

## First Peter 3:8-12

### Kingdom Living: One to All

From 2:11-4:6, Peter's primary concern has been with our ethical conduct amongst unbelievers and in the face of persecution: Believers to the government, slaves to unbelieving masters, and wives to unbelieving husbands. In this passage, he encourages us to cling to one another as our community in the face of a hostile world.

### Verse 8

Peter begins with "Finally" (NIV, NKJV), to indicate that he's wrapping up his injunctions addressing specific kinds of people (slaves, wives, husbands). Developing these five virtues will promote biblical community and support. We are given five imperatives that, with God's help, are attainable virtues:

1. "Live harmoniously" (see Acts 4:32; Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 1:10; Philip. 2:2).
2. "Be sympathetic" a prerequisite for number 1 above (cf., Rom. 12:15; 1 Cor. 12:26; Heb. 10:34).
3. "Love as brothers" (John 13:35; 1 Thess. 4:9-10).
4. "Compassionate" (Matt. 9:36; Mk. 1:41; Lk. 15:20; 2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 4:32).
5. "Humble" (Pr. 29:23; Eph. 4:2; Philip. 2:3, 8).

How do we develop these virtues? How do we obey these commands?

### Verse 9

Our ethical relations to a hostile society are to be impeccable. Peter sees our response to pressures not as aggressive retaliation, but with active grace. The term for "insult" (NIV) or "reviling" (NKJV) has to do with insolent talk or abusive speech. These are words intended to harm another's character or feelings. This injunction has everything to do with what we say, which, according to Jesus, issue forth from our heart (Mt. 15:18).

Read Mt. 5:44, Lk. 6:27-28; Rom. 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:12-13. What kind of words should come from your mouth when you are wrongly treated?

"Bless" literally means, "to speak well of." This is not merely a friendly disposition toward enemies to active prayer and intercession. A kind word and a sincere prayer will go a long way toward moving people closer to God in faith and repentance.

The "blessing" Peter says we will inherit is likely imminent rather than the future blessing of heaven. In essence, what we do and how we live makes a huge difference for us in this life! Consider the following (taken from Grudem, *First Epistle of Peter*):

Verse	Right Conduct	Resulting Blessing
1:8	Loving Christ	Unutterable joy
1:9	Continuing faith	More benefits of salvation
1:17	Holy life with fear	Avoiding God's fatherly discipline
2:2	Partaking of spiritual milk	Growing up toward salvation
2:19-10	Trusting God and doing right while suffering	God's approval
3:1-2	Submitting to husbands	Husbands won for Christ
3:7	Living considerately with wives	Prayers not hindered
4:14	Enduring reproach for Christ	Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you
5:7	Casting cares on God	He will care for your needs
5:9-10	Resist the Devil	God will restore, establish, strengthen

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### Verses 10-12

Beyond our desire to receive a blessing, we should be motivated by the fact that God is the final Judge and jury of all human life. Ps. 34:12-16 indicates God is watching, evaluating, and listening to everyone. God turns his entire countenance ("face") against those who do evil. This passage is filled with abstractions that are not hard to understand, but difficult to implement.

Brotherly love, not retaliating against injustices, living harmoniously and obediently is fundamental to being Christian. In our society, the challenge is how we should face persecution when we can do something about it. According to Peter, we should not be known for retaliation, retribution, or fighting for our rights at any cost. We are called, not only to be known for our love, but for our peacefulness (1 Pt. 2:23).