

Lesson 19 – 1 Peter:

II. Believers' conduct in everyday circumstances	2:11 – 5:11
A. Submission and respect toward others	2:11 – 3:12
1) Reasons for self-discipline	2:11 – 12
2) Respecting People in Authority	2:13 – 17
3) Duty of Servants to Masters	2:18 – 21a
4) Example of Christ our Redeemer	2:21b – 25
5) Duties of Wives and Husbands	3:1 – 7
6) Principles of Christian Living	3:8 – 12

Principles of Christian Living: 3:8-12:

“Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. For the Scriptures say,

“If you want to enjoy life
and see many happy days,
keep your tongue from speaking evil
and your lips from telling lies.
Turn away from evil and do good.
Search for peace, and work to maintain it.
The eyes of the Lord watch over those who
do right,
and his ears are open to their prayers.
But the Lord turns his face
Against those who do evil.”

In these verses (3:8-12), Peter gives the last in a series of exhortations (instructions) to different groups. All believers must respond to others – believers (3:8) and unbelievers (3:9-12).

How All believers must respond to other believers: (3:8):

v. 8 - “Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude.”

The word “Finally” is the Greek – ‘to de telos’ is literally translated ‘now the end’ meaning ‘to sum up’ or possibly to bring to an end by adding the crowning point.

This does not mean that Peter is bringing the letter to an end but that he is summing up and completing the preceding instructions to the different groups of people by simply demanding love in action.

This verse lists five characteristics that all Christians should have in them. It is important to note that all five are social and have to do with Christians' relations to one another. The phrase "all of you should be **of one mind**" – Greek – homophrones – means "minding the same things."

A man's character is determined and revealed by the things that he thinks about. Peter says that Christians should be united by a common interest and outlook; and they should all 'mind' the things of God and of the Spirit, and therefore, imitate the mind of Christ, (see Phil. 2:2, 5)

Philippians 2:2, 5: 2, "Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose." 5, "You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had."

Five Characteristics:

1. Just as Christians have a **common confession** meaning that we all say the same thing – see Hebrews 3:1 and 4:14:

Hebrews 3:1 – "And so, dear brothers and sisters who belong to God and are partners with those called to heaven, think carefully about this Jesus whom we declare to be God's messenger and High Priest."

Hebrews 4:14 – "So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe."

Then this also means that we have a **common mind**, a mind informed by God's Word and Spirit. What Peter describes and desires is not just human agreement together, but agreement reached by each person and by all receiving the truth of God. See what Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:13-15:

"This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church."

2. **“Sympathize with each other”** – The Greek word is ‘sumpatheis’ – meaning to have compassion, means ‘suffering together,’ having responsive fellow-feelings. Such as rejoicing with those that rejoice, and weeping with those that weep – Romans 12:15 – **“Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.”**

Hebrews 13:3 – **“Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies.”**

At its deepest level this should follow the preceding characteristic. Those who are united by a common spiritual mind should be moved by, or be sensitive to, the same spiritual emotions. This is why Christians can unite with fervor in singing hymns which confess the faith or give God praise.

3. **“Love each other as brothers and sisters.”** In the Greek, this verse says to ‘love as brethren.’ Love – Greek – ‘philadelphoi’ – implies loving one another because we are now related as fellow-members of God’s family. The Greek word for ‘brethren’ implies members of a family – both male and female. Therefore, modern versions will use ‘brothers and sisters.’ It is the God connection that give this characteristic its deepest and distinctive meaning. See 1 Thessalonians 4:9 – **“But we don’t need to write to you about the importance of loving each other, for God himself has taught you to love one another.”**

4. **“Be tenderhearted”** – the Greek word is ‘eusplagchnoi’ – meaning tenderhearted – being affectionately sensitive, quick to feel and to show affection. The Greek word refers to the good condition of a man’s “inward parts” or “bowels” – see Philippians 2:1 – **“Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate?”** From the Hebrew perspective – this means that only as we have His Spirit can we become ‘tenderhearted.’ We have become accustomed to hearing of people’s sufferings and tend to be superficially hardened and not so easily moved or we just don’t do anything about it. So, there is the need for free, full, and practical expression of deep feeling among Christians.

5. **“keep a humble attitude”** – The Greek word here is ‘philophrones’ – ‘friendly’ or be courteous. Most translate it to be ‘humble minded.’ Humility or lowliness of mind is a Biblical virtue, and it was not appreciated as such by the Greeks. This kind of attitude corresponds to the facts of life. We are weak, dependent, finite creatures, with bodies of ‘humiliation’ or ‘lowliness.’

See Philippians 3:21- “He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.” This is the right spirit or attitude in which to live before God. It the same spirit exhibited and patterned by Jesus. See Matthew 11:29 – “Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” God rewards this kind of spirit with sustaining grace and ultimately with exaltation.

How All believers must respond to unbelievers: (3:8-12):

“Don’t repay evil for evil. Don’t retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. For the Scriptures say,

“If you want to enjoy life
and see many happy days,
keep your tongue from speaking evil
and your lips from telling lies.
Turn away from evil and do good.
Search for peace, and work to maintain it.
The eyes of the Lord watch over those who
do right,
and his ears are open to their prayers.
But the Lord turns his face
Against those who do evil.”

v. 9 – “Don’t repay evil for evil. Don’t retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing.”

Peter now addresses how Christians should act towards **unbelievers**: those who are unfriendly, or those who maliciously do them harm or run them down (verbally). The governing principles of Christian action in such circumstances were taught by Jesus Himself. On the one hand, there should be no retaliation, no treating others as they treat us. On the other hand, there should be a positive expression in word and action of active goodwill.

This kind of behavior seems exactly opposite to what seems natural to us, yet it is the kind of behavior to which we are called in Christ and which will bring its own rewards in our own lives because we enjoy the same treatment from God. God, too, is full of active goodwill toward those who have sinned against Him in word and deed. See Matthew 5:44-45: “But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who

persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For He gives His sunlight to both the evil and the good, and He send rain on the just and the unjust alike.”

“don’t repay evil for evil” – the Greek verb ‘apodidonai’ means to give back in return, or, to render as due. This identical injunction is given by Paul in Romans 12:17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:15:

Romans 12:17 – “Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable.”

1 Thessalonians 5:15 – “See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people.”

So, it is obvious that this principle is a regular part of the ethical instruction given to converts, and this is based on Jesus’ command and what He Himself taught. See Matthew 28:19-20: “Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Jesus taught: “But I say, love your enemies” – Matthew 5:44; “Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you.” - Luke 6:28.

Paul described his apostolic behavior: “We work wearily with our own hands to earn a living. We bless those who curse us. We are patient with those who abuse us.” – 1 Corinthians 4:12.

The verb ‘eulogēin’ means ‘to bless’ which includes the ideas of speaking well of those who speak ill of us, showing them active kindness – bestowing blessings upon them, and praying God’s blessings upon them.

The phrase “That is what God has called you to do” is a repeating of 1 Peter 2:21 – “For God called you to do good, even, if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.” So, here the reference is to the patient endurance of unjust treatment; and the active recompense of good for evil. In Christ – God blesses those who have sinned against Him. It is an essential part of our Christian calling ourselves to experience the kind of treatment which we are exhorted to give to those who sin against us. We will enter increasingly into the full enjoyment of the blessing of God’s forgiveness and goodwill only if we learn ourselves to extend similar forgiveness and goodwill to others.

v. 10 – 12 – “For the Scriptures say,
“If you want to enjoy life
and see many happy days,
keep your tongue from speaking evil
and your lips from telling lies.
Turn away from evil and do good.
Search for peace, and work to maintain it.
The eyes of the Lord watch over those who
do right,
and his ears are open to their prayers.
But the Lord turns his face
Against those who do evil.”

In these verses, Peter gives scriptural completion and confirmation of his instruction to restrain from retaliation in word or deed, and to treat the unfriendly with kindness, by quoting Psalms 34:12-16: “Does anyone want to live a life that is long and prosperous? Then keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies! Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it.

The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right; his ears are open to their cries for help. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil; he will erase their memory from the earth.”

Scholars believe that this section of the psalm was used in the early Church as part of a catechism or hymn. In quoting Psalm 34:12, Peter adapts the phraseology. In Peter’s use, the psalms passage describes the man who wished to live a life which he can love and find worthwhile, a life that is not marked by endless frustration or boredom.

v. 10 – the phrase “keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies.” Uses the Greek word, ‘pausato’ – meaning ‘let him make to cease.’ The kinds of words that we are to give up are those that are either malicious (to harm) or deceitful (to mislead).

v. 11 – “Turn away from evil” – Christians are to turn away from evil by deliberate choice and self-control. “and do good” – good here is not something to be spoken with admiration but something that should be done! We are to zealously pursue happy and harmonious relations with others. See:

Romans 12:18 – “Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.”

Romans 14:19 – “So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.”

Hebrews 12:14 – “Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.”

v. 12 – “The eyes of the Lord watch over those who
do right,
and his ears are open to their prayers.
But the Lord turns his face
against those who do evil.”

Here in this verse, as in Ps. 34:15-16, “the Lord” – means Jehovah, the God who has entered into covenant with His people. He watches over the righteous. He exercises active oversight and cares over them. He is alert to hear and answer their “prayers” – here meaning ‘supplication’ or request, their confession of need. Yet, on the other hand, He sees and must show His judgment and punishment towards those that do evil. The use of the name “Lord” for God, here is the last phrase possibly implies that it is His covenant people are in mind here. When they do evil, they are bound to encounter His displeasure and His discipline. See Amos 3:1-2 and Hosea 12:2:

Amos 3:1-2 – “Listen to this message that the Lord has spoken against you, O people of Israel – against the entire family I rescued from Egypt:
“From among all the families of the earth,
I have been intimate with you alone.
That is why I must punish you for all your sins.”

Hosea 12:2 – “Now the Lord is bringing charges against Judah. He is about to punish Jacob for all his deceitful ways and pay him back for all he has done.”

So, in these verses, Peter underscores the relationship between conduct and blessing by quoting Ps. 34:12-16. This psalm is prominent in early Christian teaching. This text focuses on curbing sins of speech, resisting evil, and doing good. It also highlights the promise of blessing for obedience.