

Women's Bible Study
1Peter 3:9, September 21st, 2022

Peter gave a general summary of the expected behavior among Christians in 1Peter 3:8. In verse 9, he gives a specific example along with a reminder of the inheritance we have in Christ.

1Peter 3:8-9 To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; **not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.**

We are to be like-minded, show sympathy, have brotherly love, be compassionate and humble. The opposite would be to return evil for evil or insult for insult. Let's look at what this means.

First, the three letters that spell 'not' leave no room for exception in these behaviors. 'Not' expresses an absolute denial. God forbid, never are we to involve ourselves in these things. The idea of not getting back at someone hits us at the core of our prideful hearts. In our flesh, we naturally want to avenge ourselves, to prove our supposed innocence, and to look better than others. We instinctively want others to feel sorry for us when we are mistreated. Unfortunately we are all guilty of those unbecoming conversations which begin with the words, "Can you believe what he/she did?". What follows is usually a rendition of the wrongdoing towards us and our quick judgement and sentence of another's guilt. We then feel vindicated; we become puffed up with pride. **Does this honor God?**

You have heard the word payback. This word can have either a positive or negative connotation. The negative meaning is an act of revenge or retaliation. It stems from vengeance. Unfortunately, it is easy to see examples of retaliation all across the world. In America, it has become commonplace to hear of mass shootings which almost always seem to be fueled by revenge of some sort. People believe they or society has been wronged so they set out to express themselves by harming others. Note for a moment the majority of lawsuits. What is the premise? To indict a penalty upon someone who has wronged someone else. Obviously, there are absolute times when this is necessary for protection and order. But often, accusations are simply borne out of a need to prove someone's guilt.

What results from returning evil for evil or insult for insult?

No one is blessed! Strife, envy, pride, and hate manifest themselves in wicked behavior. Relationships are harmed, and seething anger can become volatile. People are physically and emotionally harmed.

This may be easy to see this in the world around us but what about in your immediate world?

Do you hold on to grudges?

Do you resent those who have injured you; do you harbor bad feelings towards them?

Do you feel as if you have a score to settle?

Are you able to genuinely pray that those who have harmed you are blessed by gaining an understanding of the Gospel?

Think! Without good we would not recognize evil; without Christ we do not understand the depths of sin. Remember why the Law was given – to show the Israelites their sin and their need of a Savior to come.

***We should not be surprised at the sin among us,
however we must be serious about the sin in ourselves.***

As a believer, we cannot be comfortable with our own sinful behavior! We easily see the downturn of humanity in the world, but our focus needs to be on demonstrating Christ's forgiveness in our own lives. This means we do not react to evil or insults by returning the same – or even thinking the same.

Proverbs 20:22 Do not say, "I will repay evil"; wait for the LORD, and He will save you.

Proverbs 24:29 Do not say, "Thus I shall do to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work.

Romans 12:17-18 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

Matthew 5:39-40 "But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. "If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.

Is this difficult? Yes, however we must fight against our natural tendency to sin. Jesus died and rose again – sin no longer reigns in a believer's heart. We are called to give a blessing to those who wrong us. Our text reads, **not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead.**

Romans 12:14 **Bless those who persecute you;** bless and do not curse.

Romans 12:19-21 **Never take your own revenge,** beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

Matthew 5:44 "But I say to you, **love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,**

When we look at Matthew 5:44 and the command to love our enemies, it is not that we approve of their conduct. We should not love the actions of someone who curses and reviles us, and injures our person or property, or violates the laws of God. *"Though we may hate his actions, and even be deeply injured by it, we may still wish well to the person; we may pity his madness and folly; we may speak kindly of him, and to him; we may not return evil for evil; we may aid him in the time of trial; and seek to do him good here, and to promote his eternal welfare hereafter"*, excerpts from Barnes' NT Commentary on Mt 5:44.

1Corinthians 4:12-13 and we toil, working with our own hands; **when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try to conciliate;** we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.

1Thessalonians 5:15 See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but **always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.**

Consider your own unworthiness. God chose to bestow numerous blessings upon your life – regardless of your pitiful state, regardless of your guilt. Because He loves you, He sent His Son to die, to pay the penalty of your sin. **How can we who are blessed beyond measure not show forgiveness to another?**

Read the following warning in Proverbs.

Proverbs 17:13-14 He who returns evil for good, evil will not depart from his house. The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so abandon the quarrel before it breaks out.

Consider the example of Jesus. He did not return insult; He kept entrusting Himself to God. He did not give up, rather He surrendered Himself to His Father and kept moving forward in His Father's plan trusting Him to make things right.

1Peter 2:23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

The admonition in 1Peter 3:9 is not only *not* returning evil or insult, **but also returning good for evil or insult.**

"Knowing that you were called to be Christians in order that you should obtain a blessing infinite and eternal in the heavens. Expecting such a blessing yourselves, you should be ready to scatter blessings on all others. You should be ready to bear all their reproaches, and even to wish them well. The hope of eternal life should make your minds calm; and the prospect that you are to be so exalted in heaven should fill your hearts with benignity and love." There is nothing which is better fitted to cause our hearts to overflow with benignity, to make us ready to forgive all others when they forgive us, than the hope of salvation. Cherishing such a hope ourselves, we cannot but wish that all others may share it, and this will lead us to wish for them every

blessing. A man who has a hope of heaven should abound in every virtue, and show that he is a sincere well-wisher of the race. Why should one who expects soon to be in heaven harbour malice in his bosom? Why should he wish to injure a fellow-worm? How can he?”, Albert Barnes’ NT Commentary.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Luke 6:27-28 “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

1Peter 3:9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; **for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.**

“Ye are called to inherit a blessing – therefore their railing cannot hurt you; and, by blessing them, you imitate God, who blesses you”, John Wesley’s Notes.

In the past, I have travelled to the warm weather in the Caribbean during the cold months of January in the states. I did not concentrate on packing for the winter, I planned on being prepared for the balmy weather that awaited me.

As you sojourn through your time on earth, what are you concentrating on? Where is your focus? What are you preparing for? Are you engulfed in the problems and pursuits of this world or the promises for your final destination?

“This is your calling-your business in life, to do good, and to do good for evil, and to implore God’s blessing even on your worst enemies. And this is not only your duty, but your interest; for in so doing you shall obtain God’s blessing, even life for evermore”, Adam Clarke’s Commentary.

When we remember our purpose, we are less likely to recount wrongs. When we remember God’s forgiveness, we will not remain intent on proving another’s guilt. In fact, we will not want to relinquish our time and opportunities for good only to indulge in unnecessary conflict. We will instead be preparing for the blessings ahead.

1Peter 2:21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

Matthew 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

1Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

According to one commentary, to inherit a blessing is not only passive, but also active. *“Receiving spiritual blessing from God by faith, and in your turn blessing others from love. It is not in order to inherit a blessing that we must bless, but because our portion is blessing”*, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary, [Gerhard in Alford].

We have the blessing of forgiveness and eternal life in heaven with our Savior. Whatever we deem as suffering on earth is nothing compared to the blessings promised for our future. Shouldn't we be able to show generosity in our forgiveness towards others? If we consider God's great mercy shown toward us, we will be more apt to show generous mercy towards others.

“Not returning evil for evil, nor reproach for reproach; but, on the contrary, rather blessing, even to those that curse you, according to our Lord's precept; knowing that to this purpose ye were called to the profession of Christianity, that ye might inherit a blessing immense and eternal; the expectation of which (considering its infinite importance) may well keep your spirits calm and composed, whatever be the injury and ill usage you may meet with from your fellow-men”, Philip Doddridge N.T.

Are you willing to bear whatever injuries you believe you have received, with a sincere prayer for the perpetrator's good?

The People's New Testament Commentary reads, *“Hereunto were ye called. Peter enjoins good deeds for evil, and blessing for reviling, because any other course would be inconsistent with the Christian calling. Called to a heritage of blessing they must live lives of blessing, for "as a man soweth so also shall he reap”*.

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

Consider the immense blessing of heaven awaiting you. Let us act according to the truth of our salvation.