

1 Peter 3:8-12

1Pe 3:8 (NKJV) **Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. ¹⁰ For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. ¹¹ Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."**

What we have seen so far is that whenever we do what God has “called” us to do, it is then that we are able to receive His blessing on our life. As we stated earlier, if there is anything that we should desire for our life, it should be that we have God’s blessing on what we are doing. The way that Peter seems to express what he wants to say to his audience is in v10 which says “**He would love life and see good days...**” I think this sums up how most people think – they want to love life and what they are doing and have very good days in what they are doing. They want to have days that are fun, productive, satisfying, days that have great purpose to them, and that are not just days that end up being useless, unfulfilling, and empty. No one wants to have bad days like that or lead an absolutely miserable life. My heart just goes out to these pictures we see of refugees in many countries who have fled their country and are living with what they could carry with them. They have children who are hungry and dying. Very often they have no access to even simple things like water. Many are desperately sick, and honestly, life could not be any more miserable for them. So often when I am speaking to someone at a register at Walmart, or a waiter in a restaurant, my last statement to them is often “*I hope you have a great day!*”

The problem that we have, however, should be very obvious – the good life as the world defines it is not all that it is cranked up to be. Anyone who pursues a life of self-gratification and personal pleasure will inevitably end up completely miserable and lonely. They have to have the fancy cars, the exotic vacations, sex and drugs, really nice clothes, eat the best foods, enjoy recreation and entertainment as much as is possible.¹ I met a lady on an airplane once who was sitting beside me and she was headed to a NASCAR race. She said that her entire family never missed a race weekend – ever. They flew all over the country to go to these races, rented cars and hotel rooms, and ate out all the time. I kept thinking to myself – how boring could that become! The sad reality of that kind of life is that it does not help you to love life. In reality, it actually contributes to never being satisfied with your life and always having to have something new or exciting to fill up your life. Even Solomon who had just about anything that a person could have had at that time – incredible wealth, fame, power, land, magnificent gardens, horses, houses, women, sex, and anything else you may have wanted said this in [Ecclesiastes 2:17](#),

Ecc 2:17 (NKJV) **Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind.**

Do you remember the story of Ernest Hemingway? He pursued life to the fullest with an absolute vengeance. He had no regard for morality, for sin, for the Bible, and he pursued life and its pleasures any way that he could. He went for all of the gusto that he could find. He wrote books, traveled the

¹ MacArthur, *Grace, 1 Peter 3:8-12*, ep.

world, pursued women everywhere he went, he had fame worldwide, drank every day of his life, and lived exactly how he wanted to live. Was he happy? I do not think so. Why would I say that? Well, because in the end, he blew his head off with a gun. The issue is simple – there are very few people who seem to love life and see good days, who are content, who are fulfilled, and who are at peace.²

So, what about us? If you were really honest and transparent, I wonder if you could truly say that you are incredibly happy with your life, at peace with God, and constantly experiencing God's blessings on your life? I wonder what you would say if you had to honestly answer that question? Is your life satisfying, is your marriage and family life satisfying, are you fully engaged with purpose in what you are pursuing in your life. The word for "**life**" in v10 is the Greek word "*zoe*", and it refers specifically to all of the experiences and abundances God has provided for really living life to the fullest. Man has a standard and God has a standard, and somewhere along the way, everyone has to decide which standard he is going to pursue. Even the word for "**love**" in the phrase "**love life**" is the Greek word "*agapao*" and it refers specifically to a very strong-willed affection, a very strong desire. It is the strongest word meaning to love something or someone.³ It indicates a strong, vibrant direction of the will and finding one's joy in something or someone.⁴

Now, what is really critical to understand at this point in the study is to recognize that in v10 that Peter is addressing Christians, believers. He is not talking to someone in the world that is lost and miserable and hating the life they are living. To the contrary, he is talking directly to believers whom I think we can assume are NOT necessarily enjoying their life. If I can say it this way, there is always a cause and an effect involved in life. If I am not enjoying life the way that God intended for me to enjoy it, then there is a reason as to why that is. Peter is talking to believers who may have forfeited the very life that God has for them because for the most part they have the wrong perspective on their life, and the net result is that they find themselves dissatisfied, discontent, and incredibly unhappy in their life. It would be naïve on our part if we did not recognize that these believers Peter is addressing have in reality been suffering and at times suffering greatly. Listen to these verses that indicate this to us. [1 Peter 1:6](#) says,

1Pe 1:6 (NKJV) In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

[1 Peter 2:19-21](#),

1Pe 2:19 (NKJV) For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. ²⁰ For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. ²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

[1 Peter 3:14](#) says,

1Pe 3:14 (NKJV) But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, *you are* blessed. "*And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.*"

² MacArthur, *Grace, 1 Peter 3:8-12*, ep.

³ MacArthur, *Grace, 1 Peter 3:8-12*, ep.

⁴ Zodiates, 64.

1 Peter 3:17,

1Pe 3:17 (NKJV) **For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.**

1 Peter 4:1 says,

1Pe 4:1 (NKJV) **Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,**

1 Peter 4:12, which is probably the strongest statement on their suffering, says this,

1Pe 4:12 (NKJV) **Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;**

1 Peter 4:19 says,

1Pe 4:19 (NKJV) **Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.**

If you remember what we studied in the overview of **1 Peter**, we found that it has more references to “**suffering**” than any other book in the New Testament. So, Peter is not writing to people who just normally have good days, but to the contrary, he is writing to believers who are suffering greatly in their life – and he talks about loving life and seeing good days. On the surface, it almost seems cruel. What Peter is saying, however, is that if we really do want to love life and see good days that we have to have the right perspective, the right attitude, the right outlook. I have taught it this way often that “outlook determines outcome”. It is the difference between the pessimist and the optimist, between the glass being half full or half empty, between living with hope or living in despair, between complaining or rejoicing. Our perspective on our life will always dictate how we actually live our life. I can choose to be a complainer about everything or I can choose to give thanks in everything. I can choose to always live doubting God’s goodness or I can embrace His goodness. I can choose to worry or I can choose to cast all of my cares on God. Outlook always determines outcome.

Now, where we want to begin in this passage is by looking at the multiple things it identifies for us to do in order to inherit his blessings. Obviously, the primary one that Peter has emphasized is that of the marriage relationship in **1 Peter 3:1-7**. However, he now switches gears to that of how we treat one another as believers with seven specific ways in which we are to relate to each other. Notice what they are in v8-9. We are to “**be of one mind**”, we are to “**have compassion for one another**”, we are to “**love as brothers**”, we are to “**be tenderhearted**” to one another, we are to “**be courteous**” to one another, we are to “**not to return evil for evil or reviling for reviling**”, and lastly we are to “**ble**” others when they mistreat us. Then when we get to v10-12, Peter adds even more encouragements. He says that we are to refrain from speaking evil or deceit, that we are to “**turn away from evil and do good**”, and that we are to “**seek peace and pursue it**”. Now, if we really want God’s blessings on our life, then it is critical that we pay attention to these encouragements and why this perspective is so important to our life. Whenever we look at these as a whole and not just individually, it is immediately apparent that our relationship with each other has a great bearing on our relationship with God. We have spent many hours on the impact that our relationship with our mate actually has on our relationship with God. That cannot be taken lightly. I.e., it is not possible to mistreat each other and be confrontational and antagonistic with each other, but still have a meaningful relationship with God. It actually teaches

the opposite – that our personal relationship with God is directly related to our relationship with other believers. How we treat one another is a direct reflection of the kind of relationship that we have with God. We simply cannot have an intimate and significant relationship with God if we are always at odds with other believers. In reality, this should be very intuitive and obvious to our understanding of the Christian life and how it actually works.

Now, what we want to do initially is to look at each of these encouragements individually and then see how they relate to our life practically. The first encouragement is to “**be of one mind**”. That phrase is actually just one word in the Greek text – “*homophron*”. It simply means to be likeminded and this is the only place that this word is used in the New Testament. It is a combination of the prefix “*homou*” which means “together” and the root word “*phren*” which means “heart, mind, understanding”. If we were to translate this literally, it would mean “same think”, or to simply think the same. However, simply think of it as our heart and mind thinking in the same way so that we are able to live in harmony and unity with one another. The NASB actually translates it as “**be harmonious**” and the AMP Bible emphasizes that of being “**united in spirit**”. The NIV and ISV say “**live in harmony**”. The idea behind this word is not that we have to always think alike or that we cannot have differences of opinions about things. In reality, that is probably a very healthy thing. What this word indicates is that as believers that we are to have a common commitment to the truth that creates within us corporately a unity of heart.⁵

[Romans 12:16](#) says,

Ro 12:16 (NKJV) Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

[Romans 15:5](#) says,

Ro 15:5 (NKJV) Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

[Philippians 1:27](#) says,

Php 1:27 (NKJV) Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,

When the Scriptures speak of being “**like-minded**” or “**of one mind**”, it does not mean that we all have to think exactly alike, but rather that we have a common mindset that unites us to each other in a deeply spiritual way. Not all of us have the same taste, or the same gifts, or the same habits, nor should we. However, this word refers to the fact that we should have a common assessment of things like God, salvation, grace, forgiveness, morality, and many other areas that impact our life.

As a pastor, it is not critical that everyone has to think or believe exactly as I do. I teach to persuade, but hopefully not in a belligerent manner. What is really important is that we do not allow some of the minor differences that we may have either doctrinally or how we work out our Christian life to actually divide us, to separate us, and to hinder our fellowship with one another. The word simply means that we are to be united in our heart and our affections for one another. I.e., as believers, we are to focus on

⁵ MacArthur, 1 Peter, 187.

those things which actually transcend the minor differences of opinions that we may often have with one another and concentrate on the things that actually unite us to one another. In fact, this entire passage deals much more with our attitudes towards one another than it does our opinions or doctrinal views.⁶

It is very interesting to me that there have been many studies related to church membership and what actually draws people to one another and to various denominations. One of the major conclusions of what draws people to a particular kind of church is not really theology or doctrine, but how comfortable that person feels with the social and economic climate of the church. I.e., is it a friendly church, a loving church, a caring church, and will it be able to meet the various needs of my family. I talked recently with someone who is planning on visiting our church and that is exactly what they said to me. They said we do not care if it is a Baptist church, Methodist church, Presbyterian church, Holiness church, or charismatic church as long as our family can feel comfortable in that environment and feel like it is a place we can call home and are being taught God's Word. They said that they wanted to feel accepted and cared for in the church they attended. Obviously, no one would want to go to a church where they found that people were always bickering and fussing and arguing about the color of the carpet or the pew cushions. In reality, as a pastor I have no expectation that everyone will always fully embrace all that I may teach. It is not imperative to me personally that everyone just discard their own perceptions of Scripture and truth and accept everything that I may teach. That is how you develop a cult. We all come from different backgrounds, different families, and even different cultures, and so we very often have very different perspectives – which is perfectly okay. It is apparent that Peter is not stressing the idea that everyone has to believe exactly the same, but this word for being “**of one mind**” is stressing the fact that we find ways to live in harmony with one another even when we may have minor differences.⁷ In the Christian faith, there are doctrines that are non-negotiable, and we should be united in both mind and heart about those things, but certainly there are other areas that do not demand a kind of totalitarian unity – and we need to recognize those differences between believers. The way that I have always heard this expressed is “in essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, love”.

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⁶ Harris, *homophon*, ep.

⁷ Sproul, 97-98.