

1 Peter 2:18-3:12

May 22, 2006

In our outline of 1 Peter we are still in Section One (1:13-3:12) of Peter's many Exhortations (1:13-5:11). We have covered Peter's Exhortations Concerning the Needs of Individual Believers (1:13-2:10) which are to be holy and to grow spiritually. We have just concluded what Peter had to say by way of exhortations Concerning Sin and the People of the World (2:11-17). Now we are ready to proceed with his Exhortations Concerning Special Groups among Believers (2:18-3:12). This will conclude Section One. And so outline looks like this:

II. The Exhortations (1 Peter 1:13-5:11).

A. Section One (1 Peter 1:13-3:12).

3. Concerning Special Groups among the Believers (2:18-3:12).

a. Servants (2:18-25).

This will be followed by:

b. Wives (3:1-6).

c. Husbands (3:7).

d. All believers (3:8-12).

2:18 Here the Apostle Peter used a different word from δούλοι, which he used in verse 16. Here is the word, οἰκέται, which comes from the Greek word for *house*. It is actually a household servant. He might also be a δούλος, but he has been promoted a position which would give him, or her, as the case might be, a much closer relationship with the family. This is what Joseph was in Potiphar's house. It was usually a place given to a bondservant as a reward for faithful service. But it did not mean that the household servant could be less than respectful and submissive toward his master. The word for "masters" which Peter used here is the Greek word from which we get our English word, despot. It speaks of one who over his servants has, as Thayer says in his Lexicon, "absolute ownership and uncontrolled power" (p.130).

The word "submit" in verse 13 and the words "be subject" here, are verbs which indicate how strongly the Apostle Peter was teaching his fellow believers the necessity and importance of submission. And "be subject" is expressed in such a way as to indicate that this is what we are to do to ourselves. We are to place ourselves under the authority of those over us with every intention of doing whatever they want us to do, and to do it well. The only exceptions would be when we are expected to do something that is in direct conflict with the Word of God. And we are to do with "with all fear." The believers were to "fear God" (v. 17), and to fear their masters as well. In most cases the one is equal to the other. They were to fear the consequences of disobedience either to God or to their masters, but also to fear that we might come short of that which would please them. What a lot of trouble would be avoided today in labor-management disputes if this were the pattern of all behavior. But this is not possible where unbelievers are involved as servants.

It is important to notice that with Peter, as with Paul, they placed the chief responsibility on those who were in the second place – servants to masters, wives to husbands, and children to parents. And the same applies for all of us in our relationship with the Lord. Remember that the Lord said that the greatest are those who are the servants of all. And this submission applied regardless of the character of the master – "not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." A "good and gentle" master would be kind, considerate, and patient, but a "froward" master would be hard to please, one who expects the impossible, and one who would be crooked or dishonest regarding pay, time, and working conditions.

So the submission does not depend upon the reasonableness or rightness of the master or his demands, but upon the Word of God.

And then in verse 19 Paul went on to give another reason why he was giving the servants these instructions.

2:19 “For this is thankworthy.” The Greek is, “For this is grace.” It can mean *commendable*, or *praiseworthy*. Or it can mean that this is evidence of the grace of God. Either way it is true, but most commentators seem to prefer the way it is translated in the KJV. When a child of God suffers under a cruel master, and endures it, meaning that it is not an isolated incident, but constant, and yet, because he wants to please the Lord, this is praiseworthy, *i.e.*, this will bring the blessing of the Lord. Grudem points out that of all the times that this word “grief,” or its related verb, is used in the NT, it never used of physical suffering, but of all of the kinds of mental anguish that come in such a difficult time. “Conscience toward God” not only means that such action is pleasing to God, but it mean that the servant is aware that it is all under the eye of a sovereign God Who ultimately will settle all scores. This, therefore, seems to be Peter’s version of what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 13:19,

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mind; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Paul was quoting from Deuteronomy 32:35. And, quoting Grudem again, the child of God will be able “to submit to an unjust master without resentment, rebelliousness, self-pity, or despair” (p. 127).

And then to emphasize what he meant, Peter asked a question. See it in verse 20.

2:20 On the other hand, if a servant has done something wrong, and takes it patiently, he does not anything to glory about. There is a feeling in most people’s hearts that if a person does the wrong thing, he needs to be punished. But there is also in the hearts of unregenerate people a feeling of commendation or praise for a person who has done no wrong and yet is subjected even once to punishment of any kind. “But,” introduces a strong contrast, if a person does well, suffers for it, and yet takes it patiently, “this is,” and again we have the word, χάρις, “wellpleasing with God.” Erdman says on this point, “Endurance of undeserved punishment, when there can be no redress, is here declared to be a ground of glorying and of praise” (p. 69).

Thayer gives the proper meaning of the word *grace* (χάρις), as “that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, *sweetness, charm, loveliness*” (p. 605), as we have it, for example, in Colossians 4:6, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

What Peter was teaching in these verses is one of the strongest means of testimony that is possible to give. It is often silent, but to react as Peter was encouraging these servants to do, is so totally different from what you can expect normally, that often the most difficult people will have their hearts opened by the Lord to the Gospel when they observe such unexpected behavior.

Nobody lives in perfect circumstances. We may not have to suffer like those people did to whom Peter was writing were having to suffer, but people always in one way or another can cause us trouble. I once heard a teacher say that we wouldn’t have as much trouble as we have in living the Christian life if we didn’t have to deal with people. I doubt if that is altogether true, but it would save us some of the trouble we have anyway. Peter was writing to believers who were having a lot of trouble with people. They had been forced out of their homes by the government. They knew what persecution was. And as hard as they might try to avoid having problems with other people, they couldn’t avoid it altogether. Children have this trouble with other children. Young people getting to the age where they want to make their own decisions, have trouble with their parents who stand in their way. Husbands and wives have this trouble, and it often leads to divorce. They say that they just can’t get along with each other any more. People in churches have trouble with other Christians. People we do business with often displease us and provoke us. We never can tell at the beginning of any day how soon we are going to be in a situation where we are tempted to say the wrong thing or to react to some situation in the wrong way. So a passage like this, while it was originally directed to house servants who were living in the Roman Empire, has a lot in it that we all can use. Sin has made us so that we not only want to get even

with someone who says the wrong thing to us, or about us, or who does something that makes life difficult for us, but we want to do a little bit more to them than they have done to us. This is human nature. This is really what is behind wars between nations. This is why we have laws, but there never has been a law, even the law which God gave to Moses, which could solve all of our problems. Eight of the ten commandments are negative showing that the main problem in human conduct is to keep us from doing the wrong thing.

Well, when we are saved, we soon find that, while we want to live peaceably with everyone, yet these problems keep coming along, and we still have troubles with other people. After the Apostle Paul in Romans 12 had given many short commands telling the Roman Christians what to do, or what not to do, as they faced all of the changing circumstances of life, many of them having to do with our relationships with other people, both Christian and non-Christian, he said, “if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18). So the Scriptures indicate that sometimes it is not possible. But I want to call you attention to six words in that verse which are extremely important, and which can easily be passed over as we read the verse or even quote it from memory. They are the words, “as much as lieth in you.”

Paul was teaching the believers in Rome, exactly what Peter was teaching the believers in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. We have no control over our circumstances, nor do we really have control over other people. We don't even have control over ourselves. But where we all need to give our attention, is to what “lieth” in us. Some people look to religion for help. Others turn to psychology. Everybody makes some attempt at self-reformation. But while there might be some measure of improvement in some of these so-called remedies, yet none of them has the answer. We need someone or something that can change our hearts, and God is the only One Who can do that. And where He starts is with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is by God's work in our hearts that we are made new creatures in Christ. We experience the new birth. We have God's life in us, eternal life. God has a place in our lives that He never had before. Christ comes to live in us. But we need to do what Peter exhorted us to do at the beginning of this chapter which we are concluding. We need to grow, to grow in grace, as Peter called it in the last verse of this epistle. And to enable us to grow the Holy Spirit has come to live in each one of us. And Paul told the Galatian believers, who also received this letter from Peter, that if we will “walk in the Spirit,” walk in dependence upon the Spirit, we will “not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” That is in Galatians 5:16. “The lusts of the flesh” are going to be with me, and they are going to be with you, until we are in heaven. And one of the strongest lusts of my old nature, and yours, is that nobody is going to get the best of us. With all of the conflicts that we have with people, or with circumstances, by nature we are determined that nobody and nothing is going to get the best of us. And then we spent our lives trying to get back on our feet after we have failed again.

What does the Holy Spirit do for us? He bears “fruit” in our lives. And notice that I said “fruit,” singular, not *fruits*, plural. The fruit is packaged together, and it has nine characteristics, or features to it. You can see them in Galatians 5:22-23:

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is (1) love, (2) joy, (3) peace, (4) longsuffering, (5) gentleness, (6) goodness, (7) faith,

23 (8) Meekness, (9) temperance: against such there is no law.

What does the Holy Spirit have to work with? Where does all of the ugliness of human beings come from? I have the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ behind me in answering that question. Listen to what He said:

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:20-23).

This is what it means that we are sinners by nature. We were born like this, totally depraved. The Holy Spirit does not remove these terrible characteristics, but He overpowers and suppresses them with His own “fruit.” And the last of these is “temperance” which is self-control. Self, our old sinful nature, can only be controlled

by the Holy Spirit. And does this by using the Word of God in our hearts. To walk in the Spirit is to depend upon the Holy Spirit to enable us to live according to God's Word, to live in obedience to the Word.

So He, the Holy Spirit, a Person, a Person of the Godhead, Who is living in you and me if we are saved, will enable us, not to be perfect, that is coming later, but will enable us to respond in a completely different way to the frustrations and conflicts of life in this world. I hope we all understand this, believe it, and act upon it.

But with that digression, let me go back now to 1 Peter 2:20. After telling us that it is really shameful if we do the wrong things, and get punished for them, he indicates that while we can't ever avoid all of the conflicts of life, yet we can react differently by the grace of God when they come our way.

2:21 "For even hereunto were ye called." Christians are a called people. We have been called to Christ. We did not come on our own; we came to Christ because we were called. We were chosen in eternity past. In our lifetime we were called. We were not only called, but we were drawn to Christ. So when Peter said "were ye called," that was the same as saying, *that ye were saved*. We have been saved for many reasons, but one of them is that by our lives we may be able to show that the Lord has changed us so that when bad things are done to us, or said about us, which we do not deserve and which are not true, we can respond in a way that will attract the attention of the people we are dealing with because it is so different from what they expected from us. And the reason it is possible to react in such a different way is because "Christ also suffered for us."

Peter will go into the death of our Lord when we get down to verse 24, but Peter wants us to see in the Lord the Example of what we are to be and do. We are to follow in His steps. We are to live like He lived. And no one ever suffered at the hands of men like Jesus Christ did, and for Him it was all undeserved. Pilate could find no fault in our Lord. His wife had a dream in which she suffered much, and she warned her husband, "Have nothing to do with this just man." The centurion whose men nailed Christ to the Cross said, Truly this was a Son of God." And even Judas came back to the Jewish authorities to return the money that they had given him, and he said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." Even the thief on the Cross told the other thief that they were getting what they deserved, but that Jesus had done "nothing amiss."

Now in spite of all of this testimony Jesus Christ was arrested, put through a mock trial, and crucified. But how did He behave during that entirely horrible ordeal. Words fail us when we try to describe how terrible it was. Peter said that our Lord left his readers, and all other believers, an Example.

2:22 Notice the list:

- 1) "Who did no sin." He not only was free of any criminal charges, but His record on earth was perfect before God.
- 2) "Neither was guile found in His mouth." Not only could it be said that He "did no sin," but neither did He sin with the words of His mouth.

2:23 The list showing the Example of Christ continues in this verse, and this in particular speaks of the way in which our Lord did not sin with His mouth.

- 3) "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again." To revile means to vilify or to slander. They reproached him for the claims that He made for Himself as though they were false. But He did not slander them in return although they gave Him every reason to do so. Instead, He prayed for them: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."
- 4) "When He suffered, He threatened not." He had every right to threaten them with judgment, especially for what they were doing as He was hanging, dying on the Cross.
- 5) And this part is so important. Instead of being consumed with words of judgment for them, He "committed

Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.” Again He prayed: “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” Never before nor since, has there been such a display of absolute confidence in the sovereignty of God. From the standpoint of the Romans and the Jews who were responsible for the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, there was never a greater display of unrighteousness.

It is difficult to read these words of Peter without thinking also of the words of Isaiah in that great OT Gospel passage: Isaiah 53.

But Peter cannot leave this terrible scene without telling why all of this happened to our Lord.

2:24 The Lord Jesus willing bore our sins in his own body on the tree, the Cross, for two reasons: 1) that the penalty upon us might be satisfied, and 2) that we might live unto righteousness, having been delivered also from the power of sin. The judgment He suffered on the Cross secured our deliverance from sin’s penalty and sin’s power, and ultimately from the very presence of sin in our lives.

2:25 Again drawing upon Isaiah 53, “we were as sheep going astray, but have now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop (Overseer) of our souls.”

As I have mentioned more than once, after we are saved, the Lord leaves us here for two purposes. And both of them are mentioned in this chapter. The first is that we might grow, might mature in the likeness of Christ. The second is that we might be witnesses to a lost world of the only Savior from sin. But we often think of our witness as the verbal testimony we give to others of the Gospel. That is certainly an important part. But how do we get people to listen to a message that they don’t want and really can’t understand. In Acts 1:8 the Lord Jesus in leaving His disciples to return to heaven, spoke of their reception of the Holy Spirit, but not just that they would talk to people about the Lord, but that they should “be witnesses unto Me,” is what the Lord said.

This is what Peter was talking about. Peter was saying that if we react to our trials as the Lord did to His, the difference between what the world usually sees when there are troubles and conflicts, the love, the joy, the peace, and so on down the list, this will awaken people to the fact that there is a reality to the Gospel, and that, as Peter went on to mention in chapter 3, verse 15, instead of our having to look for opportunities to talk to people about the Lord and the Gospel, people will begin to ask us about the reason for the hope that we have which has caused such a great change in our lives.

The household servants were in an ideal position to be witnesses of Christ. Their subservient place gave them unusual opportunities to demonstrate, to show, to a fallen, wicked world, the reality of faith in Jesus Christ.

1 Peter

October 9, 2006

Review the first two chapters, pointing out *the key verses* of the Epistle: **1 Peter 1:14-16**. (Encourage the class members to memorize these verses.)

Peter was writing to Hebrew Christians who were suffering greatly for their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Twice in the epistle he referred to their trials as “tried with fire” (1:7), or “fiery” (4:12). We can say from these verses that the trials which these people of God were experiencing, were hurtful, damaging, and not pleasant in any ways *except* for what God is accomplishing through them. And it would not be limited to physical suffering, but would include emotional and spiritual experiences which trials can produce, such as, fear, intimidation, and spiritual depression. The writer of the book of Hebrews spoke of such trials as chastening, παιδεία, which includes, as Thayer said, “the whole training and education of children” (p. 473). And he went on to say that it “relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishments” (*Ibid.*). It also included the care and training of the body. But the word is used of adults, correcting their mistakes, curbing their passions, and all instruction that is designed to enable a believer to live a holy life.

This what the Apostle Paul had in mind in describing the divine origin of the Scriptures, and their function in the lives of believers. Cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

So the epistle was written to instruct the people of God as to what they are to do in times of testing and trials. We are always to keep our minds focused upon the Lord, what He is doing, and on what He is doing in us, how He is seeking to make us more holy.

Up to chapter 2, verse 17, Peter was addressing himself to all believers. Then he singles out servants, as we have seen in the last part of chapter 2 (vv. 18-25). Now, at the beginning chapter 3, he addressed wives (3:1-6). Next in 37 he wrote to husbands before turning again to address all of the people of God.

There is a great deal of teaching throughout this epistle, but basically it is a letter based upon practical exhortations from 1:13 to 5:11. (Consult the outline.)

Now we need to recognize that these instructions are not just for times when we are being tested and tried concerning our faith. They are for all times. They describe the way we are to live every day. But the point that the Apostle Peter seems to be making is that in testing times we are not to live differently from any other time. Trials do not mean that obedience to the Lord is suspended during the time of testing. We are keep on trusting the Lord, obeying the Lord, loving the Lord and seeking to please Him, just as we do when we are not in difficult times. And I might add that when things are relatively quiet in our lives (because we do have some times like that), we are to live just like we are to live when the going gets rough.

Remember how the Apostle Peter began his exhortations in 1 Peter 1:13. (Read.) He said, “Gird up the loins of your mind.” Let me remind you of what I told you back in chapter 1 when we came to this first exhortation of this epistle. (The following is copied from previous notes.)

“Gird up the loins of your mind.” We don’t usually talk like this, and so we need to take some time to find out what Peter meant. The NASB expresses it this way: “Gird your minds for action.” The NIV renders it, “Prepare your minds for action.”

The verb which Peter used here, ἀναζώννυμι, and which is used only this once in the NT, is described by

Thayer in his Greek Lexicon as

a metaphor derived from the practice of the [Jews], who in order to be unimpeded in their movements were accustomed, when about to start on a journey or engage in any work, to bind their long and flowing garments closely around their bodies and fasten them with a leathern girdle (p. 37).

But with reference to their minds, this would mean that they were to prepare their minds to think differently, as Christians should think, and to be prepared for action.

Hart, in the Expos. Gk. Test., sees in this exhortation a reference to what the Lord told the children of Israel as He was preparing them to leave Egypt in the days of Moses. Speaking of the Passover Lamb, the Lord said this:

11 And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD's passover (Ex. 12:11).

Our deliverance from the world is yet future, but we are to have our minds girded for action as we await the coming of the Lord, as the last part of this verse indicates.

We also have these words spoken by the Lord Jesus in Luke 12:35-36 as He was speaking to His disciples about how they were to live as they awaited the coming of the Lord. Listen to what He said:

35 Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them (Luke 12:35-37).

The way psychologists, humanistic psychologists, have invaded the church, has made a lot of Christians wary of any talk about the mind. And we should be wary of what they have to say. But I would remind you that there is such a thing as Biblical psychology. The Bible has a lot to say about the mind. The way we use our minds is extremely important. Paul spoke in Romans 12:2 about “the renewing of your mind.” In Philippians 2:5 he said, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” The word that Peter used here is *διάνοια*. It is used twelve times in the NT. Once it is translated “imagination” in Luke 1:51, and once, as “understanding,” in 1 John 5:20. But in the other ten verses where it is used it is either “mind” or “minds.” This is the word that the Lord used when He said that we are to love God “with all thy mind.” It has to do with the way we think. In Ephesians 2:3 and 4:18, as well as in Colossians 1:21 we see the problem that we had with our minds before we were saved. You see, one of the basic differences between a Christian and a non-Christian, is in the way we think. There are just two ways in which people think: either with the wisdom of this world, or with the wisdom of God, some of which is in our hearts, but the rest is in the Word of God. A non-Christian is incapable of thinking like a Christian is to think. It is foolishness to him. It is a miracle of the grace of God when in our minds and hearts we think the way God wants us to think.

So what Peter was saying here right at the beginning of his emphasis on how we are to live, he was saying that we all need to get our minds prepared for action, and we can only do that by reading, or hearing, the Word, by memorizing the Word, *and by obeying the Word, and all of this done with much prayer!* It doesn't make sense to a person who doesn't know the Lord, but nothing else makes sense to a true child of God. A part of what Peter was saying will be fulfilled by simply going on in our reading of chapter 1, and then chapter 2, and so on. (The end of the quotation of previous notes on pp. 19 and 20 in this series on 1 Peter.)

In times of testing we have to deal with ourselves, and especially with our minds, the way we are thinking. Depression is usually caused with the wrong kind of thinking. We get mad at the Lord. Or we feel sorry for

ourselves. We can't figure things out, and so we fall into Bunyan's Slough of Despond. Girding up our minds, *preparing our minds for action*, as it is translated in both the NASB and the NIV, is not easy to do. Looking at the things that we can see is always easier than looking at the things we cannot see. And yet we need to set the Lord before us as King David was in the habit of doing. Cf. Psa. 16:8. Isaiah 26:3 and 4 tells us that if we want peace in our hearts we need to keep our minds "stayed" upon the Lord. The word "stayed" means to have our minds *lean* upon the Lord, or to take hold of the Lord. It carries with it the idea of being propped up. Our thoughts are very important. We need to be focused upon the Lord, not upon other people who may be the immediate cause of our trial. Certainly not upon ourselves, nor upon the trial itself. We need to focus our thinking upon the Lord, and the greatest help we have in doing that is by reading, and by meditating on, and by praying over the Word of God.

So as we come to chapter 3, verse 1, we need to go back in 1 Peter where Peter began his exhortation. And that is the verse that we have been talking about. There are probably reasons in all of our lives why we need that verse today.

Now, as I have mentioned, after Peter addressed the servants (which may have included most of them), he wrote to wives, and then to husbands.

3:1 I think that this is an indication that when wives are in a trial, husbands are too, and *vice versa*. So one is deeply affected by the trouble the other is having. After all, in marriage the two are one "flesh" (Eph. 5:31). There is no closer relationship between two people than the relationship between a man and a woman in marriage. And it is a relationship that is based upon love. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church, and a wife is to be submissive to the man she has married because she loves him. And it will be a delight for her to submit herself to the man who loves her as Christ loved the church, and still does, and gave Himself for her.

But trials, even in the lives of a husband and wife who know the Lord, can cause difficulties, especially when the trial goes on and on, and even often in shorter trials. But the divine guidelines in marriage remain the same. The wife is to submit herself to her husband. Maybe her husband is the reason for her trial. Maybe he is not as loving as he should be, or, as the indication is in this verse, her husband may not even have been a Christian. Perhaps that was the situation with many of the women to whom Peter was writing. Some Christian women feel that if her husband is not a Christian, she is not responsible to obey him. She certainly is not responsible to obey him if he wants her to do something that is in contradiction with Scripture. I knew of a man whose wife was a Christian. She refused to obey him because he wanted to swap her for another man's wife just for one night. So refused to do it, and she should have refused. But under normal condition the husband whether Christian or not, is the head, and the wife is to obey.

But what should be one of her main concerns? It is that her husband might be saved. And so Peter indicates here that she needs to be godly, she needs to be holy, so that without talking to her husband all of the time about going to church, or about becoming a Christian, she was to live in such a way that the character of her life would be used to convict him of his need of Christ.

The KJV obscures somewhat the meaning of this verse because it adds a word that should not be there. The word "that" in this verse should be translated *in order that*. But that is not where the verse needs to be corrected. But the word "that" expresses why it is so important for her to show her love for her husband by placing herself under his authority. Here is the reason: in order that, "if any," that is, any husbands, "obey not the Word, they also may without (and here is where the correction needs to be made) not the Word, but a "word be won (be won to Christ) by the conversation (conduct, character) of the wife."

A wife is not to keep bugging her husband about trusting the Lord, or even about going to church. She may have an opportunity now and then to talk to him about the Lord, *but her main objective should be that by a holy life, a life of obedience to the Lord, she may be able to win her husband to the Lord.*

Maybe neither one was a Christian when they got married, or she may have been a Christian, but made a mistake by marrying a man who was not a Christian. In either case her best God-given means of reaching her husband, was a holy character and life. How wonderful it would be if we would only be wise enough to do things God's way! This applies not only to a man and wife, but to any other relationship where we are concerned about another person's salvation. It is not just our talk (although that is important), but it is our walk, the way we live, the Christ-likeness of our lives.

3:2 This verse continues the thought of verse 1. It is not so much what people *hear from* us, but what they *see in* us, providing our lives are "chaste." What does that word mean? This word has the same root as the Greek word for *holy*. A chaste person, by dictionary definition, is a person who is pure in thought and action. People are more concerned about what we are than they are about what we say. What we say is always more impressive if it is backed up by what we are. "When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7). Speaking of the husband, Edmond Hiebert said, "His attention to the Gospel would be won through the eye rather than the ear" (p. 197).

"Coupled with fear" – The NIV grasps the idea in translating this verse, "when they see the purity and reference of their lives." But it would be better if they translated "reference" as *fear*. Peter was speaking about the fear of the Lord. On the fear of the Lord, see 1 Peter 1:17; 2:17, 18 and 3:15. To fear the Lord is to reverence Him, to treat Him as God, to fear that you might displease Him, and to fear the consequences of displeasing Him.

3:3 It has always been the case that women seek to make themselves attractive to men by the clothes they wear, and by what they do to their hair. Necklaces and bracelets and rings play their part too. And it is interesting to see that it was the same in the early days of the church. In fact, it has always been that way. And men have encouraged it. Today it is not just by what women wear, but by what they don't wear. The word that we hear constantly about women's clothing, is that it is "sexy."

I don't believe that Peter was objecting to women looking nice. But he was objecting to them dressing so as to attract the attention of men, or so that they would be able to influence them, often for immoral reasons. You can often see even in little girls that they love to have a new dress, or new shoes, and they will often tell us what is new. But here Peter was speaking of the most usual way that women seek to influence men. And here it seems that he is still talking about how a Christian wife is going to get her husband to listen to her. And, as in many places throughout this epistle Peter began with what women should *not* do, and then spoke of what they should do.

First, "let it not be." Now he was speaking here of "adorning" although that word does not appear in the text. The translators chose a good word to convey the meaning. To adorn anything is to make it beautiful to the eye. Architects seek to do that with buildings. Home decorators seek to do that with the furnishings of a home. The Men's Wear House which sells men's clothing advertises with the slogan, "You'll like the way you look." And they guarantee it. So we men are not guiltless when it comes to adorning.

But here we are talking about a woman who is concerned about winning an unsaved husband to the Lord. Now if we think that this can be a factor in winning husbands to the Lord, we are mistaken. Any husband like for his wife to look attractive, but if we are thinking just about clothing, ornaments, and the way a lady does her hair, that might be the way the world thinks but "let it not be" the way a Christian woman thinks. Now again let me

say that I don't believe that Peter was against a nice looking, modest dress, with a necklace to go with it. and even a ring and/or a bracelet. But this is not the way to evangelize. All of this is outward, and if this is all that a woman has, she is a hypocrite. And when you get to know her, that is what you learn about her. Some of the best dressed women in the world are that, and nothing else.

“Plaiting the hair” means braiding it. “Wearing of gold” needs no commentary. Beautiful ornaments have always been made of gold. “Putting on of apparel” has to do with beautiful dresses. Now if you braid your hair, and have some gold accessories that you wear, and buy and wear a new dress now and then, is that sinful? No! But if that is all that people can say about you, your emphasis is in the wrong direction. And the reason is that all of that does not do a single thing for you as a person. A woman's effectiveness as a wife, and we are talking about a Christian wife with an unsaved husband, is not dependent upon how she fixes her hair, or whether or not she has the latest fashion in her clothes. Don't you see that a prostitute can do all of that? But we are talking about a Christian wife with an unsaved husband, and somehow and for some reason she is a Christian under trial, a Christian who is being called upon by her circumstances to show what it means to be born again, to be a child of God.

Let me give you a comment that summarizes what we have in this verse:

Our perverse, crooked hearts turn everything we use into chaos. How few people know how to use the two necessities of life—food and clothes. For the mind to be pleased with such things is foolish and childish. This is a disease that few escape. It is strange what poor things men and women become vain about, thinking they are somebody. The soul that departs from God has lost its true worth and beauty, and so it descends to concentrating on how it may indulge and dress the body (Light on & Griffith Thomas, p. 135).

The Lord told Jeremiah, “Can a maid forget her ornaments (jewelry), or a bride her attire (wedding ornaments), yet my people have forgotten me days without number (Jer. 2:32).

Peter has said in this verse what should not be for such a lady; in verse 4 he tells us what this Christian wife should be.

3:4 What you and I are on the outside, is not the important thing about us. It is what we are on the inside where no one but God can really see who we are and what we are. Peter speaks of “the hidden man of the heart.” However, the word that he used for man is *ἄνθρωπος*, which is a generic term for either a man or a woman, a human being, but here the obvious meaning is, *the hidden woman of the heart*. However, what Peter was about to say about this wife, is equally important for all wives *and for all husbands!!!* So men we need to pay attention to this too.

Fashions come and go. What is in style today, may be out tomorrow. And there are people, even some Christians who spend their lives trying to keep stylish. This is what Solomon called *vanity*. *But what the Apostle Peter was speaking about was “not corruptible.”* Peter used this word in 1:4 regarding our inheritance. Here he used it regarding God's work in “the hidden man of the heart.” It will never decay and grow old. We can say for the child of God that it is never out of date. It is immortal. It will never pass away. What is it? “A meek and a quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price.”

“Meek” means humble. It means gentle. This is what made Moses truly great in the eyes of the Lord. Cf. Num. 12:3). And remember what our Lord Jesus Christ said about Himself along with His invitation to us:

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matt. 11:28-30).

It is, therefore, very clear that to see “a meek and quiet spirit” is to seek to be like the Lord Jesus Christ. A meek person is never pushy, and a quiet person puts up with disturbances caused by others and does not cause disturbances herself. This is called a fit description for a submissive wife.

On “a meek and quiet spirit” Adam Clarke said that it is “a mind that will not give provocation to others, nor receive irritation by the provocation of others. Meekness will prevent the first; quietness will guard against the last.”

We all should be attracted to what Peter says about “a meek and a quiet spirit. He said that “in the sight of God” is it “of great price.” Hiebert says, “Whatever the world may think of such an unassuming and mild disposition, for the believer the final test is whether it wins God’s approval” (p. 201). It is of infinitely greater value than the most costly wardrobe of the wealthiest woman in the world.

3:5 Not only should such character approved by God attract the attention of the wife under trial, but the OT gives us numerous examples of women, “who trusted in God,” and who so adorned themselves by being “in subjection unto their own husbands.” They would never have made the “who’s who” in the world, but they were infinitely precious in the sight of God.

3:6 The mention of Sarah here means that she is the greatest example, or that she is the head of a long line of godly women who lived in happy and humble submission to their husbands.

Where is it recorded that she called Abraham, lord? It was after the Lord had told Abraham, “Sarah thy wife shall have a son” (Gen. 18:10). Her response was, “After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also”? (Gen. 18:12). Sarah recognized that among men, Abraham had supreme authority over her

Peter told the married women that they could only be considered the daughters of Sarah, which godly women were inclined to do, if they sought to please God, as Sarah did, and submitted themselves to their husbands without any feeling of fear or alarm (which is the meaning of “amazement”).

Wayne Grudem pointed out in his commentary that Peter’s use of two present participles in this verse were an indication that Peter was speaking of “a continuing pattern of conduct during one’s life” (p. 141).

This may not be popular in our day, even among some women who call themselves Christians, but from the days of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, this is the wife’s place, and it is the place where she will experience the blessing of the Lord.

Peter was strong on the importance of examples. Here he spoke of Sarah as an example to all godly wives. In 2:21 he spoke of Christ as our example. And in 5:3 he exhorted elders to be examples to their flocks.

October 16, 2006

The Lord, in speaking to “servants” in 2:18-25, and to “wives” in 3:1-6, has not sought to accommodate to what we hear so much about today, “my rights,” nor to their limitations as human beings, but he has addressed them as the children of God, and has placed before them standards which are only attainable by the grace of God. Any instruction today about husbands, wives, children, employees and employers, even as citizens, which does not recognize what people today recognize as their own “rights,” is met with scorn and ridicule, and often

by the strongest opposition in the world. Peter, and the other writers of Scripture, were always totally concerned about God and His will, and did not hesitate to teach that submission to the will of God is the only way to true happiness and eternal profit. Doing God's will is the only way of living that will bring peace to individuals (children, young people, and adults), and so to families, to cities, and to nations. But such high and holy standards are only attainable by those who, as Peter made clear at the beginning of this epistle, are the elect of God and have been born again. However, even those of us who have been born again, there must be a conscious dependence upon God Himself Who alone can enable us to obey His will from our hearts.

But what did Peter have to say about husbands?

3:7 The perfect counterpart of submission, is love. It takes the fear out of being submissive. But, instead of saying "love," Peter described what it means for a husband to love his wife. The Apostle Paul raised the husband's love for his wife to the highest possible level likening it to Christ's love for the Church: "even as also Christ love the church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). I am sure that we would all agree that no husband has ever yet reached that goal, and no one ever will. So it means that we need to love our wives more and more.

"Likewise" means that what Peter was about to tell husbands, was of equal importance with what he had just told the wives. It is not a one-sided relationship, but just as a wife is to be submissive to her husband, what he was about to tell the husbands carried with it the same kind of authority."

"Dwell with them" means that it is only in this relationship that a man and a woman are to live together. And then Peter added the words, "according to knowledge." This has been interpreted in different ways, but it seems to me that in the context it would have to mean, knowledge of what God intended for the marriage relationship to be. Pagan ideas are very different from God's plan for marriage. A wife is often treated like a slave. Today in America there this a very strong feeling that the husband and wife have equal positions as far as authority is concerned. **III:** Several years ago I had a couple come to me, and the young lady informed me that she was not going to promise to submit herself to her husband. So I told her that she was going to have to find someone else to marry them. After some discussion, she agreed to promise to submit herself to her husband. As far as I know, they are still married, but whether or not she kept her promise, I cannot say. Two reasons that there are so many divorces: 1) Couples come to marriage without Christ; 2) They don't know the divine pattern for marriage. God made us, He is our Creator. God brought the first couple together as husband and wife. He has the right to tell us why He made us male and female, and what the marriage relationship is to be. To be ignorant of that, is the very reason so many marriages fail. When the Apostle Paul said in Romans 13:7, "Render therefore to all their dues" and followed it with "honor to whom honor," that should include the honor, the respect, that a husband shows for his wife. After all, a great deal of love is made up of respect. A husband who loves his wife will not discuss her weaknesses or their differences with other people.

Peter speaks of the wife as "the weaker vessel." This has to mean, and is almost unanimously interpreted as meaning, weaker physically. A wife may be equal or superior to her husband intellectually, and even spiritually and morally, but not physically or emotionally. And the husband needs to remember this. But even this can be a real asset to a husband. Wives are generally more sensitive to the feelings of others than a husband is inclined to be.

But where a husband and wife stand on the same ground is in relation to the Gospel. They are "heirs together of the grace of life." Cf. Romans 8:16-17:

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him,

that we may be also glorified together.

Also cf. Ephesians 3:6:

6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.

And then Hebrews 11:9 we read,

9 By faith he [*i.e.*, Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him (joint heirs) of the same promise

A husband doesn't have any more in salvation than his wife does. And her inheritance in Christ is the same as her husband's inheritance. Both are "predestined to be conformed to the image of His (God's) Son." And if a husband treats his wife as being less, or having less, or looking forward to less, than he is or has, he is sinning grievously against the Lord. God is no respecter of persons in salvation. A man has as much as a woman. A Gentile has as much as a Jew. A child has as much as an adult. One who has just been saved, has as much in Christ as a man or woman who has been saved for fifty years. This is basis theology. Bringing this truth into the marriage relationship the husband must remember that he and his wife, if both know the Lord, are "heirs together of the grace of life." "The grace of life" is *the gift of life*, which is salvation in the fullest meaning of the word: justification, sanctification, and glorification.

Now to show how important all of this is, important that the husband remember all of this, and recognize it continually in his relationship with his wife, it is "that your prayers be not hindered." Can a Christian husband be in a worse position than to have his prayers hindered? And Peter was speaking directly to husbands. One of a husband's greatest responsibilities is prayer. He needs to pray for himself. He needs to pray for his wife. He needs to pray for their children –and on and on the list keeps getting longer and longer. There are many conditions attached to prayer in the Bible. This is surely one of the most serious at all. But let me add: the word "your" in the Greek text is plural, meaning not that Peter was addressing husbands and wives. This verse has to do with "husbands." So a husband needs to take this verse, and other verses addressed to husbands in the Bible, very, very seriously. Men, we can't be in fellowship with the Lord if we are out of fellowship with our wives. "Hindered" means *cut off*. It is like trying to talk on a telephone when the line to the phone has been cut. We can be talking, but no one will be listening.

At this point Peter turned to "all" believers – those who are married, and those who are not married.

3:8 I have tried to bring out in the outline that I have given you that there are two major sections in this epistle made up largely of exhortations. The first goes from 1:13 to 3:12. So, when Peter wrote "finally" here it is taken by some that he was concluding the first part. Some say the same, but would run the end of the first part to the last verse of chapter 3. Either way that you look at it, he has reached the point in the epistle toward which he has been writing, and by saying "finally" he was pointing to the reasons why he had said what he had said before. It is like he could have said, *Now I want you to listen carefully so that you will see how important the truths are which I have already given to you.*

"Be ye all of one mind." The NT epistles are very strong on this point of unity, or oneness. But it was also very prominent in our Lord's prayer found in John 17. This does not mean that we all will ever get to the same position doctrinally. But it does mean that we should all immediately get to the place in our thinking, that we will have the same "mind" about where we go to find the truth. Taking what Peter had just said, it means that every wife and every husband should be in agreement that what Peter had just written about their relationship with each other was absolutely true, and that it always would be true. We do not establish doctrine by going to the creeds of the church, nor to the commentaries, nor to the doctrinal statement of any church or organization. *Those statements of doctrine are only to be accepted to the extent to which they agree with the Bible.* We are to be one in our acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God. It is our ultimate authority. No other writing is to be

accepted on the same basis as the sixty-six books of the Bible. God has given no other revelation. Judgment is pronounced upon any who add to the Word of God, and the same judgment is declared against those who delete anything from holy Scripture. This is where we as the Lord's people are to be one.

Every once in a while there will be those who get concerned about unity in the church, but instead of calling the people of God back to the Scriptures, they say that if there are doctrines in the Bible about which we can't agree, then we'll forget about them and accept what we can agree on. But what do they agree on? Nothing! They disagree about the authority of Scripture. And if you disagree on that point, then every other vital doctrine is in question: the Deity of Christ, the depravity of man, the existence of sin, the sovereignty of God, the resurrection of Christ, the doctrine of salvation, the personality of the Holy Spirit, and on and on. So what you are left with is nothing!

True unity, the unity that the Lord prayed for, and which the apostle encouraged, was a unity that starts with the Bible, and rests upon the authority of the Bible. Some of us attended a wedding recently and in reality the minister had nothing to say about marriage and the Bible. He probably thought that there was no connection. So Peter told those saints who had been scattered from their homes, and who were being persecuted for their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ – take your stand on the Word of God, be united there in what you are to believe and how you are to live, *and don't let anyone move you from the Word of God*. That is the kind of unity we need, and the only kind!

What was Peter's second point here? "Having compassion one of another." If you look at the remainder of this verse, you will see that they all have to do with the love that we are to have for each other. This is the second major affection that a person receives when he is saved. The first is a love for God and for Christ; the second is a love for the Lord's people. The Apostle John said along this line,

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death (1 John 3:14).

If you don't love God's people, and love to be with them, and love to help and encourage them, then you aren't one of them, and you shouldn't think that you are.

What is "compassion"? We get our English word sympathy, or to sympathize, from the Greek word. So it means to enter with people into their sufferings and trials, and we do what we can to relieve their sufferings. The people to whom Peter was writing would have had plenty of opportunity to show their compassion. They were all with their feet in the fire, so to speak. In the story that the Lord told about the man we call the good Samaritan, the priest did not have compassion, neither did the Levite, but the Samaritan did.

The greatest example of compassion that the world has ever seen was in the coming and sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Compassion" is love in action. Remember that Peter told these people to "gird up the loins of their minds," to prepare for action. Helping people in their needs, and especially the Lord's people, is how we show compassion.

"Love as brethren." Brothers are those who have the same father. All who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ have been born into the family of God. We have the same heavenly Father. We are all brethren (and sisters). There is no human relationship that is greater nor more precious than the relation that two Christians have toward each other in Christ.

"Be pitiful." Each of these phrases in this verse is the translation of one Greek word. It is used in only one other verse in the NT: Eph. 4:32, which tells us,

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

It could be translated the same way here in 1 Peter 3:8, “be tenderhearted,” or “be pitiful.” If I understand how this differs from the other words which Peter has used, he means that what we do for each other, must come from our hearts. Pity is a feeling that you have in your heart. That is what true love is. It has to come from the heart or it is not real love. So we are not to just go through the motions in expressing our concern for the people of God. If that is all that there is to it, then it is hypocrisy. How different it is when your heart moves you to do anything you can for someone else who is in need.

“Be courteous” is the last word in this verse. This should always be one of the chief characteristics of a child of God. We need to be courteous at all times. However, the best MSS support seems to indicate that what Peter said was, “be humble.” We must do good works which will be of help to others, but we are not to feel proud of ourselves for what we do. Proverbs 27:2 teaches us, “Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.” It should humble us when the Lord places before us an opportunity to help someone in need. But we want to keep quiet about it instead of seeking the congratulations and praise from others for what we have done.

So we are to be on the lookout for people in need, especially the Lord’s people. And we must do what we can from our hearts, being humbled by the opportunity that the Lord has given us to help lift the burden that is in someone else’s life.

But as Peter went on, it seems that he had in mind coming upon someone in need who has acted with enmity toward us. And, in context, it could be that Peter had in mind instances he had been informed about of husbands and wives who were having trouble with each other.

3:9 “Rendering” here means *to give back*. It is a pleasure to be able to help someone who has helped you. But what about when the person whose need is brought to your attention, who has done some wrong to you. Naturally it is easy to feel that that person is getting what he deserves.

The word for “evil” which Peter used here does not necessarily mean something that is really bad, but it can mean a slight offense of some kind. It may be a person who has left you out of something when others thought that you should be included. Or it could be a person who could have helped you when you were in need, but instead did nothing. The tendency is to get even, or maybe give the other person something a little worse than that person gave you. Peter said a Christian does not try to retaliate in kind. We are not to try to get even with someone who has wronged us.

“Railing” on the other hand is usually vocal. David prayed in the Psalms that the Lord would keep people from telling lies about him. Or maybe you are on a baseball team, and you drop a fly ball that you should have caught. Perhaps one of the other team members won’t let you forget it, and he makes sure that everyone else he knows who knows you, is informed about your error. “Railing” is a word which sounds like what it is.

Peter, speaking by the Holy Spirit say “no” to both of these. But in telling anyone what they should do if they were hurt by any situation like these, he said, “but contrariwise, blessing.” What he meant was that we as Christians, instead of seeking to continue causing trouble, should seek an opportunity to be a blessing. This is the way Joseph in the book of Genesis responded to his brothers. This is the way that our Lord reacted toward His enemies, healing Malchus’ ear, praying from the Cross, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And at this point Peter again referred to the Gospel. We were “called” to Christ, or we would never have come to Him to be saved. The Apostle Paul had done many things contrary to God and Christ and the Gospel, some even involving the death of those whom he had persecuted. And yet the Lord brought the blessing of salvation into his heart and life. A helping hand extended toward one who has been at enmity to us, may be the

very act that the Lord will use to bring that person to Himself. God has blessed us with salvation when we were totally undeserving; we should look for opportunities, even among our enemies, to do the good that they need. There is always the possibility that the Lord will use our kindness to shame them, and turn them from being enemies to being friends.

God not only blessed us when He saved us, but He is constantly putting us in situations, sometimes bad situations, because it is in His heart to give us blessing, and to make us a blessing to someone else.

At this point, as we go into verse 10, 11, and 12 we see that Peter was quoting from Psalm 34:12-16. So he was illustrating here that we as Christians need to be of one mind, taking our guidance from the Word of God, and not from our hearts when we are presented with some opportunity to get even with someone. Peter may have had in mind “froward masters” (see 2:18), or the many other situations in which these people of God were experiencing fiery trials, even, as I have suggested, troubles that husbands and wives were having with each other.

Let us see what guidance they were given from David in the Word of God as he wrote Psalm 34 about 1,000 years before Peter wrote his epistle. Note that God’s standards for the behavior of His people do not change.

October 23, 2006

3:10 It can’t be said too often that Peter was writing to a group of Jewish believers who were suffering greatly because of their faith in Christ. In fact, they were experiencing *fiery trials*. Peter mentioned this characteristic of their trials twice in this epistle. See 1:7 and 4:12. But he was not just writing to them to sympathize with them (that was certainly a part of the reason that he had in writing to them), but he was writing to encourage them to be steadfast in their lives. They were to live when they were being tried in the same way that they were to live when they were not being tried. However, those early members of the Church, the body of Christ, did not have many days when they were not under trials.

However, we must not miss another emphasis that Peter was making in this epistle. He said that they were to be happy in the Lord in spite of their circumstances. He spoke of their joy as something that would accompany their trials, but he also encouraged them to rejoice in their trials. Look with me at the following verses: 1:6; 3:14; 4:13, 14. And the references that Peter made to their hope (1:3, 13, 21; 3:15), as well as what he had to say about peace (1:2; 3:11; 5:14), these also were inclined to encourage them and give them joy in the Lord and in their salvation. He pointed them a number of times also to the coming of the Lord where he did not use the word “hope.” See 1:7, 13; 4:5, 7, 13; 5:4, 10.

So they were not to face their trials unhappy with the Lord, but trusting Him, rejoicing in Him. Peter and John were examples of the very attitude they were encouraging in the lives of those suffering Hebrew Christians. I say that because of that time, recorded in Acts 5 where the Jewish officials had arrested Peter and John. Their Jewish persecutors decided to let them go, but after they had beaten them, they warned them not speak any more in the name of Jesus. In Acts 5:41-42 we learn what Peter and John did:

41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

Now, as we read 1 Peter, we realize that we are reading the Word of God. But at the time we are reading about, those Jewish believers would not have known that Peter wrote to them under the direction of the Spirit of God. His epistle would have impressed them as the Word because it was the Word, but at that time it is very likely

that they would have held their OT Scriptures on a level above what Peter was writing although they had full confidence in him. But at this point Peter quoted some verses from Psalm 34 to back up what he was telling them as to how they should live.

This is what we do today. I am not an apostle. I trust that the Lord has guided me in what I have told you and many others of the Lord's people down through the years. Some have questioned my teaching on the doctrine of election in salvation. But what do I do in a case like that? I cite Scripture to back up what I am saying. If I can't prove what I am saying with Scripture, then I shouldn't say it, nor should you believe me.

And so what Peter was doing when he quoted from Psalm 34, he was reminding those Jewish believers that what he had been telling them, was what King David said about living in the fear of the Lord regardless of what our circumstances might be. Turn with me to Psalm 34, and let's see the context of these verses which Peter quoted here in verses 10, 11, and 12 of 1 Peter 3. Peter's quotation differs a little from what David wrote (but not in meaning) because Peter was apparently using the Greek translation of the OT, the Septuagint, often referred to by the Roman number LXX.

Now let us go to 1 Peter 3:10.

In Psalm 34 this verse begins with a question; here in 1 Peter 3 it is a statement. "For he that will love life, and see good days." I think that such a statement describes most of us – maybe all of us! We know that life has its trials and difficulties. Nobody ever has everything in life that he wants, which would also eliminate everything that he doesn't want. But what if such a life were possible? Robertson suggests the translation, "Whoever wishes to love life," this present life. We would like to, but we really can't. **Illus:** We have some young ladies who come to our house every other week to clean house for us. They always give us a receipt after I pay them, and even though we don't always get the same girls, they always write on the receipt, "Have a good day!" in large letters. I like that idea. That has become a common greeting in our day, hasn't it? We all like the good days, but we don't like the bad days. We would not all agree on what a good day is, but according to our idea of a good day, we all like good days.

Move that up to a national level. We would like it not to have war. We would like to see an end of casualties. We would consider it a good day if there were no crimes, no accidents, no sickness. Politicians flood the air ways with their idea of what a good day is.

Or perhaps we could approach this idea like this: We are faced with all kinds of problems in our country today. Some of us yearn for those days when there was no need to lock our doors. As a child I had to walk about a mile to school, and part of it was through woods. Hundreds of children in my grade school did the same thing. I never heard of a child being molested, or of a child disappearing. I had a friend in high school whose little brother was kidnaped for ransom, and who was eventually killed, but such a thing was very, very rare. Now we are virtual slaves in our own homes. Will things ever be like they used to be? What is the solution for the problems that we face today.

David was a King, a powerful King. He had a lot of bad days. I think that we can say that he had more bad days than he had good days.

Well, David indicated that we can't have good days as long as we do bad things. If we were to suggest that to our politicians, at least to most of them, they would laugh us out of Washington, or Salem, or Olympia. But that is exactly what I would like to tell some of them. As long as adultery is a way of life, as long as homosexuality is a legal lifestyle, as long as the ten commandments are rejected, as long as we talk about Mother Nature

being in charge of our weather, and as long as we put all religions on the same basis, we are not going to have good days. In fact, what I have mentioned along with many other things which are tolerated and defended in our country today, things are going to get worse and worse.

But I want you to see an amazing thing about this text. Peter didn't talk about the evils of Rome in his day. He did not talk about the corruption of the Jewish leaders, the hypocrites in their long-flowing robes. David and Peter spoke about that little instrument that is in every single one of our mouths: *the tongue!* We could almost think that we were back in the epistle of James, couldn't we? Mention that to our politicians, and even to a lot of the religious leaders of the day, and see what kind of a response you get. "The tongue?" they would say in amazement. And we should reply, "Yes, the tongue." The tongue is to be restrained from speaking "evil," and "the lips" (a synonym here for the tongue) "that they speak no guile."

The word that Peter used for "evil" here is not always used of sin. Trench in his *Synonyms of the NT*, says an evil doctor is a doctor who does not possess the skills that a doctor is supposed to have. An evil garment a garment that is tattered or torn, one which is not an acceptable garment to wear. So an evil tongue is one that says unacceptable things, a tongue which is used in ways that it should not be used. But the questions then is, who is to decide what is acceptable and what is not.? Going back to Psalm 34 you will find that David preceded this verse with, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (Psa. 34:11). So a tongue is declared to be good or evil purely on the basis of whether what it says is pleasing or displeasing and unacceptable *to the Lord!* Most people, even many Christians, don't stop to think about whether what they are about to say is acceptable or unacceptable to the Lord. We have been learning in our study of Proverbs that Solomon, speaking by the Holy Spirit, had very much to say about the tongue. When Adam and Eve sinned, and God came to them in the Garden of Eden, their tongues got them into more trouble than they were already in. You and I as Christians ought to be extremely careful about what we say, as well as how we say what we say. Is it true? Is it necessary? Is what I am about to say going to hurt anyone? Does my speech show that I have a proud heart?

This verse is a verse of major significance. When we are under trial how easy it is to say something even against the Lord that is totally unacceptable to the Lord Himself. "Foolish talking and jesting" are unacceptable to God, Paul told Timothy. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His Name in vain" (Ex. 20:7).

But Peter also mentioned "guile"? What is "guile"? It is deceit. The Greeks have another word which means to deceive for gain, like automobile dealers are notorious for doing. But the word that Peter used here simply means to deceive, as opposed to telling the truth. Our generation has become a deceitful generation. My father-in-law used to do thousands of dollars worth of business selling rice, even to Japan, when all he had to go on was a handshake, or an order over the telephone. But he wouldn't do that today. Order something over the telephone, and somewhere in the conversation with the person you are making the order with you will hear these words, "And with what card are you going to pay for this?"

But I pity the person who does this with the Word of God. Paul told the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 4:2 that he was not "handling the Word of God deceitfully." The Devil is a master deceiver! Deceit also has become a way of life for many, many people, even Chief Executives in major American businesses. But the simple telling of a lie, is guile, deceit. But how sad it is when even Christians resort to deceit.

Nobody is really going to be able to love this life, here and now, as long as our tongues persist in saying anything that is displeasing to God. If you and I want to have the blessing of God upon our lives, we must concentrate on pleasing the Lord with our tongues and our lips. To "refrain" from the misuse of the tongue is a command to stop it, and never to go back to it again. Dr. Harry Ironside, one of my teachers in seminary, told us in class one day that one good thing about telling people the truth, is that you don't have to remember what

you told them.

3:11 But it is not just a case *refraining* from evil, but we are to “eschew” it. This also is a command, and in the aorist it means that the action is taken as a whole. The verb actually means to go out of your way to avoid it. What Solomon told his son about the house of the prostitute is an illustration of this word, “eschew.” He told his son not to go near her house. See Proverbs 5:8: “Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house .” As the people of God we are to shun, to stay as far away as we can, from any person or situation that might cause us to do anything that is displeasing to the Lord. Our attitude might be that we can handle it, like Peter being sure that he would not deny the Lord, but he did what he said he would not do because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The word for “evil” in this verse, is the same as the word for “evil” in verse 10., meaning anything that is displeasing to the Lord, and thus unacceptable for the child of God.

But it is not enough just to avoid the evil; we need to do what is “good” in the sight of God. This is what the Apostle Paul told the Roman believers about evil and good: “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21). And used the same two words for “evil” and “good” that Peter used here in 3:11: κακός and ἀγαθός.

“Let him seek peace” probably has reference back to verses 8 and 9. This should be our objective, not peace at any price, but peace according to the will of God. “Peace” may seem to escape us, to be out of reach, and that is why we need to “ensue it,” *pursue it*. The emphasis here seems to be among brethren. Trials tend to raise barriers between us and our fellow believers, again often between husbands and wives, or between slaves and their masters.

Now why was the Apostle Peter so concerned about all of this? He tells us, as David did, in verse 12.

3:12 The word translated “For” is actually the Greek word for *because* – ὅτι. Here is the reason that we need to be extremely careful about things that are good and evil. They find their definition in God, or the Lord. Things are “evil” because they are “evil” in God’s sight, and things are “good” because they are “good” in His sight. “Evil” is always “evil,” and “good” is always “good.” “Evil” does not become “good,” and “good” never becomes “evil.”

“The eyes of the Lord”– “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?” (Psa. 94:9). “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (Prov. 15:3).

11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee (Psa. 139:11-12).

The Lord is omnipresent and He is omniscient – He is everywhere all of the time, and He sees everything at the same time, and He knows everything all of the time, past, present, and future. But how easy it is for us to forget Him. This can be, and should be, one of the greatest safeguards against sin. David made it a habit to set the Lord always before himself, *i.e.*, to recognize that the Lord was always with him. Cf. Psa. 16:8. The Lord not only sees and knows all that is going on with us externally, but He also sees and knows all that is going on with us internally. He not only knows where we are, but He sees what we are doing, He hears what we are saying, and He even knows what we are thinking. We can’t hide anything from the Lord, and therefore we shouldn’t try. These are not truths to cause us to dread and fear the Lord in that sense, but to make us fear Him in the sense that we revere Him as God, and love Him because of His personal concern for us and His constant

love for us. The Lord never slumbers; He never sleeps. We are constantly the objects of His care.

Now after all that we have learned about how it is possible to disobey the Lord, and so to displease Him, we see how He looks upon us – as “the righteous.” We are righteous because we are in Christ. This is our standing before Him. The Lord Jesus became sin for us . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. But it is His sovereign will that those who have a righteous standing before Him, be righteous in character and conduct. This is what 1 Peter is all about. We love what is good (that which is pleasing to Him), but we do all that we can to avoid the evil for the simple but extremely important reason that evil is what is displeasing to Him.

But there is another great blessing that “the righteous” have as they live to please the Lord: “His ears are open unto their prayers.” All of these truths which Peter has lifted out of David’s words in Psalm 34, are what make our days good. As we have learned, the Christian life is not a trouble-free life, but it is a good life because we have a good God Who blesses us in special ways because He is our God, and because, by His grace, and only by His grace, we constantly seek to do what is pleasing to Him. The rewards of obedience to God are limitless.

Wayne Grudem summarizes the meaning of these verses with these words:

Yet this passage does present a bold affirmation of the relation between righteous living and God’s present blessing in this life. As such it provides a needed corrective to careless, half-hearted Christians living in any age, and a powerful motivation to the kind of holy living to which Peter says all Christians have been “called” (v. 9) (p. 150).

But we do have a solemn warning as we come to the end of this first major section of Peter’s epistle (of which there are only two). It is this: “but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.” What does this mean?

Remember that as David originally wrote these words, he was speaking of the fear of the Lord, and how to have a happy life in a sinful world which is opposed to all that we stand for as the people of God. There are times when the face of the Lord is against His people. There is such a thing as sin unto death for a child of God. I could always tell by looking at my Dad’s face whether he was pleased with me, or displeased. And it meant trouble for me if I saw in his face that he was displeased with me. God is our heavenly Father. He is either pleased with us this morning, or displeased. He is pleased when we seek to please Him by being obedient to His Word. But even when we grow careless and half-hearted, or even cold-hearted, the Lord most graciously and most patiently, seeks to draw us back into fellowship with Himself and to set our feet one again on the path of holiness. We can all be thankful that the Lord has not only saved us, but that He has kept us. May the Lord draw us back if we have drifted away. Even this morning, if there are things in our lives which we know are displeasing to an all-seeing, ever-loving God, let us confess and forsake our sin, and ask Him to work in us “to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13).

I believe that one of the reasons we are having so much trouble in Iraq is because as a nation the face of the Lord is against us. Our main problem is not political. It is not our relationship with North Korea or Iran. Our main problem is that we have turned away from the Lord, legalizing much of what is abominable to the Lord, living our lives to please ourselves while we ignore God and refuse to listen to His Word. Oh, let us seek to do the Lord’s will each day that people here and there will realize that we can’t have good days while we continue to do what is displeasing to God.

Robert Leighton, a Scot who lived back in the 1600's and who suffered much for the truth of the Gospel, concluded this section of 1 Peter with these words which we all do well to give heed to. These are his words:

Your blessedness is not where most of you seek it, in things below. How is this possible? It requires a higher good to make you happy. While you labor and sweat for happiness under the sun, you are wasting all your efforts. You are seeking a happy life in the region of death. Only in the love and favor of God, in his favorable countenance and friendship, is blessedness. It can be found only in the ways of holiness (p. 148).

Amen! Truer words could not be spoken. But what are we going to do about it? Read 1 Peter 3:10-12 over again, and then pray that the Lord will enable you to choose His good, and to turn away from all that is bad in His sight. Make that your daily prayer.