

1

UNSHAKABLE: An Unshakable Familyⁱ
1 Peter 3:1-7

FAMILY DEDICATION:

Thank you, Candye. I'm truly grateful for you. Families, I am also so very grateful for each of you. I am encouraged by your being here today. We live in a world in which the family is under attack and here we have several families making a commitment to build their family as a gospel-centered family. Church family, aren't you encouraged by this today?

You know, family dedication is a very biblical thing. It's modeled in both the Old and New Testaments. 1 Samuel opens Hannah's prayer for a son. She made a promise to God that if He gave her a son, she would give him back to God all the days of his life. And Hannah did that. She dedicated Samuel to The Lord.

Then in the New Testament, Jesus' earthly parents, Joseph and Mary, presented Jesus in the temple; they dedicated Him to God. So, the regular practice of Family dedication is deeply rooted in Scriptural examples. And these families here today are following in those footsteps.

And family dedication is not just these parents making a commitment to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of The Lord. Family dedication is also a time where we, as a church, we commit to coming alongside these families and providing support and encouragement.

Families, there is power in making the commitment you are making today. Today, you are beginning a journey that can and will have a profound impact on future generations. Consider the example of Timothy in the Bible. Paul considered him a son in the faith, but Paul also acknowledged the power of the faith of Timothy's family. In 2 Timothy, chapter 1, verses 4 and 5, Paul is writing to Timothy and says, *"4As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 5I am reminded of your sincere faith [a genuine relationship with Christ, a sincere faith. Paul recognizes that Timothy has that. But look at the rich history of faith...], a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and [then in] your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well."* This is the generational impact of faith that you, parents, are beginning today.

Today, you are creating a marker in your parenting journey. Today you are letting your church family know that you are committing to raising your children

2

to know and love Jesus. You are recognizing the primary focus of your parenting; to teach them about The Lord and His ways.

And Church family, today you are letting these families know your support in this journey. You are making a commitment to pray for them, encourage them, serve them, and help them in the overwhelming task of raising kids.

I'd like for us to voice commitments this morning vocally. First, I'm going to ask our parents to commit to their role and then ask our church to do the same.

Parents, do you promise to raise your children in the nurture and admonition of The Lord, to the best of your ability, pointing them to know and follow Jesus? If this is your promise state, "We will."

Church Family, do you promise to come alongside these families, to pray for them, encourage them, and to serve them as they raise their children to know and follow Jesus? If this is your promise to these families, state, "We will."

There you have it. Know that you are not alone in this journey of parenting. You have a church family that has committed to stand behind you. And we can't wait to see how The Lord is going to work in and through your family.

We are going to pray over you this morning. I'd like to do something a little different, if you don't mind. I want to invite the families that have come here today in support of these parents to just stand so that we can recognize you as well. Parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents. This is the heritage of faith we read about in 2 Timothy. Just remain standing for just a moment.

Church family, I want to ask you to stretch out your hands toward these parents as a sign of lifting them in prayer as I voice a prayer over them. [PRAY]

MOTHER'S DAY:

Well, good morning, again. In addition to today being Family Dedication, today is also Mother's Day. I'd like to take a moment and recognize the ladies in our lives that have such a profound impact on us. Moms, teachers, mentors, and ladies that care so deeply for us. I'd like to ask moms here today to stand so we can recognize you this morning. Aren't you grateful for these moms? I'm grateful for my mom, who I know is joining us online today. Love you, mom.

Ladies, we have a couple gifts for you this morning. In the lobby, there are chocolate roses specially designed by The Sweet Shop USA for you to take and enjoy. So, please be sure to take one of those before you leave today.

Also, out on the tables are prayer maps. Our Family Ministry Team put together this awesome resource to help you and your family pray together. It's fun, easy to do, and we pray it will be a piece that helps facilitate spiritual growth in your family. Those are also located on the tables in the lobby.

Can we give our moms one more round of applause? Happy Mother's Day.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Well, I do want to invite you to take your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Peter, chapter 3. We're in the middle of a teaching series called Unshakable, working our way through the New Testament book of 1 Peter. We've discovered our unshakable hope, unshakable walk, our unshakable love for one another, the unshakable church, and the unshakable honor we show everyone. Today we're looking at an unshakable family as we look at verses 1 through 7 of 1 Peter 3.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Marriage Statisticsⁱ

I feel like one of the things that is common to all people in our day and time is the desire to have a solid family. To build an unshakable family. But when we look across our culture, it seems like marriage and family is on shaky ground. Unfortunately, statistics confirm that conclusion.

Research shows that fewer people are getting married. In 2022, the median age for marriage was 31 years old. Compared to ten years ago, the average age was 27. Many are choosing to live together and not get married.

According to an article published by Forbes, half of first marriages end in divorce. Success rates plummet for second and third marriages. The most common reason for divorce in our country is, quote, "A lack of commitment," cited more than infidelity. The United States leads the world in divorces. Perhaps most shocking is that Evangelical Protestants divorce at a higher rate than any other religious group.

This has had a profound impact on the family. 54% of children born in the United States reach their 17th birthday without a married mom and dad in the home.ⁱⁱⁱ 40% of all births in our country occur outside of marriage.^{iv}

What are we to make of this information? Is marriage a broken and archaic institution? Or do we now have multiple generations that don't understand the Biblical view of marriage and family? I would say that what we are doing isn't working. And that truth be told, even Evangelical Christians haven't fully aligned our marriages to the Scriptural design.

So, Peter is going to address the family by talking about marriage. And specifically, he talks about The Roles, The Responsibilities, and The Results. So, that will serve as our outline this morning, following Peter's lead.

MESSAGE:

Let's begin by looking at...

1) The Roles.

Verse 1 of Chapter 3 begins with, "*Likewise, wives.*" Then in verse 7, Peter repeats the structure by saying, "*Likewise, husbands.*" Peter address wives and husbands very intentionally, in my view. And that speaks to several things.

First, it talks about the importance of marriage in the establishing of an unshakable family. When the Bible addresses marriage, it does so because the family is the foundation of society and marriage is the foundation of family. So, an unshakable family begins with a rock-solid marriage, built on the foundation of God's Word and His design.

Secondly, his intentional writing points to the designed structure of the marriage relationship. The Biblical definition of marriage is between a man and a woman in a lifetime covenant relationship. And since God is the designer of marriage, then God is the definer of marriage. Marriage and family are God's ideas. Husband and wife are the roles that are clearly spelled out, in The Bible, and they are foundational to the family unit.

I point this out because of the context that Peter is talking about. Remember, from last week, that Peter is saying that as Christians, we are being watched by an unbelieving world. As a result, we are to demonstrate what it means to be a Christian. That's played out in 3 specific examples; honoring government, honoring our employers, and in the way in which our homes look and operate.

Some say that the Biblical model is old, chauvinistic, and backwards. To that I would simply say, "Take a look at the current state of marriage. Culture

obviously hasn't figured out a better way. So, the timeless nature of Scripture must be what we align our lives to.^v Perhaps Scripture is proving relevant and offering the answer to our cultural woes.

Peter says that to have an unshakable family, it is built on a rock-solid marriage made up of a husband and a wife. The second thing Peter addresses, and the most controversial, is...

2) The Responsibilities.

He establishes the roles, then talks about responsibilities. He is going to give three responsibilities for wives and three for husbands. Let's look first at the wife's role in verses 1-6. He says, *¹Likewise, wives, **be subject to your own husbands**, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, ²when they see your respectful and pure conduct. ³**Do not let your adorning be external**—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—⁴but **let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart** with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. ⁵For this is how **the holy women** who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, ⁶as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.*

Now, I know our culture reads this and jumps to conclusions. But this is a beautiful passage, that when we fully understand it, we come to appreciate the benefit of God's design for marriage. So, let's first look at wives responsibility. Three specific responsibilities. First,

A) Submission

Peter says, "*¹Likewise, wives, **be subject to your own husbands**.*" I mentioned last week that we tend to bristle up against the word submission. Our culture especially does when talking about wives submitting to husbands. But I think that is because of a history of men either abdicating or abusing their responsibility. But it is also because of a lack of understanding Biblical submission and its application.

Many view submission as oppression. But that's not the case. Last week we defined submission and oppression. We said that **oppression is an outward decision, made by someone else, identifying themselves as superior over you.**

But submission is really the opposite. **Submission is an inward decision, made by you, identifying another as an authority in our lives.** It is a willful submission.

Let me share with you what submission is NOT. Sometimes by knowing what it isn't, we come to understand what it is.

Submission is NOT inferiority. Nowhere in the text is that the case. In fact, in the 1 Peter passage, there is an elevation of women and a recognition of equality. When Peter address husbands, he reminds them of this truth. Look at verse 7. *⁷Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since **they are heirs with you of the grace of life**.* The biblical view of men and women is that they are equal in value, differing in role or responsibility, but equal. And this teaching, in its original context, was revolutionary because women were not viewed as equal. A different responsibility does not mean a lessening of value or equality. And any abuse of submission is NOT okay and must be addressed.

Secondly, **Submission is NOT universal.** Many have a picture that the Bible teaches that women are supposed to be subservient in general. But look back at our text. 1 Peter 3:1. "*Wives, be subject to [who?] **your own husbands**.*" The wife's role of submission is to her husband only. **The Bible does not teach that all women should be subject to all men.** A Christian woman chooses to submit to her husband only as she submits to The Lord's purpose and design in marriage.

So, the first responsibility is submission. Secondly, a dedication to...

B) Inward beauty.

Look at verses 3 through 4. *³**Do not let your adorning be external**—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—⁴but **let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart** with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.* Again, another misinterpreted and misapplied text. Is this text suggesting that wives should not braid their hair or wear jewelry? Can a Christian wife only dress a certain way? That is not what this says.

What Peter is doing here is highlighting the difference in thought for a Christian woman and a non-Christian woman. What is the driving force for a Christian lady? It is not the external, but rather the internal.

External appearance is relatively unimportant in comparison to internal virtue.^{vi} Now, this is not a call to not care or to neglect external beauty. It is a call to value internal beauty over the external. External beauty is a moving target defined by culture. But inward beauty transcends time and stands outside the changing culture. And inward beauty is to be valued more. That's Peter's point.

Likewise, Peter is comparing a wife that is gentle and, quote, "quiet in spirit," to what would be a wife that grumbles, complains and nags to the point that her inner grace and goodness is not seen.^{vii} His point, ladies, is to focus on the development of your spiritual life and demonstrate that as a follower of Jesus to an unbelieving world. That resolve speaks louder than words.

So, we have submission to husband and the focus on inward beauty as the roles for wives. One more, Peter mentions...

C) Consider Role models

Look at verses 5 and 6. *⁵For this is how **the holy women** who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, ⁶as **Sarah** obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.*

Peter supports his instruction here by pointing out the example of godly women in the past, Sarah being a specific model to follow. It, again, is an example of what many might deem ancient being very relevant. But it is also a testimony that, ladies, you are being urged to continue the example to future generations. You are to join with the holy women who placed their hope in God.

So, the wife's responsibility is submission, attention to inward beauty, and consider role models. Peter then turns to husbands. He gives us three responsibilities as well. First, we are to be...

A) Understanding

Verse 7. *⁷Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an **understanding way**.* What does Peter mean in an understanding way? Well, the word translated "understanding," in the original language means, "knowledge from personal experience."^{viii} It carries the idea of intimacy. But not merely physical intimacy. It is a deep level of connection. Peter says that it is the husband's responsibility to foster that kind of understanding in the marriage relationship. This is where most of us have trouble following through, but it what we are called to.^{ix}

Fellas, do you know your wife? Truly know her? What makes her tick? What she is feeling? Her views on certain things? We are to be a student of our wives and come to know her. And notice it's not someone else's wife. It's YOUR wife. And when we prioritize knowing our wives, we learn how to lead her better.

So, the first responsibility is to understand our wives. Secondly, our responsibility is to...

B) Honor

We are to honor our wives. Verse 7 again. *⁷Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, **showing honor to the woman**.* The way you honor your life is to love her like Jesus loves. Husbands are to sacrifice for her and for the family. The only thing, men, you are married to is your wife. You are not married to your job, to your hobbies, or to your friends. You are married to your wife. Therefore, we need to prioritize honoring her, serving her, above those other things. We love our wives when we serve them, and we serve them when we honor them.

So, we are to understand and honor our wives. The third responsibility Peter gives to us men is to be...

C) Caring

Again, verse 7. *⁷Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as **the weaker vessel**.* Now, what are we to make of the wife being the weaker vessel?^x Well, remember, let Scripture interpret Scripture. Nothing in the Scriptures indicate that women are intellectually inferior. The Proverbs 31 woman was praised for being an incredible businesswoman. So, it can't mean wives are less intelligent.

Likewise, nowhere in Scripture does it indicate that women are emotionally weaker than men. In fact, the opposite is true. The woman at the well was celebrated for boldly sharing her emotions.

It certainly is not mentioned in Scripture that women are morally or spiritually weaker than men. The Bible celebrates the faith of women.

So, it must mean that women being the weaker vessel refers to the physical. The Bible often speaks about the differences between men and women. It

celebrates what it means to be female and what it means to be male. And again, it is not an inferiority thing, but an awesome thing! This is why we view gender through the lens of Scripture.

But again, back to the instruction. We are to care for our wives because they are the weaker (physically) vessel. We are to protect them. Be strong for them. Take on physical chores around the house. Boldly love Jesus and our kids. Cherish them. Hug them. Show them what she means to us.

Wives are to submit to their husbands, focus on inward beauty, and consider godly role models. Husbands are to understand their wives, honor them, and care for them. And when these roles are played out, there is beauty and clarity and practical function in the home. And this will always be an incredible testimony to an unbelieving world.

I need to move quickly here. I want to mention the third point Peter makes. He talks about the roles and the responsibilities. Then he talks about...

3) The Results.

Three results to living according to God's design. When each person carries out their responsibility, a married couple lives together, causes their prayers to be more effective, and wins over a cynical world. Let's look at those quickly. First,...

A) Live together.

That is that all members of the family share in the intimacy of knowing each other on the deepest level. That is the result of operating in the home according to God's design. Secondly, ...

B) Effective Prayers.

At the end of verse 7, Peter says, "*so that your prayers may not be hindered.*" A life surrendered to God's will in our lives in a life that stay in fellowship with God. James says that the prayers of a righteous person are powerful and effective. When we live in the home according to God's standards, we live a life of righteousness. So, the results of living out God's design is intimacy and effective prayers. Thirdly, ...

C) Win a lost world.

In verse 3, Peter says that a wife's submission, even toward an unbelieving husband can be won by their Christian conduct. He says, "*Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that **even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives.***"

The way we live is to be a testimony to an unbelieving world that Jesus is the answer. Jesus is where hope is found or the failing marriage. Jesus is what our souls truly long for in seeking purpose and fulfillment. We have the privilege to live this, oh but we have the responsibility to live it.

CONCLUSION:

The truth is the struggle in our marriages and families is more of a symptom than it is a cause. It is a symptom of trying to do things on our own. Truth be told, we want to live life our way and on our own terms. The Bible calls that sin and rebellion. We have turned from God's law and attempted to write our own.

Take for example the Garden of Eden. Talk about experiencing a broken family. One son killed the other. Marital strife was prominent. And life became excruciatingly difficult. But that's not the way it always was.

Before being banned from the Garden, Adam and Even enjoyed an incredible relationship with God. Their family experienced peace. They knew the presence of God in a tangible way. But that all changed when sin entered the world. Sin broke God's good design.

As a result, we turn to many things trying to cope with our brokenness. We turn to other relationships thinking that will satisfy. We occupy ourselves with our job hoping that financial success would equate to happiness. We turn to drugs and alcohol to numb the pain of our situation. But all that only leads to further brokenness.

The answer is Jesus. God saw us in the midst of our brokenness. And He displayed His love by sending Jesus to become the substitutionary atoning sacrifice for our sins. Not to give us a license to continue in sin. But a hand up to be lifted out of our sin and selfishness. It is by faith in Jesus as the Lord of our lives that we are forgiven of our sin and begin a new relationship with a Holy God.

[END AND PRAY]

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation for this message: Thomas R. Schreiner, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Peter, Jude: Vol. 37*, B&H Publishing: Nashville, 2003; Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1996; Paul A. Cedar, *The Communicators Commentary: James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude*, Word Books: Waco, 1984; John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Peter*, Moody Publishers: Chicago, 2004; William Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*, Westminster Press: Philadelphia, 1976; Max Anderson, *Holman New Testament Commentary: 1 & 2 Peter, I, II, III John, Jude*, Holman Reference: Nashville, 1999; David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary: 1 Peter 3*, published by Enduring Word Ministries, accessed online: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-peter-3/>; Troy Rackliffe, *Stand Firm in Your Faith: Message 5*, preached at Glade Community Church, notes given by Troy Rackliffe; Michael Gossett, *Anchored in Marriage*, message preached at Green Acres Baptist Church, September 25, 2022, accessed online: <https://www.gabc.org/episode/anchored-in-marriage-anchored/>; J.D. Greear, *I Am An Alien: Marriage and the Gospel*, sermon preached at Summit Church, December 4, 2011, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/message/marriage-and-the-gospel-1-peter-31-7>.

ⁱⁱ Christy Bieber, J.D., *Revealing Divorce Statistics In 2024*, article published by Forbes Advisor, January, 8, 2024, accessed online: https://www.forbes.com/advisor/legal/divorce/divorce-statistics/#sources_section.

ⁱⁱⁱ Fifth Annual Index of Family Belonging, MARRI, accessed online: https://communio.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Updated_Protestant-data-from-Barna-webinar_2_2024-1.pdf.

^{iv} Institute for Family Studies, *How We Ended Up With 40 Percent of Children Born Out of Wedlock*, 2017, accessed online: https://communio.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Updated_Protestant-data-from-Barna-webinar_2_2024-1.pdf.

^v Adapted from J.D. Greear.

^{vi} Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1996, page 184.

^{vii} *Ibid*, 185.

^{viii} Strong's Concordance, 1108, gnosia.

^{ix} Pointed out by David Guzik.

^x My discussion is shaped by Thomas R. Schreiner, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Peter, Jude: Vol. 37*, B&H Publishing: Nashville, 2003, page 160.