

Week Six

Chosen Exiles: Life in Household Settings

Studies in 1 Peter for the White Station Church of Christ

These questions are designed to help you dig deeper into 1 Peter 2:18 – 3:7

Video 1 – Slaves in the Roman Empire

1. What is a “household code” or “domestic code”? Read a very concise Christian version of such a document at Colossians 3:18 – 4:1 and one with considerably more Christian revision from Ephesians 5:22 – 6:9.
2. What do you find most interesting in the Christian versions of a household code in either Colossians, Ephesians, or 1 Peter? Most troubling?
3. From what you learned from the video, how would you characterize slavery in the Roman world? Compare it to slavery in pre-Civil War America?
4. What special challenges did Christians face who were from the slave class? Opportunities?
5. Rubel claims that Christianity was “subversive” to slavery. What does that mean? Do you agree?

Video 2 – Wives in Roman Family Settings

1. What was the central role of the wife in a Roman household?
2. How would you describe the general status of women in the Roman Empire? Why did the ancient world consider women “inferior” to men?
3. In what ways does the New Testament elevate the status and role of women?
4. Why does the NT adopt a “conservative” view of female freedom? What effect would it have had for Peter and Paul to tell churches to put into practice the absolute equality their teaching affirms?
5. How does our historical setting both *allow* and *mandate* that churches do to affirm the worth, dignity, and function of females in service to Christ?

Video 3 – *Paterfamilias*: Authority in a Roman Household

1. Why is the term *paterfamilias* important to our study? What about *pater potestas*?
2. Which would have been the greater first-century challenge: (a) being *paterfamilias* as a Christian man or (b) being a Christian wife or slave in the home of an unbeliever? Explain.
3. The term “weaker sex” (NRSV) is misleading as a description of how a believer should view his wife. Read 1 Peter 3:7 from other translations. How does the video insist the term should be translated and understood? What is your view of the matter?
4. What positive obligation does Peter give to Christian husbands? How might this have played out in a Roman family setting?
5. What significance (and radical departure from a typical pagan view of women) is involved in telling Christian husbands “they [your wives] too are also heirs of the gracious gift of life”? How would a failure to grasp and honor this insight “hinder” their prayers?