

Ready for Trouble

Hook (20%) – Washington Post - today

Right Living	Ready for Trouble	Right Testimony
Right Reason		

Book – 1 Peter 3:8-22

Look

Right Living

VV 8-9 – Peter has reviewed how Christians should behave in the world, especially in light of the persecution which was rapidly growing at the time that he wrote. He summed up his commands as follows:

Characteristic	Original Language	Meaning
Harmonious	ὁμόφρων <i>homophrōn</i>	Only used once in the Bible. Means “of one mind, concordant”
Sympathetic	συμπαθής <i>sympathēs</i>	Suffering or feeling with another
Brotherly	φιλάδελφος <i>philadelphos</i>	Loving someone like a family member
Kindhearted	εὐσπλαγχνος <i>eusplagchnos</i>	Only used twice in the Bible (cf. Ephesians 4:32). Means “having strong bowels, compassionate, tender hearted”. KJV “pitiful”
Humble in spirit	ταπεινόφρων <i>tapeinophrōn</i>	Only used once in the Bible. Means “friendly, kind”
Not returning evil for evil	κακός <i>kakos</i>	Wrong thinking, feeling or acting. Troublesome, injurious, destructive. Bad natured.
Not returning insult for insult	λοιδορία <i>loidoria</i>	Only used twice in the Bible (cf 1 Timothy 5:14). Means “speaking reproachfully, reviling”
Giving blessings	εὐλογία <i>eulogia</i>	Praise, laudation, polished language, concrete benefit

Believers can and should do these things not so that we can inherit a blessing from the Lord but because we will inherit a blessing from Him and want to obey Him out of gratitude. Further, we have already received blessings from our Lord. Therefore we should always bless others.

VV 10-13 – Peter is quoting from Psalm 34:12-16. Those who love life and wish to have good in their days will keep their words and their actions away from evil. They will also actively pursue peace within themselves and between men. The Lord will bless the righteous and will punish the wicked. As a result, the man who does good has nothing to fear. Nothing can eternally harm the holy man.

Consider this truth in day to day life. People typically favor those who do them good, and even the most selfish of people are unlikely to harm those who are kind to them. Proverbs 16:7 teaches that when a man’s ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. There are exceptions, of course, because Christians have long been persecuted by those whom they blessed, but the general rule is true.

Right Testimony

V14 – To suffer for the sake of righteousness and obedience to God is to suffer within the will of the God who blesses those who love Him. Therefore no matter how great the tribulation, the man of God need have no fear. Furthermore, he must have no fear.

V15 – To sanctify (ἀγιάζω *hagiazō*) “Christ as Lord” in this verse is to acknowledge that Christ is Lord in the seat of our will. While Christ renews our minds (Romans 12:2) and He gives peace to our emotions (John 20:21), it is the third part of our person, our rebellious will, that must recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord and Master.

Only when we bow our hearts before Christ will we have hope, and then we will be able to tell others why we have such hope. The answer (ἀπολογία *apologia* - *reasoned statement or argument, verbal defense*) that Peter is mentioning here may be a logical treatise on some aspect of God or reality, but it is more likely that he is referring to each person’s testimony. The personal testimony is the most powerful witness for Christ that believers possess. It summarizes a clear explanation of the basics of the Christian faith and how Jesus has impacted the life of the individual.

We must give our answer, however, with gentleness (πραΰτης *praütēs* - *mildness of disposition*) and reverence (φόβος *phobos* - *fear*). The truth that believers are sons and daughters of God, inheritors of heavenly glory, and free from sin is the most glorious truth in the universe. However it is also heady stuff, and many Christians have fallen into the trap of believing that they chose God, or that He chose them because of some virtue within them that others do not possess. Like the Israelites before, those people who have been chosen by God often become proud of it, and that is sin.

No one is morally good, and no one deserves God’s grace. He chose those who follow Him out of His kindness, not from anything within us. Would every man and woman on earth choose to follow Him, and God has no greater desire (2 Peter 3:9), everyone would be a Christian. There is never any place for pride in the heart of a child of God.

V16 – Followers of Jesus must also keep their conscience clear. There are few things in life that are more important than a clean conscience. Our sins, no matter how secret, are always found out, revealing themselves in our attitudes, our fears, and our increasing distance from our beloved Lord. These sins sap our strength and shake our confidence in Him (1 John 3:20-21). Consider David’s agony when he hid his sin (Psalm 32:3-4):

1. “Body wasted away” (בלה *balah* - *wore out, were used up completely*) – This phrase suggests fatigue, vague pains, and recurrent low grade illness.
2. “Groaning all day” (שאגה *shēagah* - *cry of distress*) – Here we say bitter and prolonged sadness which he was unable to hide from those around him. Given the chronology of events in 2 Samuel 11 and 12, he must have hid his sin for several months.
3. “Vitality drained away” (לשד *lēshad* - *freshness, moisture*) – This phrase suggests a pervasive fatigue that made him unable to function.

In this case it is not a stretch to diagnose David with Major Depressive Disorder and to see his unconfessed sin as the cause. In verse 5 and the remainder of the chapter we see David confessing his iniquity to the Lord, and receiving the joy of forgiveness.

When our hearts are clean, though others persecute us, we have confidence that God will work events for His purposes and our ultimate good (Romans 8:28). Being slandered, mistreated and even injured is inevitable in this fallen world. Yet those who visit evil upon those who are good will eventually be put to shame.

V17 – Peter repeated his admonition. Trials would come and believers would suffer, but it is much better that they should suffer for good than for evil.

V18 – Jesus Christ suffered more than any other man ever could or will, because He not only endured the pain of physical torture and death, but He also bore the sins of every man and woman on Him. For this He suffered the ultimate pain; separation from God the Father (Matthew 27:46).

The amazing thing is that Jesus suffered not only for the good but also for the evil. He paid the price of sin for Pope John Paul II and also for the sin of Adolf Hitler. The difference is that some will accept His forgiveness and accept Him as their Lord and some will not. The former will find community with God, and the latter will discover permanent separation from Him.

Because Jesus, an innocent man, paid the inevitable price, the logical consequence, of sin, God raised Him up from the dead.

VV 19-20 – This is a tough passage to interpret and there are three main interpretations:

1. During the time between Jesus’ burial and resurrection, His spirit went to the realm of the dead and preached (κηρύσσω *kēryssō*) to those there. Some believe that He offered salvation to the dead humans or fallen angels, others that He announced condemnation to the unbelievers and still others that He proclaimed good tidings to the faithful.
2. That Christ was on earth before the time of Noah, preaching to the people, just as He appeared to Joshua and in the fiery furnace.
3. That Jesus went to the fallen angels and told them of His victory on the cross.

Many evangelical commentators favor the third option based on the construction and language of the passage. An attractive option is that Jesus offered salvation to those humans who lived and died before His work on the cross, thus answering the question “what about those people who never heard?” This interpretation is not ruled out by this passage but it is not well sustained by it either.

V21 – Believers are not saved by the water cleansing of dirt from the body but by the Spirit cleansing of evil from the soul. As a result of this cleansing, man receives a good conscience. This can occur only because Jesus Christ paid the price for sin, and then rose from the dead. If He was not raised, we would still be dead in our sins.

V22 – As a result of the Lord’s sacrifice, He is now in the position of authority at the side of God the Father. All creation has been subjected to Him.

Took (30%) - Verdict – What do you want them to DO as a result of the truths they have just received?

<p>Right Living</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonious • Sympathetic • Brotherly • Kindhearted • Humble in spirit • Not returning evil for evil • Not returning insult for insult • Giving blessings 	<h1 style="margin: 0;">Ready for Trouble</h1>	<p>Right Testimony</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ is Lord • Clean conscience • Personal story known and prepared
<p>Right Reason – the example of Christ</p>		

Closing Prayer