same bone, and flesh of the same flesh. It is true because, in the beginning, God wisely made them *uniquely* Male and Female, *on purpose*. And so, whatever "sameness" we have only makes sense in light of the one God, Who is *distinct* in His three "Persons".

When Women *abandon* their God-given "Feminine glory" in pursuit of the *uniqueness* that belongs only to Men, first of all, they *never* achieve what they want. But, in the process, they *do* forsake their *own* unique God-given "glory". And make no mistake about this, there is a glory in Womanhood. And this makes the modern Woman to be a "usurpers", as she constantly argues that her uterus and incontrovertible Biology don't matter.

And as more and more young Women become deceived about their own inherent, God-given "Beauty" and "Value" and "Worth" and "Importance", and as they go about to find *another* "beauty" and *another* "importance" that God didn't give them, they believe the lie that in order to be relevant in a "Man's World" they have to become more like a Man. And *nothing* is more destructive to Women than that.

The Reality is that Women are *already* amazingly *relevant*, they are *already* so very *important*, and so *vital*, and so *valuable*, as Women! What God has placed in a Woman, who seeks after Excellence, this godly, biblical Excellence, as they seek after it, *in their unique Femininity*, simply *cannot* be found anywhere else on earth. And when *that* Relevance and *that* Value is ignored or minimized or eliminated, all of Humanity suffers.

My sisters, I beg you to hear me. Do you want to be relevant? Do you seek to change the world? Do you want the fullness of Joy and to find the ultimate Satisfaction in this world and in this life? Then shock the world and become what you were made to be: a fearless, unflappable, God-fearing Woman. Do not *marginalize* or *abandon* the very differences that make you *essential*.

We must understand that the unique, God-given Power that a Woman has to influence this world is found in her ability to *transform* things. But her Power is *not* the same Power of a Man. The Power of a godly Woman is *not* in the strength of her arms, but in the seemingly vulnerable softness of her Beauty and Love. Read again the wisdom of Solomon from **Proverbs 12:4**:

**An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who shames *him* is like rottenness in his bones.**

Here, a Wife is compared to a "crown" on the head of her Husband. Now that isn't because she's simply decorative, even though the fact that a crown is beautiful is *part* of what makes it valuable (the crown of royalty, by definition, is higher and better and more beautiful than the floppy hat of the peasant), but also because she is what makes her "good man" great. She *transforms* a promising bachelor into a purposeful and respected Husband. She enters into the Covenant of Marriage and begins her Ministry of "helping" her Husband fulfill the Call of God on his life.

The excellent Wife learns *everything* about "her man", and sees all of his faults and weaknesses. And, yet, she loves him, and she dedicates her life to help him shine. And no one is more happy, and no one is more satisfied when her Husband is praised and valued by others, than the Wife is. She is used by God to help display the "value" and "importance" and "worth" of her Husband (which is his "glory") to the world, even as the Church is used by God to magnify and display the Glory of Christ to the world.

And in this uniquely Feminine, *transformative* Role, whether as a Sister or a Daughter or a Mother or a Wife or an Aunt or a Grandmother, the godly Woman is used like her Savior. Like Jesus, she *submits* herself to the will of another. And like Jesus, God uses her to take what was *useless* on its own, and shapes it, she *transforms* it, into glory! And so, dirty things become clean; and chaos is turned into order; and an empty kitchen overflows with life and food; And children are given life and are loved and taught. And the world is changed.

Repeatedly and clearly, the Bible describes Children, who are in need of Knowledge and Truth, with a Mother eager to teach. It tells of Men in need of help and counsel with a Woman fit to give it. It gives examples of friends and neighbors with a thirst for the Truth with a Female opening her home and her heart to share it with them.

So, in a way, a godly and excellent Woman is like a prism that takes in light and turns it into an explosion of even *greater* and *fuller* glory. She doesn't *create* the light, but the Woman, in her unique Womanhood, is used by God so that those around her now see the rainbow that explodes with a myriad of colors that was once contained in the single beam.

An excellent Woman constantly *radiates* reminders of God's Faithfulness. She reads the black and white pages of the Word of God and takes on the task of living them out, in millions of colors, to her Husband and her children, and her neighbors, and the whole world to see. And when they see it, they marvel. When the Bible commands feeding, or nourishing, or training, and love, a godly Woman rises to the task, enhancing and beautifying *everything* around her.

Please hear me when I tell you that God's Design for Womanhood that is spelled out in great detail all through the pages of the Holy Bible is not just "right", it isn't simply something that should be "obeyed", it is *exponentially* "better" than the model given by the world.

But we need to know that this biblical Design does not only apply to those who are married or to Mothers. Single Women, *of all ages*, are meant for full, godly, excellent Womanhood. To be a "Mother" in the *deepest* sense, that is, a "*spiritual* Mother", is about *loving* and *nurturing* and *growing everything* and *everyone* that God has given her.

God created Woman for "glory". But *not* a "glory" that begins and ends with them. The "glory" that Women were created for, spends itself, glorifying *everything* given to them, and points *everything* and *everyone* to the Lord Christ Who is the very Radiance of the Glory of God. So, as Women behold Jesus, His infinite Perfections, His saving Work, His glorious Face, they will love what they see, and they will be changed from one degree of "glory" to another. And a Woman like that will change the world.

And all of this is *why* God the Holy Spirit "moved along" the Apostle Peter to write the first six verses of Chapter 3. Because Women have often been deceived into thinking that Beauty is about how they look or what they wear, their clothing, and their jewelry, or their hair style. But Peter teaches us that God defines a Woman's Beauty very differently. And that is why Peter said this in verses 3&4:

**3 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.**

Here the Apostle speaks about something that is almost unknown in our day, a strange Commodity called:

**... the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit ...**

... which God the Holy Spirit spoke through Peter to tell us:

**... which is precious in the sight of God**

Now the Word that was translated here into English as "**precious**" comes from a Greek word that means: *very costly; excellent; of surpassing*



*value*.<sup>3</sup> And this Word was only used in one other place in the whole Bible- over in **Matthew 13:45&46** where Jesus said:

**Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.**

So, Peter is equating the value of the "spirit", or the "demeanor" of a godly Woman, that is "gentle and quiet", to the Value of the Kingdom of God! In fact, Peter himself said that this kind of "God-blessed spirit" in a Woman was an:

**... imperishable quality ...**

... or a Quality that *cannot* perish, meaning it is eternal!

And the fact that this kind of spirit is eternal tells us that it is *not* something that a Woman *naturally or normally* has. But there are many Women, who are *normally and naturally* "quiet". And yet, many of those Women aren't even saved. So, *whatever* those Women already have by nature is *not* the demeanor that Peter is talking about here. *This* spirit is a Gift from God. And the way that Peter writes this also tells us that this is a *universal* Truth. In other words, *this* is the Will of God for *every* Woman who seeks to be godly and bring God glory.

Now before you begin to think that since God hasn't already made you to be like this, and since this is *not* your nature, therefore, this *doesn't* apply to you, we must realize that *everything* that God tells us to do is categorically impossible for any human to accomplish, in and by his own human initiative or decision. *Everything* God commands from us is *always* originated "by" the Grace of God, and it is *always* made real to the individual believer "through" the Gift of Faith.

And that tells us that, even though this type of spirit may well be *foreign* to most Women, all godly Women should, first, *desire* this kind of spirit. And then, secondly, they should repent because they do not already have it. And, thirdly, they should then *seek after it*, and earnestly ask God to grant it to them. Why? Because, in the Eyes of the God, Who has saved their wretched souls, this type of spirit or

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<sup>3</sup> Gr. *polutelees*

demeanor glorifies Him, this pleases God, and all saved Women should always seek to please and glorify God.

So, this is *not* something that a Woman can just push a button and have. No, this is something that a believing Woman *grows* into. As she sees Jesus more and more clearly, in all the particularities of His pristine Holiness, the *first thing* that happens is that a godly Woman begins to admire and to be in awe and grows in her "*Reverential Respect*" (Fear) of the Savior. And these three Qualities: Admiration, Awe, and godly Fear (reverential Respect), *produces a deep and abiding* Love for Jesus. Because a human being simply *cannot* love, in any real or deep way, something that he doesn't know or understand. So, Ignorance (or Distance) *cannot* produce Love. Only Knowledge (and Closeness) can produce Love.

So, the Reality of Who Jesus is enters *first* in your mind (through the pages of inspired Scripture). And then the mind "informs the heart" with Divine Truth, because the heart is *fickle* and *unreliable*. The Prophet Jeremiah said:

### **Jeremiah 17:9**

**The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?**

... which is *why* Divine Truth must enter us through our minds, and *why* our minds must then "inform our hearts". But as the human mind receives Truth, and as the mind informs the heart, the heart *grows* in Admiration, Awe, and this reverential Respect. And the result is a real and deep and profound Love for God, and a Love for the "things of the Spirit of God"<sup>4</sup>. Another way of looking at this is to understand what the Apostle John said in **1 John 4:19**:

**We love, because He first loved us.**

So, we now love God, and we now love "the things of the Spirit of God". And what that means, is that we now love, what we normally and naturally used to hate. And this is true about us *only* because the Love, which God "set on us", and the Love with which God chose us to

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<sup>4</sup> The phrase, "**the things of the Spirit of God**" comes from **1Corinthians 2:14** and describes those "things" that honor and bring Glory to God (like the Bible and Prayer and godly Fellowship, etc.); and things that only saved people delight in and which lost people *do not* "accept" and *cannot* "understand".

save us, is at work *in* us and *through* us and *around* us, to *cause* us to love Him. And that means that our love *for* God is a gracious Gift *from* God.

And the “means” or the “way” that God has chosen for this love for Him (that is based on His Love for us) to come to us is by and through an ongoing exposure to the Holy Scriptures. And that is why the first step is realizing that it is the Will of God for *all* Females to have this kind of “spirit” or “demeanor”, and that the modern Woman is not exempt from it.

Now, in context, Peter has just been talking about how saved Wives can help bring their Husbands to Salvation. Back in verses 1&2, he said:

**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, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.**

... so, the larger Issue that Peter has been dealing with, since the beginning of Chapter 2, is what living as “Aliens and Strangers” in this fallen world looks like. And he has gone over several examples in Chapter 2 about all believers and even slaves. And now, as he begins Chapter 3, Peter is telling the born-again Wives what “growing in respect to Salvation” looks like in their Marriages.

So, he begins by telling Wives, who have experienced the miracle of the New Birth, what God’s Will is concerning their sinful Husbands. And now he is getting into the type of “spirit” or “demeanor” that believing Wives should struggle to “put on”.

But *why* does Peter get into clothing and hair and jewelry here? If the subject is “Sanctification”, if the subject at hand is how to “walk this world in white” and how *not* to be dragged down into living like the lost and unsaved world, *why* bring up issues that have nothing to do with the heart?

Because *how* we dress and *how* we carry ourselves and *how* we act absolutely *does* have something to do with our hearts. And when I say that, I am *not* talking about “putting on airs”. I’m *not* saying, and Peter was *not* saying, that Christians should “dress to the nines”. Wearing nice clothes does not make you “nice”. And yet, God the Holy Spirit

“moved along” the Apostle Peter to discuss clothes and hair and jewelry here. And we have to explain that. So, whereas it is true that “dressing up” is *not* the Goal of Christianity, it is also true that these things matter. We simply *cannot* say that these issues are *irrelevant*, because Peter made them relevant. So how do we explain this? We must begin by understanding what *real* Beauty is:

**3 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.**

Here, Peter *discourages* Women from focusing on their *external* Beauty. Now this Passage contains some fairly complicated Greek. And if you notice in your Bible, the word “*merely*” is in italics. And that means that it was *not* in the Original Autograph that Peter actually wrote. Literally, what Peter wrote was this:

Whose let it be not the external of braiding of hair and putting around of gold or putting on of garments adorning.

... that is the literal Greek of **1 Peter 3:3**.

So, *why* did the translators add the word “*merely*”? Because *adding* this word brings out Peter’s original *intent*. Now that may sound strange coming from someone who espouses the concept of “Sola Scriptura” that “adding a word” *helps* to correctly understand the Bible, but that is true. And it is true because of going from Greek to English.

But how do we know that Peter was *not* talking here about *all* external issues? Because of the phrase “**putting on dresses**”. If Peter was talking about *all* external issues on Women, then he would have to condemn the “putting on of dresses”, and we can safely say that Peter was not against Women wearing clothes. So, he gives three examples:

1. Hair
2. Jewelry
3. Clothing

... and he brings these three issues up here because some Women may have been convinced that their Influence on Men is found in them being *externally* beautiful. And even though that is what our *modern* Culture teaches Women today, we should know that this is *exactly* what the Culture of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century was teaching women as well. But to that false concept, Peter says:

**Your adornment must not be *merely* external...**

So, does that mean that a Woman should *never* "do" *anything* with her hair or wear *any* jewelry or *ever* put on clothing? Because there are entire groups within Christianity that teach exactly that. Some teach that godly Women cannot *ever* wear any makeup. Others teach that Women *cannot* braid their hair. Still others teach that if a Women wears even a wedding ring, they are pagan. And they refer to this very Passage as "proof" that their interpretation is correct.

But is that what Peter was saying? If the beginning phrase of verse 3 was *all* Peter said about this subject, then those who interpret it like that would have more validity. But that is *not* all that Peter said about this subject. And that is *why* we must always strive to keep what we are reading and studying *in context*. So, because Peter was pursuing Holiness, we know that he was in favor of Women wearing clothing, and we should, too. In fact, we should be in favor of people putting on a little *more* clothing, not *less*.

But the Point that Peter was making here was that godly Women are not to allow their *main focus* to be on their hair or wearing jewelry or putting on clothing, but rather on spiritual adornment. The Apostle went on to say,:

**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.**

So, the dynamic at work here is that *anything* the world can do, *including* hair styles, jewelry, and fashionable clothing, is no witness to what *only* God can do. *Anybody* can get their hair done. *Anyone* can wear jewelry. *Anyone*, saved or lost, can wear opulent clothing that is worn for no other reason than to draw attention to themselves. It doesn't take the Holy Spirit to do any of this.

But only God can take a Woman, born after the Fall, and give her the Gift of a “quiet and gentle spirit”. Only God can transform a sinner into a saint. Only God can reveal Jesus to a fallen human being. So, whereas certain hair styles or jewelry or certain clothing can produce *external* beauty, only God can produce “**the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.**” *That* kind of *internal* Beauty is *extremely* valuable to God, and *extremely* useful to all of Humanity.

So, how do common, ordinary Women arrive at having this “gentle and quiet spirit”? A key, that we will get more into next time, is what Peter says next:

**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; 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.**

Here, Peter says that Women who are “holy” hope in God. And that Hope makes them *fearless*. And that “godly Fearlessness”, that is born from hoping in God, *frees* them to be a “tranquil and gentle” person in the midst of very difficult circumstances. And *that kind of* “quietness and *that kind of* “gentleness” very *powerfully* testifies to the world that God is *infinitely* Sovereign, that Jesus is *infinitely* Glorious, and that Grace is *infinitely* Majestic. And, when Women live like that, they change the world!

Amen. Let’s pray

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