

GETTING MORE OUT OF LIFE

1 Peter 3:8-17

It isn't fair! A child's sense of fair play. A child's cry.

"Now honey, you just have to realize that sometimes life isn't fair."

Life isn't always fair!

How do we "hang in there" when suffering unjustly?

2 people face the same unfair circumstances, one grows, the other goes under.

What makes the difference?

How are we suppose to survive in a dog-eat-dog world, where people don't appreciate us or our values?

What makes the difference between people who cope with life when it's not fair, and those who can't cope with it?

We've become spoiled.

We're living in unusual days in an unusual place.

Our generation's acceptance and prosperity of Christians is unprecedented.

We, among the nations of the world are still unusual, even today.

The good life we presently enjoy may not last forever!

How will God's people survive times of suffering unjustly for the cause of Christ?

We're not prepared to suffer real hardship for the sake of Christ.

Worst we ever face is a bit of ribbing—*maybe* being ostracized by a few.

WHEN SUFFERING FOR JESUS, WE MUST LEARN TO HANG TOGETHER AND DO GOOD.

Our hope should make a difference in our lives, even when suffering.

Importance of good deeds in general 2:11-12

Importance of submission to authority specifically 2:13-3:7

Submission to authority in times of persecution demonstrates that we're suffering for Jesus' sake; not for evil deeds.

Suffering for good deeds 3:8-22

SUMMARY OF HOW WE OUGHT TO LIVE IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING FOR CHRIST:

[to get more out of life!]

Peter identifies traits which should characterize God's people. 8-13

5 CHARACTERISTICS OF GENUINE, HEARTFELT LOVE

3:8 *"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble."*

Positive approach to love

1. Harmony-unity in thinking, without divisions or debating.

Oneness of heart, similarity of purpose, agreement on major doctrines.

Not uniformity—"look alike"—similarity in appearance and thinking.

Not unanimity—100% agreement

Not union—organizational affiliation

We should be **united in our way of thinking.**

We should agree—without divisions and dissension.

Don't focus on petty peripheral differences;
focus on what unites us; our common ground: Christ.

2. Sympathetic Compassion for each other

We should identify with people who suffer; seek to help them.
Not just thinking about ourselves.

We should sorrow with those who grieve; rejoice with those who rejoice.

We shouldn't be isolationists—separating ourselves from everybody else.

3. Brotherly love

We should demonstrate brotherly love for one another.

Philadelphia—love one another as brothers—love of an affectionate friend

4. **Kindhearted concern for one another**

Show profound concern for one another. = lit., "Good guts"
"From the guts"

From deepest part of our being, we should feel concern for one another.

5. **Humility**

Think humbly, considering others more important than ourselves.

*Each of these deals with **our support for one another** as brothers (3:8).*

TV coverage of '84 Summer Olympics gave world memorable experiences. One of those occurred in commercial prior to the games. It featured world record holder Bob Beamon seated in front of his TV. He turned to the camera: "In Olympics of 1968, I set a world record in the long jump. Some people said no one would ever jump that far again. For years I've enjoyed sitting in front of my television, watching them try. Now a new kid might have a chance of breaking my record. I just have one thing to say about that." Viewer's are ready for self-centered, defiant comment. Beamon's face softened. "I hope you make it, kid." Beamon won more goodwill with that commercial than he had with his incredible-and still unbroken-long jump record of 29 feet, 2 and 1/2 inches.

CHRISTIAN LOVE IN THE MIDST OF A NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENT

What does it look like? **9** *"Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing."*

*Peter deals with **our response to mistreatment**,
or desire for vengeance 3:9-13*

Since we've been called to receive blessing, we ought to bless people who mistreat us, rather than curse them.

NOT NORMAL HUMAN RESPONSE:

We shouldn't attempt to repay people who harm us with evil **Evil for evil** **Curse (insult, criticism) with curse (insult, criticism)**

but rather with blessing (speaking well)

Normal human response: Bumper sticker:

"I don't get mad; I get even!"

Little girl scowling at bulldog. Mother reprimanded her. "He started it!" She's probably right; it's no trouble for that breed to appear unfriendly. Weakness is her conclusion. The dog's no doubt innocent; even if he wasn't, the girl gains nothing by competing in making faces.

Normal human response doesn't bring blessing, peace, nor long, enjoyable life—with that response we end up bitter, angry old people

BUT THE RESPONSE WE'VE INHERITED FROM GOD:

Our inheritance is blessing (speaking well)—not cursing.

We're called for this purpose > to inherit blessing (well-speaking)

2:20-21 > To endure unjust suffering patiently even as Christ did for us.

2 possible senses: Blessing => Cursing
 Speak well => Speak evil
 (Compliment => Criticism)

Exhortation may apply both to unsaved, who want to destroy us, and to saved, who in attempt to protect selves may betray us.

We ought not seek evil against either of them, but rather good.

LIFESTYLE THAT YIELDS LONGER LIFE AND HAPPIER DAYS: [especially in adverse circumstances & unjust suffering]

3:10-12 [<= Ps. 34:12-16]

“Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. ¹¹He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. ¹²For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous; his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Use by Peter – “He who wishes to love life and see good days...”

Let him keep these six commands: [3 pairs]

LIFESTYLE THAT YIELDS LONGER LIFE AND HAPPIER DAYS

1. Silence tongue from speaking evil, and ...
2. Silence lips from speaking deceit
guile, trickery)
3. Turn away from evil, and ...
4. Do good
5. Seek peace, and ...
6. Pursue peace.

WHY? FOUR REASONS

12 *“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

1. **God watches out for the righteous.**

We should do what is right regardless of what anyone else does!

WHY WILL THIS WORK?

Because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous

(2 Chron. 16:9)

His ears attend to their petition

“The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.”

But God sets His face *against* people who characteristically do evil.

God knows what's going on – He sees it all.

OT idea involves more than just *seeing*. He's interested and involved!

2. NORMAL ASSUMPTION: 3:13 People don't *usually* harm people who set their heart on doing good.

"Who is going to harm you if you're eager to do good?"

3rd class condition—not known if they will do it, but the choice is theirs.

This is *normal* assumption; usually true—most people won't attack you if you're known as a "zealot for good".

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT ALL GOES WRONG?

3:14-17

Sometimes it doesn't work out that way. 14-17

"But even if you should suffer for what is right, you're blessed.

"Don't fear what they fear; don't be frightened."¹⁵ But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.¹⁷ It's better, if it's God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."

Sometimes life isn't fair!

Some people don't appreciate honesty and ethics!

(Fall of Rios Montt)

Conditional clause indicates it's unlikely—but it *could* happen.

Used in both 14 & 17.

3. Even when people do harm us—IT IS BETTER TO SUFFER FOR DOING GOOD THAN FOR DOING HARM 3:17

**Testimony comes from suffering for doing good
3:14-4:2**

To maintain testimony in suffering, we must recognize value for good.

Principle 14a *"Even if you should suffer for what's right, you are blessed."*

If you should suffer for righteousness, you're still blessed.

If that happens, you're satisfied, content. Acts 5:40-42;

James 1:2

Phillips: "Don't resent them as intruders; welcome them as friends."

Don't fear their fear, nor be troubled. Don't panic!

But, set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts.

Isa. 8:12-14 *"Don't call conspiracy everything these people call conspiracy; don't fear what they fear, and don't dread it. The LORD Almighty is the One you're to regard as holy, He's the one you're to fear, He's the One you're to dread.?"*

When confronted by Assyria, kings of Syria and Israel wants Ahaz of Judah to join them. When he refuses they conspire to attack him, so he makes an alliance with Assyria. Isaiah warns Ahaz against doing things man's way. He should do them God's way. Instead of imitating normal human response and fearing man, he should honor God, and fear him, rather than fear man and what man might do

Faced with injustice and human attacks, we too should acknowledge God's lordship and fear Him first. He can handle the opposition.

We're to fear displeasing him, rather than fear what men might do to us.

Apologetic of a submitted life 14b-16 [in suffering,] ¹⁵*In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,* ¹⁶*keeping a clear conscience, so those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*

3:15 This verse only works when we are suffering

If we suffer for doing good

and set Christ apart as Lord in our hearts,

We're to acknowledge Christ as Lord—give Him 1st place.
To have a good conscience before God we must be in
subjection to Christ in all these areas.

**Then, we'd better get ready to handle their questions about
our hope!**

**When we suffer for doing right,
people will ask about our hope.**

They'll never figure this attitude out! They can't understand it!
They're going to want to know about the hope that keeps us
going in the midst of this suffering.

If asked "Why do you suffer?"

We can answer: it's because we've submitted to Christ
as Lord.

Even then we're to respond with gentleness and respect
(reverence, fear)

Our response is not to be with defiance and lack of respect.

3:16 We're to be sure our conscience is pure

—whatever anyone else may do.

He wants us to conduct ourselves so we'll have a good
conscience.

Our good conscience—doing what's right even when
mistreated—causes people who're responding wrongly (= act
spitefully) to be put to shame.

Sooner or later people will figure out what's going on.

If we fight back, then we do wrong and bring suffering on
ourselves.

We suffer for wrong doing and no one will be surprised
about that.

**The principle 17 "It is better, if it is God's will,
to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."**

If we submit, we may suffer.

But if we suffer, it will be in good conscience.

It's *external* suffering for Christ's sake. (Job; James 5:11)

In v. 17 He talks about another kind of suffering.

–suffering that arises when we refuse to submit to Christ.

This would be suffering from *internal* causes, from conscience, because we're not willing to submit to Christ as Lord.

This suffering is far worse.

It's a better course to suffer from the Jews.

It's better because even Christ chose to accept that suffering.

[=> 4th reason to do what is right, even when others don't]

4. The perfect example: Christ suffered for doing right; we've received the benefit. 3:18-22 18

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

Think about benefit we've received from his faithful good deed!

After establishing the principle (3:14-17),

Peter uses Christ as primary example (3:18-22).

Christ, the righteous one, suffered and died for the unrighteous, so we might come to God.

Then God restored him to life by His Spirit.

Christ's suffering was the source of blessing for many.

We too should be willing to suffer wrongly for the will of God.

HOW SHOULD THIS PASSAGE IMPACT OUR LIFE?