

EXCELLENCE IN OUR SOCIAL LIFE

1 Peter 3:8-12

Intro: Peter emphasizes that the Christian is different. Because of that he may be persecuted or spoken against. He challenges us to live so far above the world that we may win the respect of the world and lead them to salvation!

There is yet no better way to lead people to the Lord than for ordinary people who live extraordinarily well coming in contact with people who are not living so well. There is great power in such a life. It is the power of an excellent lifestyle! Peter shows us how we may excell as citizens, as workers, as husbands and wives. Now one last time Peter shows us the features of the excellent life. This time his exhortation is not merely to servants, wives or husbands, but to "all".

A PORTRAIT OF PERSONAL EXCELLENCE

OF ONE MIND

"homophrones--"Of one intent or purpose; a very literal rendering of the original. It conveys the idea of being agreeable, harmonious in attitude.

The church needs such an attitude within itself.

A lot of people are turned off to the gospel because the people they know who are Christians can't seem to get along with their fellow Christians. I'm afraid that Christians in some areas have quarreled and split so many times over personality conflicts that they have lost their credibility to the world.

God's people need to develop excellence in their ability to get along with people in their everyday life who are not Christians.

The gospel is never attractive when it is spoken by one who everybody knows is contrary and hard to get along with! The world is filled with grouches! (cf. the man who had seen so many changes). What a refreshing thing to see a positive happy Christian who is pleasant and agreeable and easy to get along with!

COMPASSIONATE

"sumpathes" from which we get the word "sympathetic"; ill. with sympathetic vibration

We all need to take time from our schedules to show compassion.

Christians ought to care for each other! Rom. 12:12
And we ought to be the first on the door step of our neighbors and friends when need arises! We need ordinary people practicing the royal law (Love your neighbor as yourself).
People will not care how much we know until they know how much we care! (Sickness, death, catastrophe, celebration, support in problems)

LOVE AS BRETHREN

"philadelphos", cf. "philadelphia"

Brotherly love, the familial spirit of those with a common father Christians need to cultivate a family spirit. "Brother and Sister" is not a meaningless title; it is a description of our spiritual relationship. Every time we use it we ought to think of each other as family.

And we need to cultivate a brotherly spirit toward the lost! Cf. reference to genealogical research; We all have the same last two names in our family tree--the son of Adam, the son of God. That makes us all kin physically. The love of which Paul speaks is "friendship", not the kind that partakes of the world's vices (Jas. 4) but the kind that makes contact and builds relationships from which to teach! Gal. 6:10

PITIFUL

"eusplagchnos"--lit. "good inward parts"

The Romans thought of the inward parts as the seat of courage. So we use the term "intestinal fortitude" or "guts". The Hebrews thought of the inward parts as the seat of emotions, of tender feelings toward others. Cf. Phil. 1:8.

Peter is talking about developing the ability to feel tenderness toward others. "Pitiful" in the sense of "full of pity". Let people of the world hear you say something about how you feel about your fellow-Christians that is positive and commendable.

HUMBLE IN SPIRIT

KJV uses the word "courteous"; but there is greater manuscript evidence for the word translated "humble".

Literally means "a mind not rising far above the ground". We have similar expressions like "down to earth".

Having a genuine modesty, not a pretended self-abasement, the kind that makes us bury our talents.

Think of the value of cultivating humility among the people we are with. Someone once said pride is glue with which we get stuck on ourselves! How refreshing it is to see people who are not filled with self-importance, who can take a genuine interest in the thinking and needs of others rather than fill the time talking about himself.

It seems we all have a natural aversion to pride. Like God, we tend to resist the proud; but our favor is toward those who are down to earth. So it will be with the world around us.

NOT RENDERING EVIL FOR EVIL

The common human approach is personal vengeance--an eye for an eye.

Jesus taught unconditional love and forgiveness--Mt. 5:38-42

How hard it is to refrain from paying people back. cf. man in restaurant who ran over motorcycles

Everyday we have occasion to practice this principle at school, at work, in business. When someone says something to us out of the

way, we can put them in their place, we can shoot something back or...we can:

RENDERING A BLESSING TO OTHERS

From "eulogeo" meaning "to speak well of"

Mt. 5:44; 1 Cor. 4:12

Just as we were blessed by God when we lived in sin, so we should extend that same blessing to others. Rom. 12:17-21

A PROMISE TO THE PERSONALLY EXCELLENT

Peter shows us that his exhortations about character are in keeping with God's ongoing expectations from His people and that such a life has always been blessed by the Lord.

The essentials of man's conduct

Refrain (pausato) his tongue from evil (cursing, slander) and his lips from speaking guile (fraud, deceit)

"Eschew (turn away from) evil and do good"

"Seek peace and ensue (follow) it"

The blessings from God

Love life and see good days (The positive enjoyment of God's providence; the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous)

Answered prayer (His ears attend to their prayer). Peter has already alluded to the idea that bad behavior can be a barrier to God's blessings (cf. 3:7).

Conclusion: What a challenge these verse present to us! Every day wherever you are you have an opportunity to manifest powerful attitudes that will change people's lives forever! Sometimes its the seeminly little things that make the difference. Let's start making full use of the the power of a godly example wherever we are. We will bring blessing to ourselves and others.