

1Pet 3.11—Turn away from evil, do good, and pursue peace

Our threefold duty in the face of evil

- I. Turn away from doing wrong or injury to another person.
 - A. But the only way to guard the conduct is to begin with the heart, Pr 4.23. That means we must hate evil conduct (cf. Rom 12.9; Ps 97.10).
 - B. Peter's calling us not simply to turn away from doing evil, but to turn away from the love and choice of the heart towards evil.
 - 1. He's giving us heart-work to do. Because whatever change we want to see in the life has to begin in the heart.
 - C. If we turn away from evil conduct *in our heart*, then two powerful and wonderful things occur *in our conduct*:
 - 1. Our doing good to others will be more constant and less varied because the good desires of the Spirit will have a more free access to our daily lives.
 - 2. Our doing good to others will be more comprehensive because it'll spring from a heart which is predisposed, on principle, against doing evil of any sort.
 - D. Thus, the only way to turn away from evil is to have a change of heart—which is a work of grace in God's people, Ezk 36.26-27.
 - E. And why are we to turn away from evil? Because retaliatory, vengeful, injurious conduct is *sin* and there's never a justification for sin against another human being (cf. Js 1.20).
- II. Do them good instead, Rom 12.9; Gal 6.10.
 - A. Here again, the only way this is happening is if we have *an inward principle* for good, a heart fueled with a love for God and a desire to obey His Commandments, Jn 14.15; Ps 119.16.
 - B. This is so contrary to the flow of this evil world because the world in which we live lies in the blinding, maddening grip of the evil one, 1Jn 5.19.
 - C. But the disciples of Jesus are not like the world. We have a heart that desires and sincerely strives to do all the good within our calling.
 - 1. By the saving grace of God and our transforming union to Jesus, we have a heart to *do good to all men*.
 - 2. Why? Because we've been called to this (2.9), and because the Lord may be pleased to use our good works to bring even our enemies to salvation, 2.12.

III. Seek peace and pursue it.

- A. We've been saved by the One who made peace between us and God, who established peace in our own hearts with our own conscience, and who now calls us, as far as it depends on us, to seek peace with all men, Rom 12.17-18; Heb 12.14.
 - 1. We're not to quarrel, fight, or return blow for blow, or sharp words for sharp words. We're to seek and work for peace.
 - 2. This may mean a lot of things, practically speaking, but it always means behaving in such a way, and responding in such a way that our actions and our words *aim* at that kind of peace that will diffuse anger and drown out retaliation and cut off discord and division.
 - 3. Just think of how many arguments, fights, and divisions you could've avoided, if you were resolved to work for peace. How many regrets do you have that, in the heat of the moment, you gave way to sin instead of working for peace?
- B. What about those people who don't want peace? We're to *pursue* peace with them as far as we can. And if they cut us off, then we're to pour out all our peace-making energy at the throne of grace, asking God to work it by His almighty hand.
- C. What about those people who seem to just want to pick a fight? We're to kindly walk away and seek our refuge in the Lord.

This is God's prescription for a happy life

- I. This is a hard calling for several reasons. And it's hardest of all in our closest of relationships.
 - A. That's why we must never forget that this is a work of God's powerful grace in our hearts. We're to pray for God to work this in us and through us for His glory, and we're to give ourselves to it with diligence and resolve by His grace, Phil 2.12-13.
 - B. We don't give up. We don't despair. And when we fall, we repent, ask forgiveness, and get back into the race, Pr 24.16.
- II. Therefore, for your encouragement, remember that *this* is the way to live the the good life, v.10.
 - A. No good can come in the ways of sin and evil conduct.
 - B. Good only comes in the ways of God, who graciously rewards with happiness those who strive to walk by faith in the ways of holiness, 1Sam 12.14; Ecc 8.12-13; Ps 112.1.