

LIVE AT PEACE WITH OTHERS

1 PETER 03:08–09

Introduction

This is a great passage for believers. It deals with peace. We are to live at peace with other Christian believers. When the world looks at believers, they are to see a most unusual unity, a spirit of oneness that is not found any place else on earth. They are to see believers who are so unified and so closely knit together that they are as brothers and sisters — brothers and sisters who stand together, who love and support each through all the trials and temptations of life. The world is not to see believers...

- arguing
- griping
- bickering
- enticing
- complaining
- brawling
- in division
- grumbling

The world is to see believers unified, standing together through thick and thin regardless of circumstances. How can believers live in unity? How can people with such diverse personalities and backgrounds be closer than earthly brothers and sisters? In the clearest of terms this verse spells out how in six points.

- I. Live in harmony (v. 8).
- II. Be sympathetic (v. 8).
- III. Have brotherly love (v. 8).
- IV. Be compassionate (v. 8).
- V. Be humble (v. 8).
- VI. Do not retaliate, but bless those who do evil against you (v. 9).

I. 1 Peter 03:08 Live in Harmony; Brotherhood

Believers must live in harmony (homophrones). The word means to be like-minded; to be of the same mind. Believers must keep their minds on the same things. They must focus their minds upon Jesus Christ and His mission.

1. Believers must keep their minds upon becoming just like Jesus, upon being conformed to the image of Christ.

Rom 8:29 *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

2 Cor 3:18 *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Phil 3:10 *I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.*

Col 3:10 *And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

2. Believers must keep their minds upon living holy, righteous and pure lives.

Rom 12:1-2 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

2 Cor 7:1 *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

Heb 12:14 *Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.*

1 Pet 1:15-16 *But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

2 Pet 3:11-12 *Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.*

3. Believers must keep their minds upon developing spiritual character and fruit.

Gal 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

4. Believers must keep their minds upon carrying out the ministry and mission of Christ.

Mat 20:28 *"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Luke 19:10 *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."*

John 20:21 *Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."*

Acts 1:8 *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

2 Cor 5:20 *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

2 Tim 2:2 *And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*

II. 1 Peter 03:08 Sympathy

Believers must have sympathy for one another. The word sympathetic (sumpatheis) means compassion; to actually feel with others. It means to feel for others so much that...

- one suffers with those who suffer.
- one weeps with those who weep.
- one rejoices when others are honoured.
- one understands the pressure that a leader is under when he has to lead.
- one hurts with those who are criticized and attacked.
- one grieves with the sorrows of others.

Unity cannot exist unless believers feel sympathy for one another. Believers cannot be selfish and aloof; they cannot be seeking attention and seeking to get their own way if they are to be unified. Unity demands sympathy; unity demands that believers feel for one another – that they feel deeply, so deeply that they actually experience what other believers experience: pain, hurt, abuse, suffering, joy and rejoicing.

Rom 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Rom 15:1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Gal 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

III. 1 Peter 03:08 Brotherly Love

Believers must have brotherly love for one another. “Brotherly love” (philadelphoi) has already been discussed by Peter (see *Love*, 1 Pet. 1:22-25).

IV. 1 Peter 03:08 Compassion

Believers must have compassion for one another. The word “compassionate” (eusplagchnoi) means to be tender-hearted; to be sensitive and affectionate toward the needs of others; to be moved with tender feelings over the pain and sufferings of others. We live in a world that desperately needs compassion, a world of extreme suffering. So many suffer and continue to suffer without ever having their needs met. The means and resources to meet their needs exist, but so many within the world have become hardened to the sufferings of others. They bank, hoard and build up asset after asset instead of sacrificing and reaching out to meet the needs of the world. But this is not to be true of the believer. Believers are to have compassion upon the sufferings of others. Believers are to feel compassion to the point that they are moved to act, moved to sacrifice and to reach out and meet the needs of the suffering.

Again, note how compassion leaves no room for selfishness. Compassion demands that a person deny himself and help others in their desperate needs and sufferings. Note also how compassion draws people together. Helping and ministering to one another binds and knits people together. Having compassion — feeling for one another and sacrificing and reaching out to help one another — unites people together. A great bond is created between the believer and those to whom he ministers.

Acts 20:35 “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Heb 13:3 Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

V. 1 Peter 03:08 Humility

Believers must be “humble” (tapeino-phrones). The word means to be humble-minded; to be lowly in mind. It means to offer oneself as lowly and submissive; to walk in a spirit of lowliness; *to present* oneself as lowly; to be of low degree and low rank; not to be high-minded, proud, haughty, arrogant or assertive.

Note: a humble person may have a high position, power, wealth, fame and much more; but he carries himself in a spirit of lowliness and submission. He denies himself for the sake of Christ and in order to help others.

Men have always looked upon humility as a vice. A lowly man is often looked upon as a coward, a cringing, despicable, slavish type of person. Men fear humility. They feel humility is a sign of weakness and will make them the object of contempt and abuse and cause them to be shunned and overlooked.

Because of all this, men ignore and shun the teaching of Christ on humility. This is tragic:

=> for a humble spirit is necessary for salvation (Mt. 18:3-4).

=> for God’s idea of humility is not weakness and cowardice.

God makes people strong, the strongest they can possibly be. By humility God does not mean what men mean. God infuses a new and strong spirit within a person and causes that person to conquer all throughout life. He just does not want the person walking around in pride. He wants the person to do what the definition says: *to offer* himself in a spirit of submissiveness and lowliness; not to act high-minded, proud, haughty, arrogant or assertive.

Humility is to be developed. Scripture tells us how:

Mat 11:29 *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*

Mat 18:3-4 *And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”*

Mat 23:12 *“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”*

Rom 12:16 *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

Eph 4:1-2 *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

Phil 2:3-4 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Col 3:12-13 *Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

1 Pet 5:6 *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*

VI. 1 Peter 03:09 Believers, Life and Walk

Do not retaliate, but bless those who do evil against you. This point refers to both believers and unbelievers. As tragic as it is, some believers do repay evil with evil and insult with insult against other believers. Nevertheless, no matter the source of the evil and insulting, true believers are not to retaliate. What are they to do when someone does evil against them?

1. The believer is not to react; he is not to return evil with evil to anyone. In the world and in the course of behaviour between men, everyone is mistreated and reacted against at one time or another. Therefore, the believer suffers evil and mistreatment just as every one else does — just in the course of behaviour as a man. However, the genuine believer suffers additional evil: he suffers evil and mistreatment because he is a follower of Jesus Christ. As a follower of Christ...
 - the believer is living a life of righteousness and purity, honesty and truthfulness; and such behaviour is often opposed by the world. Therefore, the worldly person often opposes and abuses the believer.

- the believer is bearing testimony to the corruption of the world and to God's salvation; to man's need to escape the corruption by turning to Jesus Christ and His righteousness. Again, the worldly person often opposes the message of Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

The point is this: the believer is not to react against a person who mistreats and does evil against him. There are at least two reasons why he is not to react.

- a. Reaction will most likely lose the friendship of the person and lose all hope of ever reaching the person for Jesus Christ. The evil doer will be able to say, "A Christian did that to me." The believer will have made Christ an *unappealing* Saviour. On the other hand, if the believer returns good for evil, he opens the door for eventual friendship and bears testimony to the love of God for all men, even for those who do evil.
- b. Reaction is not the way of God or of Christ.

Mat 5:39,45 "But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also...that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

1 Pet 3:9 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.

1 Th 5:15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

Lev 19:18 "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the LORD."

Prov 20:22 Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.

Prov 24:29 Do not say, "I'll do to him as he has done to me; I'll pay that man back for what he did."

2. The believer is to bless those who do evil against him. The word "bless" (eulogountes) means to speak well of.
 - a. It means to *speak well to our persecutors*. We do not react against them by cursing, speaking harshly or striking out at them. We do not try to hurt them either verbally or physically. On the contrary, we seek to find something that is commendable about them and we commend them for it.

1 Pet 3:9 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.

Eph 4:31-32 *Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

- b. It means to *speak well about our persecutors*. When speaking to others, we do not down the persecutor, but we mention some commendable trait. We praise some good thing about the person; we do not tear him down.
- c. It means to *pray for our persecutors*. We must do as Jesus said and did.

Mat 5:44 *“But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”*

Luke 23:34 *Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.*

Thought 1. Think of the impact upon persecutors when an attitude of love and blessing is demonstrated toward them. Every persecutor would not be won to Christ, but every persecutor would have a strong witness that could be used by the Holy Spirit in the persecutor’s quiet, thoughtful moments; and some persecutors would be won to Christ. This is what God is after.

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

- d. It means to do good to our persecutors.

Luke 6:27 *“But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.”*

Luke 6:35 *“But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.”*

Rom 12:20 *On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”*

1 Th 5:15 *Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.*

Exo 23:5 *If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help him with it.*

Prov 25:21 *If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.*

- 3. The believer who blesses those who do evil against him will be greatly rewarded. Note: the believer is actually called to receive a blessing. The Amplified New Testament states it well:

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. (v. 9)

The idea is that believers shall inherit eternal life. If they forgive others, God will forgive them. God will forgive them and give them the inheritance of heaven, of eternal life itself.

Mat 5:44-45 *“But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”*

Mat 6:14-15 *“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

Mark 11:25 *“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”*

Eph 4:32 *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

Col 3:13 *Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ■*