

1 Peter (opening slide)

Review: God has offered us the deal of the ages! Since we have received such a great deal from God in salvation, we should be motivated to change our thinking and our behavior. This makes us peculiar people that are spiritual, set-apart, and strangers in this world. Because of our faith in the Lord we should have proper respect for those in authority and submit to their leadership. Even when we disagree with an authority figure it should be in a respectful and honorable way. And, our faith in the Lord should even affect our marriages. There should be mutual love and respect and lots of kind words; no tearing down! As we each grow closer to Jesus, we will automatically grow closer to each other.

Blessed Behavior

1 Peter 3:8-22

A little boy was walking down the beach, and he spied a matronly woman sitting under a beach umbrella on the sand. He walked up to her and asked, "Are you a Christian?" "Yes." she replied. "Do you read your Bible every day?" She nodded her head, "Yes." "Do you pray often?" he asked next, and again she answered, "Yes." With that he asked his final question, "Will you hold my quarter while I go swimming?" --That little boy believed that only a woman who was a Christian would be trustworthy. He wasn't willing to entrust his quarter with anyone else. Why would he believe that? Perhaps it was because that's what he'd been taught... or because that was what he had observed.

Peter says that what people see and hear from us will affect how they view Christ.

v. 15-16 are at the heart of this passage, which basically says that our behavior has an impact on non-believers.

In other words, we should live our lives in such a way that even wicked men will know they can trust us with their quarters. We need to be careful how we live because we belong to Jesus and how we behave out in the world reflects on him. This is a good reminder because we tend to compartmentalize our lives. There is a tendency to do "Christianity" inside the church walls but then leave the "Christianity" on a hanger in the foyer on the way out. But we need to realize that our lives are observed by people around us. They know we go to church. They know what we claim to believe. But they also see how we behave. So, we need to practice blessed behavior that represents Christ well. This calls for us to have righteous attitudes, righteous responses, and righteous standards all for the right reasons.

☞ Righteous Attitudes v. 8

Live in harmony with each other = literally, be of one mind

This does not mean uniformity, where everyone is exactly the same with the same tastes, preferences, and ideas. But it means to work together in unity of purpose and commitment to the truth. It's like a loving family. Each individual is unique but we all belong to the same group. We stand together and we stand up for each other.

☞ **Be sympathetic** = share each other's feelings

Romans 12:15

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

--James S. Hewett... A little girl was sent on an errand by her mother. She took much too long in coming back. Mother, therefore, demanded an explanation when she finally did return. The little girl explained that on her way she had met a little friend who was crying because she had broken her doll. "Oh," said the mother, "then you stopped to help her fix her doll?" "Oh, no," replied the little girl. "I stopped to help her cry."

☞ **Love as brothers** – as I said, we're a family of believers. We are to be committed to each other. Even though we might have conflicts, like many brothers do, we are still family, so we stick together.

☞ **Be compassionate** = tenderhearted.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

☞ **Be humble** = have a modest opinion of yourself.

--John Ruskin... The first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean by humility, doubt of his own power. But really great men have a curious feeling that the greatness is not in them, but through them.

☞ Righteous Responses v. 9

Don't repay evil with evil

Proverbs 20:22 (*Let God settle the accounts*)

Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the Lord, and he will deliver you.

Matthew 5:39 (*Jesus takes it a step further*)

If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Matthew 5:44

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you

Don't repay insult with insult; rather respond with blessing

Romans 12:14

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Modern medicine has shown that emotions like bitterness and anger can cause problems such as headaches, backaches, allergic disorders, ulcers, high blood pressure, and heart attacks, to name just a few. By holding grudges or seeking revenge, we really inflict great harm on ourselves.

This is our calling

1 Peter 2:20-21

if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. **21** To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

The old saying goes, "Nice guys finish last". Gary Shandling disagrees, and says, "Nice guys finish first. If you don't know that, then you don't know where the finish line is."

Righteous Standards v. 10-11

Keep your tongue from evil; keep your lips from deceit

James 1:26

If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

This says a lot about our faith. There is a tendency to think, "I go to church;" I'm basically a good person." In the old days it was, "I don't smoke and I don't chew; I don't go with girls that do." But here the Scripture says that our words matter far more than those things. Sometimes the best way to keep your tongue from evil is simply to shut up.

But James 3:8 says “no man can tame the tongue.” We all need to pray about our speaking. Sometimes we just need to pray, “Lord, help me to keep my mouth shut.” Or “Lord, help me to speak only words that heal and bless and encourage and help.”

☞ **Turn from evil; do good**

We’ve talked about this before. We need to do more than just try to avoid sin. We must replace our sinful behavior with godly behavior. And it starts with a right view of God...

Proverbs 16:6
through the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil.

The Scripture also indicates that we should be actively looking for opportunities to do good...

Galatians 6:10
as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

And, further, the Scripture associates doing good with being generous. Plus, there’s a reward for this...

1 Timothy 6:18-19
Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. **19** In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

☞ **Seek and pursue peace**

Romans 14:19
Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace

Like a hunter vigorously tracking down his prey. This should be sought after even with others who persecute us. We are called to be peacemakers.

☞ **Right Reasons** v. 12ff

God watches the righteous

Proverbs 15:3
The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.

This should be considered for both the negative and positive ramifications. Since God is always watching, he knows and keeps record of our bad behavior. But he also is keeping track of our good behavior and will reward us in the end.

☞ **God listens to their prayers**

James 5:16

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

When we have righteous attitudes, righteous responses, and righteous standards God listens and responds to our prayers. And, we are called to all of this even if we're treated unjustly. Remember, Jesus is our example. This is how he behaved. And, Jesus is our Lord. We belong to him. So, we should submit to his guidelines.

Peter refers back to Noah as an example. In Noah's day, those who were righteous lived. And Noah's life was a living sermon to the people of his day. We also are called to be living sermons to the people around us by our blessed behavior.

A woman once said "My soul is like a mirror in which the glory of God is reflected; but sin, however insignificant, covers the mirror with smoke." I dare not allow myself the luxury of playing fast and loose with my faith. I dare not allow myself to mistreat others no matter how justified I may feel I am in doing so. I dare not allow myself to repay evil for evil or insult for insult because I am bought with a price! I have been reborn in the image of Jesus Christ! And I am called upon - by God Himself - to be a reflection of His Son. And when I engage in sinful behavior ... smoke covers that image. My sinful behavior clouds the reflection of the Christ I say that I love.

Matthew 5:16

let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise (*not you, but...*) your Father in heaven.

☞ **Remember who you are!** You are a **representative of Jesus Christ**. You're a child of the living God. So make sure you are showing the world a **righteous attitude, a righteous response, and a righteous standard all for the right reason.**