

Take-Home • Session Five

The Hidden Heart of the Household • 1 Peter 3:1-12

What We Found

Peter walked the exile strategy through the front door of the house. Peter tells wives that a husband who does not obey the word may be won without a word, which is not silence but the strongest evidence in the building, and St. Monica proved it on her husband Patricius; her years of prayers and tears won her son Augustine by another road. The imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit joined the letter's short list of things that do not perish. Verse 7 shocked its century: husbands must study their wives, honor them down the power gradient, and know that heaven screens their prayers by how they treat a joint heir of the grace of life. And Psalm 34 surfaced as the letter's own psalm: the righteous sufferer whom the Lord hears.

Voices of the Church

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St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), Confessions, Book IX

St. Augustine writes that his mother, St. Monica, served her hot-tempered pagan husband Patricius as her lord, and preached Christ to him by her conduct, by which God made her beautiful to her husband; toward the end of his life she won him for Christ. Augustine's account reads like a commentary on 1 Peter 3:1-2 written from inside the household that proved it. Her patience did in decades what argument had not done in years.

Voices of the Church

St. John Chrysostom (d. 407), Homily 20 on Ephesians

The great preacher of Christian marriage tells husbands to prize their wives' love above everything in the house, to say to her that her love outweighs all possessions, and to make the home a little church where Christ's love for the Church is painted in daily acts. His whole homily is 1 Peter 3:7 expanded: honor, knowledge, and tenderness as a husband's daily liturgy.

Voices of the Church

St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622), Introduction to the Devout Life, Part III

The Doctor of gentleness teaches that nothing is so strong as true meekness, and nothing so gentle as real strength; the devout soul corrects and endures with a calm that no provocation can rent. His counsel is the "gentle and quiet spirit" of 3:4 turned into a rule of life for laypeople in ordinary

households, which is precisely where Peter aims it.

Live It This Week

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This week: (1) Memorize 1 Peter 3:4. (2) Pray Psalm 34 once, slowly, as your own. (3) Choose the family member hardest to love and do them one hidden kindness that no one else will ever know about. (4) For those married or preparing for it: Peter tells husbands to live with their wives “according to knowledge”; take that duty up for yourself, whichever spouse you are, by asking your spouse or intended one real question and only listening.

Scripture Memory

“Let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious” (1 Peter 3:4, RSV2CE)

Before next session: Read 1 Peter 3:13-22 before Session Six, and bring your Take-Home from Session One with your sealed My Guess on it. This is the week it opens.

Go deeper in the Catechism: CCC 1615; 1642; 1656-1657; 2334