



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V26 N14

April 7, 2024

## HIGHER UP

### “God’s Design for Marriage”

1 Peter 3:1-7

#### THIS WEEK’S CORE COMPETENCY

##### Gentleness

I am thoughtful, considerate, and calm in dealing with others.

“Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.”

Philippians 4:5



How are spouses to treat one another?

In light of Peter’s instructions to wives and husbands found in 1 Peter 3:1-7, one might suggest a revision to the creed of the Central Virtue Gentleness, since *gentleness* is a necessary ingredient for a gratifying marriage that, as confirmed by experience, survives the tests of time.

With couples in mind, the creed might read: “I am thoughtful, considerate, and calm in dealing with my spouse.” Paul doesn’t have wives and husbands, in particular, in mind, when he writes to the Philippians, “Let your gentleness be evident to all,” (4:5), but “all” is *inclusive*. To be “thoughtful, considerate, and calm in dealing with others,” *exclusive* of one’s spouse misses the mark entirely. People who choose to live *selfish* lives devoid of *gentleness* – unencumbered in general by any semblance of morality and the weight of any virtue – forego the key to every long-term personal relationship, especially a marriage relationship.

The dictionary definition of the English word “gentleness” is “being kind, tender, or mild-mannered.” The Greek term translated “gentleness” in Philippians 4:5 is *epieikes*, often used to refer to an attitude of kindness where the *normal or expected* response was *retaliation*. In 2 Corinthians 10:1, Paul explains that Jesus’ example of “humility and gentleness” lies behind his own gentle treatment of his recalcitrant readers, i.e., like Jesus, he refuses to respond to them in kind.

Commenting on Philippians 4:5, one writer offers this more formal description of gentleness: “L. H. Marshall gives a full description of its meaning as *fairmindedness*, the attitude of a man who is *charitable* towards men’s faults and *merciful* in his judgment of their failing because he takes their whole situation into his reckoning’. Perhaps *graciousness*’ is the best English equivalent, and, in context here, it is to be the spirit of *willingness to yield* under trial which will show itself in a *refusal to retaliate* when attacked” (Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, TNTC, 170, italics added).

Commenting on the same text, another writer *explicitly* links “gentleness” to the example of Jesus: “Others should know them for their ‘gentle forbearance’ toward one another and toward all, including those who are currently making life miserable. This is the Pauline version of 1 Pet 2:23, spoken of Christ but urged of Christian slaves, ‘when they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.’ It is this ‘gentle forbearance’ and ‘meekness’ of Christ, to which Paul appealed in 2 Cor 10:1, which he here calls the believers to exhibit in Philippi” (Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT, 407).

With the type meaning of *gentleness* in mind, namely, the meaning expressed in all of its associated nuances, it’s easy to see that when possessed by both spouses, gentleness is one of the “fixins” for a happy marriage. Wives demonstrate gentleness by deferring to their husbands rather than defying them, and by displaying “the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit” (v. 4). Husbands demonstrate gentleness by being considerate and treating them with respect (v. 7).

Scot McKnight writes: “One of my students illustrates this perfectly. He told me, rather humorously, that he had an old Volkswagen that had been sitting in our seminary parking lot, rusting and rotting there for two years. ‘Why?’ I asked. He responded, ‘Because my wife was not ready to part with her dear old VW.’ He also told me that she was now ready to ‘cut the cord.’ I appreciated his sensitivity to her boundary line: She simply was not ready to make that decision, and he was respectful of that view. Someone might argue that she should have been submissive; I think my student was right and was ‘living with his wife considerately.’ Had he pushed forward in the name of submission, he may have done irreparable harm to his marriage. Good for him!” (*The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, 190). She didn’t put her foot down, and he didn’t force his will on her.

# 1

## EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

### Read 1 Peter 3:1-7

1 Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. 4 Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

### Read in another translation

1 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, 2 when 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 – 4 but 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. 5 For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

7 Likewise, 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, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (ESV)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Bracket “in the same way” in vv. 1, 7.
- Circle “submit” in v. 1.
- Box “so that” indicating *purpose* in vv. 1, 7.
- Circle “won over” in v. 1.
- Circle “without words” in v. 1.
- Underline “purity” and “reverence” in v. 2.
- Underline “elaborate hairstyles” and “gold jewelry” in v. 3.
- Box “Rather” indicating *contrast* in v. 4.
- Box “For” indicating *reason* in v. 5.
- Box “like” indicating *comparison* in v. 6.
- Circle “obeyed” in v. 6.
- Circle “lord” in v. 6.
- Circle “fear” in v. 6.
- Circle “weaker partner” in v. 7.
- Circle “heirs” in v. 7.
- Bracket “gift of life” in v. 7.
- Circle “hinder” in v. 7.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about \_\_\_\_\_.”



## DIG DEEPER

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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Is Peter likening the submission of *wives* to husbands to that of *slaves* to masters? Explain (see note).
2. Is Peter saying that women are to submit to men in general? Explain why or why not.
3. Explain the (*pragmatic* rather than *theological*) *purpose* behind their submission.
4. Wives' beauty "should not come from outward adornment" (v. 3). Why not?
5. Is Peter forbidding outward adornment? Explain why or why not.
6. Explain the *contrast* introduced in verse 4.
7. What must Christian wives do to be seen as Sarah's daughters?
8. Compare the NIV's translation of verse 7 to the ESV's translation of the same verse. Then put how husbands are to treat their wives in your own words.
9. What does the fact that Christian husbands and wives are co-heirs of "the gracious gift of life" imply to you?
10. Explain the *consequence* husbands face for disobeying Peter's instructions.
11. **Discussion:** Talk about whether wives' and husbands' obedience to Peter's words *looks the same* in every Christian marriage.

### Commentary On The Text

A few observations are in order before interpreting Peter's instructions to Christian wives and husbands. *First*, Peter's readers live in a patriarchal society in which men and women are not treated as equals. Regarding women in the Jewish world, one commentator writes: "The dominant impression left by our early Jewish sources is of a very patriarchal society that limited women's roles and functions to the home, and severely restricted: (1) their right to inheritance, (2) their choice of relationships, (3) their ability to pursue a religious education or fully participate in the synagogue, and (4) their freedom of movement" (Ben Witherington, III, "Women (New Testament)," *ABD*, 6:958). Regarding women in the Roman world, another writes: "Women in the Greco-Roman world, on the other hand, were in most cases better off. But what women could or could not do depended on location and culture. Wives of citizens in Athens, for example, had about as much freedom as Jewish women in Palestine (though for different reasons), while women in Asia Minor had much more opportunity to pursue their own interests. Women there 'engaged in private businesses, served in public offices, and had prominent roles in various religious cults.' They were even able to vote and hold public office. Roman society in particular allowed more property rights for women, permitted greater leverage for women in marriage and divorce situations, and encouraged more education for women" (Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, 183).

*Second*, all patriarchal societies are not the same. While the meaning of patriarchy remains the same, the particulars of its expression differ from society to society and from age to age (see above). And so, its contemporary expression in our world differs greatly from its ancient expression in the Roman world. In fact, its expression in our world varies from one place to another—even as it did in the various parts of the Roman world.

*Third*, just as Peter's instructions to slaves should not be taken as an endorsement of slavery per se, neither should his words to wives be taken as an endorsement of patriarchy per se, more specifically, the expression of it in Peter's world.

*Fourth*, while the opposite of *patriarchal* may be *matriarchal*, the contemporary debate among Christians regarding wives and husbands is between *complementarians* (men and women are meant to have different yet complementary gender-based roles in marriage, in the household, as well as in church and ministry), and *egalitarians* (men and women are meant to be equal partners in marriage and church with no gender-based distinctions or limitations). The two perspectives mark the extreme points on a continuum. Some in the middle see themselves as complementarians in theory but egalitarians in practice—"complegalitarians."

While Peter addresses all wives in 1 Peter 3:1, he is especially concerned with the wives of unbelieving husbands in verses 1-6. His desire for all believers to submit to "every human institution" (2:13 ESV) is to be expressed by Christian wives submitting (i.e., deferring, being subject) to their own husbands, not to men in general. He wants them to do this for two *pragmatic* reasons: 1) by being *good* wives they can silence the ignorant talk of foolish people (2:15); 2) by being *good* wives they might *win over* their unbelieving husbands. "Peter's injunction to Christian wives is that they conduct their lives so as to win their husbands to the Christian faith 'without words.' That is, 'in certain cases the eloquent silence of Christian deportment is its most effective vehicle'" (McKnight, 183-84). Peter wants wives to focus on their *inner selves* rather than *outer appearance*, because the beauty of the former will outlast the beauty of the latter, the beauty of the former is "of great worth in God's sight" (v. 4), and most importantly, unbelieving husbands are not likely to be "won over" by their Christian wives' appearance.

He bolsters his case by appealing to how "holy women of the past" (v. 15) adorned themselves, namely, by submitting themselves to their own husbands—like Sarah, who fearlessly obeyed Abram by telling Abimelek that she was Abram's sister, and on one occasion, by calling Abram "her lord" (Ge 18:12). Regarding that occasion, one commentator observes: "The context of Sarah's remark in Gen 18:12 is not quiet deference to her 'lord,' but amused skepticism at the extravagant promise she has just heard . . . His [Peter's] argument is from the greater to the lesser: if Sarah 'obeyed' Abraham and called him 'Lord,' the Christian wives in Asia should at least treat their husbands with deference and respect" (J. Ramsay Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 49, *1 Peter*, 165). How easily would a *defiant* Christian wife, married to a pagan husband, invite "ignorant talk" directed against the gospel!

Peter addresses Christian husbands more briefly in 3:7, in part because he assumes their wives are Christians, since in patriarchal society, women presumably follow the religion of their husbands. In this case, *homoiōs*, rendered "in the same way" (v. 1), likely means something like "too" or "in turn," since husbands are not instructed to "submit." The verse might be paraphrased: "Husbands, you, in turn, must live with your wives in an *understanding* way" (cf. ESV)—rather than in an *insensitive, indifferent* way. Husbands must also "treat [their wives] with respect" (v. 7)—not lording it over them, nor using intimidation to impose their will on their "weaker partners." After all, the fact that both are heirs to "the gracious gift of [eternal life]," (i.e., are *co-heirs*, if you will) implies that wives and husbands are co-equals *spiritually*. If husbands choose to disregard Peter's instructions, they can expect it to limit their fellowship with God and hinder his answers to their prayers.

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *in the same way* Not “in the same way” slaves are to submit themselves to their masters (cf. 2:18). “In the same way’ refers to the more all-encompassing exhortation to submit for the Lord’s sake to others in various relationships *instituted among human beings*. Selwyn agrees that the directive to wives in 3:1 (and to husbands in 3:7) belongs not to the command to servants in 2:18 but to the broader code of subordination underlying the entire passage beginning with 2:13” (James R. Slaughter, “Submission of Wives (1 Pet. 3:1a) in the Context of 1 Peter,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153 [January-March 1996]: 69, italics added). Wives are to express their submission to “every human institution” (2:13 ESV) by submitting to their own husbands. And yet, the term does not refer to another example of submission in verse 7.

v. 1 *submit* Cf. 2:13, 18; 3:5; 5:5. Perhaps “defer” is a better translation than “submit” (see J. Ramsey Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 49, *1 Peter*, 123-24), since “submit” does not imply total obedience (Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, 144). “In the Greek world it did not mean to obey someone or to do the will of another person, but rather ‘to lose or surrender one’s own rights or will.’ . . . In the New Testament this form of [*hypotassō*] consistently denotes voluntary subordination (e.g., of Jesus to His parents, Luke 2:51)” (Slaughter, 70). While the essential meaning (i.e., type meaning) of “submit” remains the same, the expression of that doesn’t change, the details of its expression (i.e., associated traits) vary. Submission of citizens to government, slaves to masters, and wives to husbands varies widely in its expression.

v. 1 *won over* I.e., “a missionary term.” “The Greek verb *kerdainain*, whenever used in the NT with this meaning, always represents humility as an instrument of conversion” (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC, 95). “The term, ‘won over,’ is used frequently to describe success in missionary activity (Matt. 18:15; 1 Cor. 9:19-22; 1 Peter 3:1)” (Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, 183).

v. 1 *without words* Lit., “without a word” (ESV). Note the wordplay: “do not believe *the word*” refers to not believing the gospel; “without *a word*” refers to not preaching or talking about the gospel.

v. 2 *purity and reverence* Lit., “in fear chaste conduct;” cf. “respectful and pure conduct” (ESV); “chaste and respectful behavior” (NASB 1995). The rendering in the NASB 1995 is best, since Peter is referring to wives conduct with respect to their husbands not with respect to God. “‘Pure’ translates a general term describing her purity, while ‘respectful’ reflects her attitude toward her husband that rises out of her attitude toward God’s will” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Peter,” 2023 ed., 66, [planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1peter.pdf](http://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1peter.pdf)). “Interpreting [*en phobō*] as the wife’s

respect for her husband fits Peter’s argument better than viewing it as reverence for God” (James R. Slaughter, “Winning Unbelieving Husbands to Christ (1 Pet. 3:1b-4),” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153 [April-June 1996]: 199).

v. 3 *hairstyles, jewelry* Lit. “braiding of hair and putting around of gold.” Women “often wore their hair elaborately prepared, braided tier on tier, frequently requiring the services of a professional hairdresser. Elaborate combs and net held the tiers in place. Women sometimes feared going to sleep at night out of concern for spoiling the design of their hair . . . Women’s apparel also included expensive jewelry, such as gold rings, chains, and bracelets placed around the neck, ankles, arms, and fingers. And sometimes women wore ornaments suspended from their earlobes” (Slaughter, “Winning Unbelieving Husbands,” 208).

v. 6 *obeyed* See Ge 20:2, 5, 13; cf. Ge 16:1-2.

v. 6 *lord* See Ge 18:12, where Sarah *refers* to Abraham as “my lord,” but does not *address* him as such. “The reference is to the story of her amused incredulity to the promise that, despite her barrenness and Abraham’s advanced age she would bear him a son . . . In fact, this manner of speaking of her husband conformed to conventional Eastern practice, but the rabbis expounded the text as demonstrating Sarah’s obedience to Abraham (SB III, 764)” (Hillyer, 131).

v. 7 *weaker partner* “Not a reference to moral stamina, strength of character or mental capacity, but most likely to sheer physical strength” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on 1Pe 3:7). “The weakness in view is physical, but the phrase does not mean ‘the weaker sex’ in a generalized sense” (Michaels, 169; see also McKnight, 186).

v. 7 *heirs* I.e., heirs of the fullness of salvation that is “ready to be revealed in the last time” (1:4). “Women experience the saving grace of God on equal terms with men (see Gal 3:28 and note)” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on 1Pe 3:7).

v. 7 *gracious gift of life* Cf. “grace of life” (ESV); i.e., eternal life. “Women will have an equal share in the new age; and even now in the life of the new age, they experience the grace of God equally with men (cf. Gal 3:28)” (Edwin A. Blum, “1 Peter,” in *The Bible Expositor’s Commentary*, vol. 12, 237).

v. 7 *hinder your prayers* “So concerned is God that Christian husbands live in an understanding and loving way with their wives that he ‘interrupts’ his relationship [i.e., fellowship] with them when they are not doing so . . . No husband may expect an effective prayer life unless he lives with his wife ‘in and understanding way, bestowing honour on her’” (Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, TNTC, 146).

# 4

## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Wives defer to your husbands, so that they might be won over, and husbands live with your wives in an understanding way, so that your prayers might not be hindered.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



### 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

I absolutely love that our church practices “integrated Biblical teaching” or alignment. Every person in our church in every ministry and in every community or home group will study the same passage this week highlighting God’s design for marriage. You may be wondering why in the world you need to teach your elementary child about marriage. Well, Mom and Dad, believe it or not, one day that eight-year-old toothless boy who thinks poop jokes are hilarious will propose to “the one.” Will he be ready? One day, you’ll be shopping for wedding dresses with your grown-up daughter and still see your baby girl who curled up next to you to watch princess movies. Will she be ready? Now is the time to help your kids understand God’s view on marriage, including healthy and godly submission. This is a touchy subject that’s bound to ruffle some feathers but it doesn’t have to be. In Children’s Ministry, we teach kids that the best place to go when they’re confused about truth is God’s Word. If you’re reading this passage and have questions, I encourage you to first pray about it. Ask God to reveal the true meaning of Scripture to you. Don’t go to Google; it won’t be helpful. Instead, seek other companion passages that will shed light on this text. Read through 1 Peter 3:1-7 again, then take a look at Ephesians 5:22-33 or 1 Corinthians 11:3. Read the passages before and after or go on a deep dive about marriage in general. Don’t stop searching God’s Word and prayerfully seeking answers. Our right and responsibility is to help kids understand godly marriage. We’re praying for you!

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 Peter 3:1-7

1. Why does Peter tell wives to submit to their husbands?
2. Where does beauty come from?
3. How are husbands to treat wives?

### What Do You Think?

What difference will these passages make in your life if you’re not married?

### What Do You Do?

Who in your life has a marriage that you admire? What about their marriage shows they love God? Do something nice for this couple to thank them for being a model for godly marriage.

### CORE COMPETENCY: Gentleness

I respond to others in a calm, thoughtful way.

### MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 139:23-24

*“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

## KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week’s verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)

*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)

*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)

*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)

*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)

*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)

*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)

*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)

*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)

*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)

*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)

*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)

*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)

*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)

*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)

*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)

*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)

*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)

*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)

*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)

*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)

*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)

*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)

*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)

*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

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