

PETER'S EPISTLES

1 Peter: Living In Conflict With The Culture

XIII. Functioning With A Right Attitude

(1 Peter 3:8-12)

I. Introduction

- A. Several believers in different states of the nation have reported on the increasing difficulty they face in living in accord with Bible truth since doing so conflicts with the godless world's deteriorating culture around them.
- B. "First Peter was written to Christians . . . whose stand for Jesus Christ made them aliens and strangers in the midst of a pagan society" (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 837), so we study 1 Peter for insight and edification.
- C. 1 Peter 3:8-12 calls us to function with a right attitude, and we view it for our insight and edification:

II. Functioning With A Right Attitude, 1 Peter 3:8-12.

- A. God calls all (*pantes*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 797) of us believers in Christ to be "harmonious" (*homophron*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 572), a "likeness of 'sentiment or disposition' rather than of 'opinion,'" Moulton & Milligan, The Vocab. of the Grk. N. T., 1972, p. 450. We may not agree in beliefs with others, but we can be harmonious in our disposition toward them, what makes life easier for all involved and leaves our testimony more winsome before a lost world. (1 Peter 3:8a)
- B. God calls us to be "sympathetic" (*sumpathes*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 786), "sharing the experiences' of others" (*Ibid.*, Moulton & Milligan, p. 598), to be compassionate with the sufferings of others, 1 Peter 3:8b.
- C. God calls us to be (*philadelphos*), "loving one's (Christian) brothers," *Ibid.*, p. 668; 1 Peter 3:8c.
- D. God calls us to be "compassionate" (*eusplagchnos*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 326-327) toward people in trouble, need or who suffer, 1 Peter 3:8d.
- E. God calls us to be "humble" (*tapeinophron*, *Ibid.*, p. 812) in our relationship with others, 1 Peter 3:8e.
- F. God calls us not to return evil for evil nor verbally to abuse other people if they "verbally abuse" (*loidoria*, *Ibid.*, p. 480) us, but "on the other hand" (*tounantion*, *Ibid.*, p. 261, s. v. *enantion*) to render "blessing" (*eulogeo*, *Ibid.*, p. 322) to those who wrong us, for to this were we called of God, namely, that we might inherit a blessing, 1 Peter 3:9. To explain the blessing, Peter referred to Psalm 34:12-16 (as follows):
 - 1. For the believer who wishes to love life and see good days in that life, he should restrain his tongue (speech) from evil and his lips that they not speak "deceitfully" (*dolos*, *Ibid.*, p. 202), 1 Peter 3:10.
 - 2. Such a believer must turn aside from evil and practice good, 1 Peter 3:11a.
 - 3. Such a believer must also seek peace and go after it, to pursue it in his life, 1 Peter 3:11b.
 - 4. The reason for these directives is that God's eyes are on the upright and His ears are open to their petitions in prayer (*deesis*, *Ibid.*, p. 170-171), but the "face of the Lord is against them who do evil" (1 Peter 3:12 KJV), and Jeremiah 44:11-12 reveals this phrase means that God will severely punish evildoers.

Lesson: (1) God calls us to be harmonious, sympathetic, to love fellow believers, to be compassionate, humble, to return good and blessing for evil, to restrain our speech from evil and deceit, to turn aside from evil and do good, to seek peace and pursue it. If we practice these directives, God will grant us a relatively prolonged and good life and hear our prayers for deliverance from the trials that we face. However, (2) if we are unharmonious, unsympathetic, unloving to fellow believers in Christ, heartless, proud, paying back evil for evil, speaking what is evil and deceitful, doing what is evil and not seeking peace, God will not give us a prolonged life or to let us see good in life, but He will be against us in severe discipline, not answering our prayers for help.

Application: (1) Though we Christians do not live under the Mosaic Covenant today so that obeying God does NOT AUTOMATICALLY produce GREAT longevity and GREAT happiness, to SOME degree, longevity and happiness in this life even in the Church era is dependent on righteous living. This should motivate US Christians TODAY to depart from evil in thought, word and deed for practical blessings in our lives. (2) Especially relative to our living as aliens in a godless world, we believers must shine as lights of love and righteousness before the lost who know only how to return evil for evil, and that by swallowing up evil committed against us by doing what is good in return. This may seem to be an "abnormal" behavior pattern before the lost, and it is certainly not the inclination of our own sin natures, but the Holy Spirit in us leads us to shine as selfless, gracious lights in a self-centered world of sin. (3) If we cease to gain answers in prayer, we need to examine and correct our lives, 1 John 3:22. (4) On the other hand, if we DO receive answers to prayer, we can rejoice in God's work in our behalf to bless us because in HIS estimation, we are living righteously before Him!