

I Peter 3:10-12
May 21, 2017

Open with THANK YOU for love, care, and support in my time of loss of my Mother

Prayer

HOOK:

We all know that it is easy to show love to others when they are showing love to us. It's easy to love the loveable. But we're not always around people who are lovable...

Q: How do you show love to someone who is not loveable, or even worse, someone who persecutes you or has become an enemy of sorts? [Let people engage]

Transition: We have seen that love is a recurring theme in Peter's letters, not only God's love for us, but also our love for others. When we studied I Peter 3:8, we learned that we should begin with *love for God's* people. Just as the whole of the law is summed up in love (Rom 13:8-10), so the whole of human relationships is fulfilled in love. This applies to every Christian and to every area of life. We also learned in v.9 that not only should we love God's people, but we should also *love our enemies*. The recipients of this letter were experiencing a certain amount of personal persecution because they were doing the will of God. Peter wanted even our enemies to experience the powerful love of God.

Today, we pick up the continuing theme of love. He moves from loving one another and love our enemies, to *love life*, which is an act of the will, in spite of persecution. It is an attitude of faith that sees the best in every situation. As we begin our study this morning, **let's consider that all of us can successfully love life by exercising the Principles/Rules that Peter presents to us.** Let's begin.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

V.10:

- For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.

V.11:

- He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.

V.12:

- For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." (Quoting Ps 34:12-16 in v.10-12)

Process Observations/Questions:

Q V.10: What is one of the important things we can do to ensure that we're enjoying the good life and see good days? [Keep our tongues from evil.]

Q: How in the world do we just keep our mouths shut? [Look at this from the opposite angle. What if God created a rule whereby the only reasons we are allowed to speak are to encourage, edify, or bless others?]

X-REF: James 3:1-13; Pray Psalm 141:3

Observation: A “good day” for the believer who “loves life” is not one in which he is pampered and sheltered, but one in which he experiences God’s help and blessing *because of* life’s problems and trials. It is a day in which he magnifies the Lord (Ps. 34:1–3), experiences answers to prayer (Ps. 34:4–7), tastes the goodness of God (Ps. 34:8), and senses the nearness of God (Ps. 34:18).

Q V.11: What are the last two instructions? [Turn from evil and do good; seek and pursue peace]

Q: What does it mean to turn from evil and do good? [It means to avoid sin, not just b/c it’s wrong, but b/c we despise and loathe it.]

Q: When Peter says to “seek and pursue peace,” does he mean “peace at any price?” [No. Christians should exercise moderation as we relate to people and does not create problems because we want to have our own way. But it does mean that we are encouraged to work hard to achieve peace b/c it doesn’t just happen (Rom 14:19)]

Q V.12: What assurance does Peter give his readers if they’re trying to seek peace, while someone continues to interfere with evil? [For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil]

LOOK:

A “good day” for the believer who “loves life” is not one in which he is pampered and sheltered, but one in which he experiences God’s help and blessing *because of* life’s problems and trials. It is a day in which he magnifies the Lord (Ps. 34:1–3), experiences answers to prayer (Ps. 34:4–7), tastes the goodness of God (Ps. 34:8), and senses the nearness of God (Ps. 34:18).

The next time you think you are having a “bad day,” and you hate life, read Psalm 34 and you may discover you are really having a “good day” to the glory of God!

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 2, pp. 413–419). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

We should love one another, love our enemies, and *love life* (1 Peter 3:10–12). The news of impending persecution should not cause a believer to give up on life. What may appear to be “bad days” to the world can be “good days” for a Christian, if he will only meet certain conditions.

First, *we must deliberately decide to love life.* This is an act of the will: “He who wills to love life.” It is an attitude of faith that sees the best in every situation. It is the opposite of the pessimistic attitude expressed in Ecclesiastes 2:17: “Therefore I hated life ... for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” We can decide to *endure* life and make it a burden, *escape* life as though we were running from a battle, or *enjoy* life because we know God is in control. Peter was not suggesting some kind of unrealistic psychological gymnastics that refused to face facts. Rather, he was urging his readers to take a positive approach to life and *by faith* make the most of every situation.

Second, *we must control our tongues.* Many of the problems of life are caused by the wrong words, spoken in the wrong spirit. Every Christian should read James 3 regularly and pray Psalm 141:3 daily. How well Peter knew the sad consequences of hasty speech! There is no place for lies in the life of a saint.

Third, *we must do good and hate evil.* We need both the positive and the negative. The Old English word “eschew” means more than just “avoid.” It means “to avoid something because you despise and loathe it.” It is not enough for us to avoid sin because sin is wrong; we ought to shun it because we hate it.

Finally, *we must seek and pursue peace.* “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Matt. 5:9). If we go out and seek trouble, we will find it; but if we seek peace, we can find it as well. This does not mean “peace at any price,” because righteousness must always be the basis for peace (James 3:13–18). It simply means that a Christian exercises moderation as he relates to people and does not create problems because he wants to have his own way. “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18). Sometimes it is not possible! See Romans 14:19 where we are also admonished to *work hard* to achieve peace. It does not come automatically.

“But what if our enemies take advantage of us?” a persecuted Christian might ask. “We may be seeking peace, but they are seeking war!” Peter gave them the assurance that God’s eyes are on His people and His ears open to their prayers. (Peter learned that lesson when he tried to walk on the water without looking to Jesus—Matt. 14:22–33.) We must trust God to protect and provide, for He alone can defeat our enemies (Rom. 12:17–21).

Peter quoted these statements from Psalm 34:12–15, so it would be profitable for you to read the entire psalm. It describes what God means by “good days.” They are not necessarily days free from problems, for the psalmist wrote about fears (Ps. 34:4), troubles (Ps. 34:6, 17), afflictions (Ps. 34:19), and even a broken heart (Ps. 34:18). A “good day” for the believer who “loves life” is not one in which he is pampered and sheltered, but one in which he experiences God’s help and blessing *because of* life’s problems and trials. It is a day in which he magnifies the Lord (Ps. 34:1–3), experiences answers to prayer (Ps. 34:4–7), tastes the goodness of God (Ps. 34:8), and senses the nearness of God (Ps. 34:18).

The next time you think you are having a “bad day,” and you hate life, read Psalm 34 and you may discover you are really having a “good day” to the glory of God!

Raymer, R. M. (1985). 1 Peter. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 850-852). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

3:10–12. **Whoever would love life ... must first keep his tongue from evil (3:10).** Verse 8 is a listing of Christian characteristics that keep a tongue from evil. **Harmony** (*homophrones*) could be translated “like-minded.” Christians are urged to **be sympathetic** (*sympatheis*), to **love as brothers** (*philadelphoi*), to **be compassionate** (*eusplanchnoi*; cf. *splanchna* in Phil. 2:2; Phile. 7, 20), and **humble** (*tapeinophrones*). Of these five characteristics listed in 1 Peter 3:8 only the word for “compassionate” is found more than once in the New Testament and it is only used twice (here and in Eph. 4:32). This unique vocabulary stresses the importance of these Christian virtues which keep one from deceitful (*dolon*; cf. 1 Peter 2:1, 22) speech.

The second exhortation, taken from Psalm 34:14, is foreshadowed by 1 Peter 3:9, do not repay evil with evil (cf. Rom. 12:17). Turning from evil (1 Peter 3:11) requires that there be no retaliation for ill treatment. Jesus taught this same law of love: “If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matt. 5:39).

Third, rather than returning evil, Christians are to seek peace (*eirenēn*; cf. 1 Peter 1:2; 5:14) and pursue it (Ps. 34:14). Peace is pursued by returning a blessing (1 Peter 3:9) when an insult is given. “Blessing” (*eulogountes*) here means to speak well of someone. This differs from the word “blessed” (*makarioi*, “fortunate or privileged” in verse 14; cf. 4:14; Matt. 5:3–11). Jesus said, “Pray for those who persecute you” (Matt. 5:44), and Paul wrote, “When we are cursed, we bless” (1 Cor. 4:12). This is the compassionate way that Christians should pursue peace. As a result, believers inherit a blessing (1 Peter 3:9; cf. 1:4; 3:7), for the eyes of the Lord (v. 12) watch over the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer. The “eyes” and “ears” of the Lord are figures of speech, anthropomorphisms which attribute human physical characteristics to God. Here the figures emphasize God’s watchful oversight and careful attention to His people’s needs (cf. 2:25).