

## THE ART OF LIVING IN AN UNDESIRABLE WORLD

### 3:8-12

#### Verse 8

“**Finally**” brings to a conclusion a series of exhortations that stressed making the right impression on a hostile world. The hardship are not general ones that all people face but from the world’s response to Christians.

“**All of you**” the **attention** now turns from the individual/groups in certain situations, to **all Christians** whose **conduct among one another** and response out in the world should silence and disarm hostility of an unbelieving world.

1. Peter will give 5 qualities, like **5 different portraits** that **depicts** the **Christian community**. We should leave **no room for accusation** from the world about **how Christian treat one another**.
  - a. Live in Harmony... being likeminded, unity of disposition, not uniformity (Unity)
  - b. Be sympathetic... to **share** fellow **feeling** whether joys of sorrows. (Romans 12:15) we should show empathy by being sensitive to the feelings of others.
  - c. Love as brothers...refers to a **bond** like a brotherhood, not just love all like brothers
  - d. Compassionate...depicts a **warm** and **tender** attitude toward one another.
  - e. Humble in spirit...having a **modest** opinion of oneself or humble minded. It’s not a part of human’s social ethics, but the best soil to cultivate social qualities.

#### Verse 9- Blessed, to give a Blessing

1. **Our returns**...The Christian’s response in general to a hostile world... (in the present tense carries continual idea). The negative aspect... **do not return** literally meant “**giving back**.”
  - a. Confronting Evil- the natural instinct in all humans is to retaliate, but this only multiplies evil. (Proverbs 17:13; 20:22)
  - b. **God’s strategy** starts by breaking the chain in our response,
    - i. Initially we must **voluntarily endure** it.
    - ii. Insults are words that falsely portray us, which can be
    - iii. Endure it so that you do not fall into using additional words to combat it
2. Instead, **give a blessing**. Indicates our responsibility is **more than** simply “not doing negative/wrong,” but instead proactively giving or invoking God’s blessing to a hostile world.

**Question:** What does this mean, what does this look like?

- a. Overcoming evil with good... is a way of blessing.
- b. How can we speaking well of those who do not speak well of us? In Prayer (v.12)
3. Why, because you **were called** (4<sup>th</sup> time 1:15; 2:9, 21) looks back on the reader’s conversion...but also give them a sense of God’ purpose when facing hostility.
4. “**Into this**” you were called for the purpose of invoking God’s blessing so that you may inherit a blessing. (Looks back or forward?)
  - a. **Looking back** reflects on the kind of life you were called at conversion...God forgave you sins and hostility. And we “increasingly” enter the full enjoyment of God’s blessings of love and forgiveness as we learn to express it. We cannot merit it!
  - b. **Looking forward** (NASB) the Christians call to inherit a blessing place him/her under the noble obligation to bless others. More of a present obligation to bless, because God’s made us inheritors of His blessing. (1:4)

- c. **Conclusion:** What we do know God's blessing are not earned, but inherited by his grace. However, **our realization** of this is not fully appreciated and enjoyed until we learn to extend and express it.

Note: Scripture's approach to blessing... the blessed and the givers of blessing?

1. Started in Genesis with Abraham (12:1-3; 18:18; 22:18; 28:14)...where did it go from there.
  - a. Self-pronounced blessing Deut. 29:19; Jeremiah 4:1-2
2. Psalm 67 as a channel to bless others
3. Philippians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 2:14

**Verse 10-12** (quote from Psalm 34:12-16)

1. The one **desiring (wishing)** to love life and see good days... How does this desire fit with the teaching about losing your life in order to gain life?
  - a. Speaks of a **healthy desire** as we live on this earth, **one that all humans desire**.
  - b. Speaks, **not** about **length of day but quality of life**.
2. However, "**loving life and seeing good days,**" was spoken to people who were facing hostility. Life is worth living in spite of the hostile encounters... which can sour life.
3. The "**for**" explains further **how not to be retaliatory**, by giving a blessing instead. This is connected to loving life and seeing good day instead.
  - a. Our life is mix of love amid hate in this world- 2 Corinthians 6:4-10; 1Peter 4:4,12
  - b. Life that is desirable learn to see and show goodness when faced with hostility
4. This desire for life and goodness can be gained only as we...
  - a. "**Restrain our tongue**" the impulsive nature of the tongue can be energized and used wrongly to attack the unfairness or antagonism of others. Peter instructions apply to all of life as well as the imminent circumstances of his reader. (James illustrates the power of the tongue James 3:6-8)
    - i. Reframe your tongue **from Evil**- base and degrading apply to profane, slander, and impure (even idle talk)
    - ii. Reframe your tongue **from Deceit**- saying one thing and meaning something else, or leading a person to believe something that is no true or partial true.
    - iii. The benefits of this lead to a life of goodness, where there is no trail leading back to past comments or deceptions that would need correction! Truly what is needed for a good and enjoyable life.
  - b. **Turn from Evil and do good**- this is something **more than words** from our tongue. Loving life and seeing good days **has to do with actions** that display goodness.
    - i. Evil can leave a negative void in situations... when we can we need to fill it with goodness. Prevent long term effects of evil means, by demonstrating good responses.

**Question:** Think of a difficult situation you may be facing, what good could you invest in it?

- c. **Seek peace and pursue it**- this **assumes** there are **situations** that **lack peace** or isolated from it, we are to accept the responsibility to pursue.
  - i. The idea is to **chase** and **hunt** for the peace that could depart in the turmoil of life.
  - ii. Seeking and pursuing peace is an invitation by God, demonstrated **through us to those** who **persecute us** and consider us their enemies.
5. The **motivation for such living**- God's awareness of the persecuted and persecutors-
  - a. God's watchfulness of the situations. "**The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous**"

- i. **Righteous** is without an article (The) which points to **those who conform** to what is right in God's standard. (Note: Not about our righteous standing before God, but our right responses are a fruit to His righteousness credited to us. 2Corinthians 5:21)
- b. We can be assured of His awareness, because... **His ears are open to our prayers.**
  - i. Literally "**into our prayers**" the smallest request of need... God is into them.
  - ii. Exercise our privilege to show good toward those who persecute us by praying for them.
- c. His awareness assures us that, "**the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.**"
  - i. He is watching those who do evil, and **we must leave room** for His wrath/judgment of them someday. (Romans 12:18-19)
  - ii. It is clear that God is "**against**" such people and actions. They do not have God as their friend, but as their enemy.
- d. Interestingly, Peter does not quote the fourth line of the Ps 34:16b "**to cut of the memory of them from the earth.**" Why?
  - i. Evidently, Peter found **no delight** in depicting the fate of the wicked... neither does God, for He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23).
  - ii. Peter **leaves room** for **possible repentance** of the wicked.
  - iii. Peter's **emphasis** is not to elaborate on the fate of the wicked, but to **encourage suffering saints** to know that their response in suffering is part of God's overall plan and purpose.

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