

SEEING GOOD DAYS - 1 Peter 3:8-12

January 31, 2021

We're going thru 1 Peter, and we're talking about submitting to those in authority. Now every person needs to be submissive to the authorities God has placed over him. And it's for their good, their protection, their blessing, and for the glory of God.
- 1 Peter 3:8-9. Now vss 1-7 are about the husband / wife relationship. But now Peter talks about some character qualities that are important for every relationship, which includes marrieds, singles, everyone. And listed here are 6 different qualities that are essential for our relationships with families, friends, and fellow church members.

First, there's the word harmonious, which literally means one mind. That is, God wants us to be of one mind with others - he wants us to be united, to be thinking in the same way. I am not saying we're to be like robots, but on the essential truths and matters of life, our thinking needs to be the same. 1 Cor. 1:10, Psalm 133
- If there's not this unity, this harmony, then there'll be disagreements and division, which will destroy relationships and destroy churches. And for there to be this harmony, there has to be good communication, people need to be talking, interacting with one another.

Then we are to be sympathetic, which means to suffer with another person. Others are going thru difficulties and trials, they are hurting and we're to share in their suffering, we're to mentally and emotionally join in their suffering, we're to feel their pain so to speak. In relationships this means we are observing how others are doing, noticing if someone seems down or discouraged. We are not be indifferent or insensitive to what others are going through. It means initiating with them, and talking to them, asking them questions about what they are going through. It means, by God's spirit, identifying with how they're feeling, and then expressing your feelings, and your concern for what they are going through.

Then there's the word brotherly. It is better translated in the NIV as "*love as brothers.*" It comes from the Greek *phileo*, which means brotherly love, family love. As Christians, we have the same heavenly Father, we're all brothers and sisters and have the same family. Now this word, "*phileo*," is never used in a command to love God, but only as a command to love our brothers and sisters in the Lord. And as a Christian family, there should be tender affection for one another, a closeness with others, a caring for others. All of you've been in families, and all of you know, to one degree or another, how we're to care for one another - we are to have this brotherly love and affection for one another. 1 Pet. 1:22, John 21:15-17

Then there's the word kindhearted, which is better translated in both the KJ and NIV as compassion. It comes from a Greek word meaning bowels, and you all know that when you are strongly affected by something, you can feel it in your gut, in your stomach. And so the idea is that you are to feel deeply about the condition of others - you're to be deeply moved when someone else is going through a difficult situation.

It means you are not just thinking about yourself, but are thinking about others, and are putting yourself in their shoes, and you literally feel for them, and are concerned for them, and so much so, that you reach out to them, and express your concern, and then do what you can to help them. Jesus was like this. Mark 1:41, Luke 7:13

- And if you don't have this quality like you ought, then ask God to change you, to help you grow in being compassionate. For being compassionate towards others, whether they are saved or lost, has a big impact on their lives.

Then there's being humble in spirit. This is foundational, an all-encompassing character quality that relates to everything we've talked re: this morning. Eph. 4:2. The Greek word from which we get the phrase "*humble in spirit*" is a compound word that literally means lowly minded, or we could say humble minded. Being humble in our words and actions needs to start with being humble in our mind and spirit.

Now being lowly minded doesn't mean you think you're a nobody, that you're a worthless person, but it means you are not thinking more highly of yourself than you ought, that you are considering others as being more important than yourself, with the result that you see yourself as being a servant of others. Phil. 2:2-3

- Now to have good relationships, you need to be humble. And if you are not humble, then you'll be proud and selfish and won't be able to get along with others, and serve and love others. That's why being humble is foundational to these other qualities mentioned here, being harmonious, brotherly, sympathetic and kind.

1 Peter 3:9. This is the final point in this list of qualities. We're not to insult, to rail, to curse, to speak evil of someone who either says something bad or does something bad to us, but rather, we're to be forbearing and forgiving towards others. And we're to give a blessing, and to give a blessing, you first need to forgive them, you first need to forbear with them, and not hold things against them. Otherwise, you will just be angry at them and want to get even with them.

Romans 12:18-21. We are to let God judge people and not think we need to take God's place and do his work. And then look at what it says here – that you are to give a blessing to those who say or do evil things to you. We are to love our enemies, be kind to them, help them, serve them. If people are evil towards us, then we're not to be evil towards them, we're not to retaliate. Instead, we are to be kind in our speech. Tell people who are mean to you to have a good day, tell them you are praying for them, and that you hope things go well with them. Matt. 5:38-45

All unbelievers are ensnared by their sin, are held in bondage by the devil, are not at peace, they get sad, they get discouraged. They are spiritually speaking, lost, blind, and naked, and their only answer is Christ. And so, we're to be Christlike towards them. In fact, their only picture of Christ may be the Christ they see in us. Matt. 9:36-38

It says we're called for this purpose. God has called us to be lights in this world, to be like a lighthouse to people in this dark, sinful world. We're to be loving in our words and deeds, and as God gives opportunity, we're to share the gospel with them. Phil. 2:14-16. And God will bless you. You will inherit a blessing, which, for the most part, is talking about eternal blessings, blessings you'll receive in heaven, and in the ages to come.

1 Peter 3:10-12. Peter now expands on what he just said, but gives you even more motivation to live a godly life, to be loving and kind in all your relationships, with both the saved and the lost. And Peter quotes from Ps. 34:10-12. And if you really love life, if you really want to live life to the full, if you really want a meaningful, purposeful and satisfying life, then you'll do what he said in the previous vss, and in the verses to follow. He says this kind of life means you love God and people, and this is agape love, a godly, spiritual and supernatural love. And it says this life is seeing good days, that is, having days that are good, productive, a blessing to God, and a blessing to the people in your life.

1 Peter 3:10-11. This relates to what we read in vss 8-9, those 6 different qualities. And God is saying two important things: First, you need to turn away from saying bad things or doing bad things. Second, if you are to have a good relationship with people, you need to pursue them, you need to initiate with them. Let's look at the 1st point. There are tons of verses in the Bible about bad speech, and about good speech. And you need to learn these vss. and apply them to your life. Proverbs
- James 3:1-12. We see that the tongue can do lots of evil, can cause lots of problems, and can be very hurtful and destructive. Hitler, relationships, marriages, church

Learn then to recognize when you're thinking of saying something bad or not truthful, and then don't say it. That is, learn to think before you speak, and learn to speak what is right, what is righteous, and learn to be slow to speak. And this doesn't just happen – it takes God's working in you and you working with God. Phil. 2:12-13, Prov. 18:21
And with respect to your speech, focus on just one area at a time.

We also see that you are to turn away from doing what is evil, what is sinful. Now Cain was tempted to hurt Able before he actually killed him, but he did not turn from this temptation, he didn't say no to this temptation, and this wrong desire kept growing in his heart until finally he gave into this temptation, and killed Abel.

And all of you are tempted to sin in different areas, whether it relates to your thought life, your speech, or your actions, whether it relates to your personal life or your relationships. And a growing Christian recognizes this temptation to sin in his mind and then says no to it. Col. 3:5, Ps. 119:35-36. I cannot stress enough the importance of saying no to sin, of turning from evil, and it starts in your thought life, and then is seen in your words and actions. That is, if you don't say no to the sin in your thoughts, then it will be seen in your words / or actions.

But it's not enough to just say no to a sin, you then need to do good. That is, you need to learn to replace the evil with good. Instead of getting mad at a person, pray for him. Instead of saying something mean to a person, say something nice to him. Instead of being selfish and thinking about what you want, think of what they want and be giving to them. Turn from evil and do good - this is such an important instruction for your life. This whole principle of learning to do good for people, of learning to be kind to them, will revolutionize your life, and will have a dramatic effect on them.

Then we read that you need to learn to seek peace. As you know, relationships don't just happen. You need to work at them. And sometimes, when there are conflicts, when there are difficulties, you need to do what you can to make peace. You're to seek peace, you're to pursue it, you're to be a peacemaker. As it says in Matt. 5:9, *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."*

Romans 12:17-18 – *"so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."*

This means you need to initiate with people. Sometimes people just separate themselves from others, but you need then to seek them out, initiate with them, and get with them. And then you need to talk things out, and make sure there's good understanding and acceptance and forgiveness. And there are times when you are trying to make peace, and you are pursuing peace, and for whatever reason, the person is irreconcilable, doesn't want to get the relationship right. But you want to do all you can to make peace, and then just leave it with God.

1 Peter 3:12. This verse summarizes God's attitude and actions towards people. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, are watching the believers. He loves you so much, and cares for you, and wants to protect you, and wants to bless you. It's like a mother watching over her child. She is always keeping an eye on her child. And so too, God is always keeping His eye on us. Sparrow – Luke 12:6
- And He hears us. And it's not just that He hears us talking to others, but He hears us when we're talking to Him, when we're asking Him for help, when we pray to Him. But the Lord is opposed to the evil. He is against those who are sinners, and who are sinning against Him. You may not think about this or realize this, but it is true, that God is opposed to sinners, to those are proud and rebellious. 1 Pet. 5:5, Ps. 11:5