

1 Peter 3:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

Analysis

Peter specifies what conduct wins unbelieving husbands. "While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear" (epopteuontes tēn en phobō hagnēn anastrophēn hymōn). "Behold" (epopteuontes) means observe closely, witness firsthand. "Chaste" (hagnēn) means pure, holy—sexual fidelity, moral integrity. "Coupled with fear" (en phobō)—reverent respect, likely for God primarily but extending to husband appropriately. Husbands observing wives' pure conduct and reverent demeanor see Christianity's transforming power. Such conduct silences objections and attracts to gospel. Lifestyle evangelism complements verbal witness.

Historical Context

Pagan Roman culture accepted widespread sexual immorality, divorce, and marital infidelity. Christian wives' purity and fidelity stood in stark contrast, attracting husbands who observed this transformation. The 'fear' likely refers primarily to fear of God (reverential awe) but also appropriate respect for husband. This balance—ultimate loyalty to God expressed through faithful service in human relationships—characterized Christian counter-cultural witness. Early church fathers noted pagan husbands' conversions through observing Christian wives' transformed character.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What specific behaviors constitute 'chaste conduct' that commends the gospel to observing unbelievers?
2. How does 'fear' (reverence) toward God manifest in respectful behavior toward others?

Interlinear Text

ἑποπτεύσαντες τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνῆν ἀναστροφὴν
While they behold ^{G3588} **coupled with** **fear** **chaste** **conversation**
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Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 2:12 (Parallel theme): Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Philippians 1:27 (Parallel theme): Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Colossians 3:22 (Parallel theme): Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

2 Peter 3:11 (Parallel theme): Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

Ephesians 6:5 (Parallel theme): Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

Ephesians 5:33 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

1 Peter 1:15 (Parallel theme): But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

Philippians 3:20 (Parallel theme): For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

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