

1st Peter Chapter 3- John Karmelich

1. In Chapter 3 of 1st Peter, we are still dealing with the topic of Christians and suffering.
 - a) In Chapter 3, we move from the “external to the internal”.
 - b) Often, the difficulty of living the Christian life does not come for external (nonchristian) sources, but with strife and difficulty from other Christians.
 - c) It could come from our marriage. That is the topic of the first seven verses.
 - d) It comes from other members of our church. The next set of verses deal with that.
 - e) Peter wraps up this chapter and the previous chapter by getting the focus on our attitude. The main point of this section is, “Hey we’ve got problems. How does God want us to deal with those problems as opposed to how we “think” we should deal with them?
2. I’m purposely keeping this introduction brief, because I’m going to cover a lot of ground.
 - a) The one thing to keep in your mind as you read through this chapter is to think about “persecution from within”. The “within” can be your family, your neighbors, your church friends, or someone close to you. In other words, how do you deal with someone who is a pain in the behind and should know better? ☺
 - b) God wants us to have an intimate relationship with Him. To have that relationship, we can’t have anything blocking it. That includes pain. That includes suffering. Peter’s letter accepts the fact that life is painful. This letter is about how to deal with that pain. The focus is on our attitudes and our behavior in response to persecution.
 - c) We start this lesson with the topic of marriage. With that in mind, here we go.
3. Verse 1: Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, ² when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.
 - a) Remember that the main theme of 1st Peter has to do with Christian suffering. The word suffer or suffering or suffered is used 17 times in the NIV translation of 1st Peter.
 - i) As all married couples know, where there is marriage, there is suffering. ☺ The last section of 1st Peter deals with outside influences that cause us suffering. As I stated in the introduction, this chapter focuses on “inside suffering”
 - b) Before I start telling all the women readers how to deal with their husbands, ☺, let’s backtrack a little and talk about the big picture:
 - i) The first word is “wives”. Therefore, we know Peter is addressing this portion of the letter to Christian women.
 - ii) Next, it says, “in the same way”. We need to ask, “in the same way as what”?
 - a) The answer is go back to Verse 18 of the previous chapter. That verse states, “Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect”.
 - b) Compare that with, “Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands
 - c) The point is Peter is teaching about submissiveness as a pattern for Christian believers. Submissiveness is about respecting the rank of authority, the same way a soldier must respect his superior officer. In the army, a soldier is not worth more as a human than a general, but the soldier must respect the higher rank and be submissive. That is the idea to slaves and masters as well as husbands and wives.
 - iii) There are six verses addressed to women and one verse addressed to men.
 - a) It doesn’t mean that women need more help. If anything, it shows how women are willing to listen to more details and when it comes to discussing relationships, and men can barely handle one verse. ☺

- c) When it comes to marital advice, there are not a lot of bible verses.
 - i) Essentially, there is Chapter 5 of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, there are these seven verses in 1st Peter, and one can argue that the poetic book "Song of Songs" in the Old Testament is a book on marital happiness. But in the big context of the entire bible, that is not a lot of verses. Yes, there are some lessons all through the bible that can apply to our marriage. Jesus does make a few short comments about marriage and divorce, but a direct discussion of marital advice is pretty much limited to this section of 1st Peter and Chapter 5 of Paul's letter to the Ephesians.
 - ii) Our problem is not that we need "more advice" on marriage, but actually applying what Peter and Paul are trying to teach us. Like all the bible, the easy part is to read and understand it. The trick is actually applying it. It is difficult, not because it is counter-intuitive, but because applying the bible to our lives goes against our ego. Like almost every other aspect of the Christian live, submission is all about submitting our will to God's will. Our will (or our ego as I call it) still wants to be in charge all the time. For a believer in God, life is a constant battle of submitting our will to God's will moment by moment.
 - iii) That same battle also occurs in marriage. We struggle in our marriage as we want our will over God's will for our marriage.
- d) Now let's actually get to the verse itself. Let me start by repeating Verses 2-3: "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them (husbands) do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives."
 - i) Note that the principals of these verses apply to husbands who have unbelieving wives. Some of the ideas also apply to husbands with unbelieving wives.
 - ii) The bible teaches that Christians are not to be married to nonbelievers. (Reference 2nd Corinthians 6:14.) That is not an unpardonable sin, nor should we divorce if we make that decision. Peter is focusing on those who become believers after they get married.
 - iii) Here is Peter's advice in a nutshell: "Women, let's say you became a Christian after you got married. What do you do about your husbands? Do you divorce them? Do you put on bible radio when you're husbands falling asleep? Do you leave bible tracts on his pillow at night and in his lunchbox?"
 - a) To continue, "The answer is no. If you want to convert your husband, you don't do it by lecturing him, buying him books or making him watch a television crusade. You do it by your behavior."
 - iv) Your husbands can debate all day long about the God, the bible and religion. He cannot argue with changed behavior. The greatest witness a wife can do for an unbelieving husband (and vice versa) is long term, changed behavior.
 - v) Your husband might say, "OK, I've been watching you go to church for a long time now while I play golf on Sunday mornings. I have to admit, you've been a happier person. I like the fact you don't lecture me about it or criticize me at all for not going with you. You don't complain or make me feel guilty. The problem is I'm starting to feel guilty about it all by myself."
 - vi) Let's say your husband goes to church out of guilt because you've been nagging him to go. Will his heart be open to the truth or is he just going to appease you? Remember that God alone gets the credit for any and all conversion. Pray for your husband to change and let God work on his heart (as opposed to you!)
- e) OK, so how do I actually "behave"? Do you expect me to be perfect all the time?
 - i) Yes I do. Next topic. ☺ (Just kidding!)

- ii) Let's start with a sample prayer: "Heavenly Father, my husband really irks me. He has lots of faults and there are times I have seriously considered killing the guy. I want to give that anger to you. That anger is blocking my relationship with You. I am blind to my own faults and I focus on the faults of my spouse. Help me not to "fix him" and let You fix him! Help me to have mercy on him as You have mercy on me! Help me to explain to him in loving ways how he has hurt me."
 - iii) By being submissive to your husband, you're actually appealing to his ego! By letting your husband have authority over you as to your decisions you are telling your husband just how much you love him and trust him. That will make him love you and trust you even more because you are trusting him.
 - iv) OK, where do I "draw the line"? Well, for starters, Peter never commands the women to stop believing in God if say, the husband forbids you going to church. If you are in such a situation, I would continue to worship God privately and get together with other Christians if possible.
 - f) One of Peter's points is that winning your husband for Christ is more important than leaving your husband or any other aspect of your marriage. (There is a separate topic of dealing with a physically abusive husband, but you get the idea.)
 - i) If women became Christians and then left their husbands because the husbands were not Christians, the husbands would think, "Well, she just wanted to join the church so he could leave me! Deep down, she doesn't care about this stuff!" A point of these verses is that in order to win your husband for Christ, you need to 1) stay in that marriage and 2) let your conduct and not your words be your "witness" to your husband about Christianity.
 - g) The last phrase of Verse 3 says, "when they see the purity and reverence of your lives."
 - i) Don't let the formality of "purity and reverence" intimate you. This is simply about conduct. It is about changing the conduct of your behavior.
 - a) It doesn't mean you have to walk around the house using pious or special religious terms. Just continue to go to your church, "husband willing". Continue to take time to pray and read God's word. Let God work on you to change your behavior as to be a witness for your husband.
 - ii) On a related note, you don't have to show off in front of your husband. You don't have to walk around the house with a big bible and announce every time you're going to church. It will get noticed. Your husband is less oblivious than you think. ☺ From your husband's perspective, "There is another man in your life, and his name is Jesus". He is watching you. He is watching how you act. Your husband is interested in salvation. Trust in the fact the Holy Spirit is convicting him and don't try to make him feel guilty. The Holy Spirit is doing that as it is.
4. Verse 3: Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. ⁴ Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.
- a) The same thought continues in Verse 3 and 4. Here Peter uses the illustration of "fashion" to make a point about women's conduct. (Let's face it, if Peter were talking to men, he probably would use a sports illustration. Instead, Peter focuses on fashion items! ☺)
 - b) To paraphrase Peter, "It's not so important how you look on the outside, but how you look on the inside". Peter's point is that inner beauty means a lot more than outer beauty. Peter is not preaching against owning jewelry or nice clothing. It is about putting those things in perspective.
 - c) Let's face it, "looks" fade over time and inner beauty does not. Men initially would be attracted to looks, but for men to stick around in the long run, the "inner beauty" is far more important than outer beauty.

- i) Does that mean your husbands won't turn their heads when a pretty girl goes by? No, they are still human and men are visually stimulated.
- ii) I know a lot of divorced people. I've never met one guy who's ever left her wife because of her looks. Men leave out of frustration. They would rather have peace than argue. I'm sure some do leave out of the temptation of a seductress, but I'm guessing the most likely reasons have to do with their wives' personality. This is why I state the "inner" beauty matters far more than the outer beauty.
- d) Notice the last phrase of Verse 4. It says, "which is of great worth in God's sight".
 - i) The question is, "are you trying to please your husband or God? Now again, look at that last phrase in Verse 4: ""which is of great worth in God's sight".
 - ii) Your job, as women, is ultimately to please God. Remember this letter is about dealing with suffering. Yes, married to a man causes great suffering, even the best Christian men out there will cause suffering! ☺ Like the letter as a whole, this section of the letter is how to properly deal with Christian suffering. It is specifically about how to live with an unbelieving husband.
 - iii) The underlying message of this section is all about how to make a marriage work. What Peter is saying is that in order to "fix" your marriage, you don't try to fix your husband! You pray for him and let God gang up on him! He won't stand a chance! Focus on trying to please God, be obedient to God's instructions about being a wife and let God deal with your husband. Try saying to God, "OK, God, I've tried doing it my way and failed. I'm now going to try it your way. You're reputation is now on the line. Let's see what happens!"
 - a) I stated earlier that the hard part about Christianity is applying the Word of God. Our ego's want to do it our way. Our ego's want to tell of our husbands what a jerk he is. (Yes, he is a jerk, but that's not the point! ☺)
 - iv) My point is about submission. The husband must submit to God and the wife must submit to the husband. This is not about superiority as a person, it is how God wants us to be happy by respecting the authority that is over us.
 - v) Remember we are specifically dealing with wives whose husbands won't respect God as an authority. Peter's point is you don't win them over by beating them up with a bible! You win them over by changing your behavior and then let God deal with their behavior. (P.S. Don't worry girls, there is only one verse coming up for the guys, but I promise to lay it on thick when I get there! ☺)
- 5. Verse 5: For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands,⁶ like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.
 - a) Peter now goes on to give a biblical example of a women who was submissive to her husband in order to make herself beautiful. That is the idea of Verse 5.
 - b) The specific woman in question is Sarah, the wife of Abraham.
 - i) Two times in Genesis, (Chapter 12 and Chapter 20) Abraham lied to a foreign king and stated that his wife Sarah was really his sister. Abraham did this out of fear of his life. He knew Sarah was beautiful and was afraid these kings would kill him in order to take Sarah as a wife.
 - ii) I take the view that what made Sarah beautiful was not so much the outer beauty but the inner beauty of a submissive spirit. I'm sure both of these kings had lots of beautiful young women at their disposal. To find a woman that is good looking is not difficult to do. However, to find a women who has the inner beauty of a submissive spirit, well, that's something you don't find any day.

- iii) What is amazing about those Genesis' stories is that Sarah agreed to go live with those kings and leave her husband! Sarah submitted to her husbands' will even to the point she would agree to go along with her husbands' lie about their marriage. In both Genesis Chapters 12 and 20, God had to step in and restore their marriage.
- iv) We don't read of Sarah saying, "Excuse me oh hubby of mind, would you mind telling this king over here that I am your wife? I'm the one about to be taken away to be part of a harem! You care about saving your life. What about me?"
- v) The lesson to learn from Sarah's perspective is "she agreed to go along with whatever her husband said, and let God work out the details". In both cases, God saved Sarah after trusting in her husband.
- vi) Again, I want to emphasize that if you are married to a physically abusive husband, you don't have to sit there and take it. You may choose to stay married, but you don't have to stay in the same house. If your husband has other substance abuse problems, there are grief support groups that are helpful. My point here is simply about changing one's behavior so that you as women live a life that is pleasing to God. Doing that requires submitting to one's husbands authority.
- c) The last sentence says, "You (Christian women) are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear."
 - i) This does not mean women literally become of the lineage of Sarah. It means that women are to follow Sarah's example of how to be submissive.
 - ii) The last phrase says, "do not give way to fear".
 - iii) Let's face it, the reason we don't want to submit to our husbands is out of fear. You can fear how they might treat you. You can fear the decisions that they make are not the best for you.
 - iv) Remember that Peter is talking to women who don't have Christian husbands. Living with a Christian husband is tough enough, ☺ let alone abiding by the decisions of a man who does not have the fear of God in his life.
 - v) What you have to ask yourself is, "Is God big enough that He can handle my husband? Is God big enough that He can work through my husband as to what is best for my life?" You are not submitting to your husband for the sake of your husband, you are submitting to your husband for God's sake! (And don't let your husband forget it! ☺)
- d) One final joke and I'll move on to the men. In the 1960's there was a famous football coach named Vince Lombardi. He won the first ever Superbowl. He told a story of when he first got married, he had cold feet. When his wife got into bed with him for the first time, she yelled, "Lord, you're feet are cold!" He responded, Honey, the football players are not here right now. When we are alone together, you don't have to call me Lord, just Vince." (I'm not sure what's the application of the story, I just like the joke. ☺)
- e) Good news, we made it the verse about husbands. It's time for revenge. ☺
- 6. Verse 7: Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.
 - a) Let me start with my martial advice to my two daughters: Girls, find a husband who loves God more than they love you. Why? Because the bible teaches us to "love our wives as much as Christ loved the church" (Ephesians 5:25). How much love is that? It means Jesus was willing to die for the church. Jesus gave up everything for the church. That is how much a man should love his wife. If a husband loves God more than he loves his wife, then that husband desires to be obedient to God, and that means he wants to love his wife as much as Christ loves the church.

- b) Peter is addressing this one verse to Christian men.
 - i) I have found as a general rule when husbands are devout Christians, the whole family goes to church. When just the wives are devout Christians, just she, or she and the children go to church. It is much more difficult for a women to “win over” her husband than for a husband to win over his wife on this issue. Maybe that’s why Peter spends six verses on women and only one on men.
 - ii) My point here is the lessons of this verse apply whether or not your wife is a Christian. Men, never let your wives “spiritual state” determine how you should treat them! Like I said earlier, worry about your own relationship with God and let God deal with your spouse. Again, this is hard because we are fighting our ego. We want to “fix” our spouses as opposed to letting God do it and giving God the credit for the changes.
- c) Onto the verse itself. The first course of action to be “considerate” to your wives.
 - i) Why? For starters, it has nothing to do with your wives behavior. It does not say to be considerate to them if and only if they are considerate to you. This has nothing to do with “tit for tat” behavior. God is telling us through Peter that we are to be considerate to our wives despite how they are acting!
 - ii) Does that mean we can still watch football? ☺ Yes, it’s ok to watch football. Balance that time with time for your wife. If you spend as much time with your wife as you do studying next week’s opponent, this will help your marriage. ☺
 - iii) The idea of “considerate” is to consider them. It’s about thinking about their needs. I take the view the husband is the “high priest” of the family. That means starting your day by praying for your marriage, your wife and your children. On practical terms, it means to consider their needs as much as yours.
 - iv) Remember the biblical definition of love is about putting other’s needs above your own. That is the idea here about being “considerate” to your wife.
- d) The next phrase is, “and treat them with respect as the weaker partner”.
 - i) As a general rule of thumb, men are physically stronger than women are. That is all Peter meant by the “weaker” partner.
 - ii) Remember that Paul taught in Christianity there is no difference between male and female in terms of equality (See Galatians 3:28). The idea of submission is that “someone has to be in charge”. God designed marriage with the idea that the husband is to submit to God and the wife is to submit to the husband. It is not about superiority as a being, it is about rank so someone can be in charge.
 - iii) I believe Peter’s point here is for men not to use their physical strength to dominate their wife. This verse alone is a good argument against any sort of physical abuse over one’s wife.
 - iv) The idea is, if you want your wife to submit to you, you don’t grab the nearest bible and say “read it and weep, honey, submit because it’s God’s orders!” ☺
 - v) What Peter is teaching is that if you are willing to love your wives as Christ loves the church, then it will be easy for them to want to submit to you.
 - a) If your wife sees you reading your bible every day, she is more likely to trust you and your decisions for the family.
 - b) If your wife sees you leading the family to church every week, she is more likely to want to submit to your will.
 - c) If your wife sees you leading a good godly life, then her desire to submit to you will come easy.
 - d) Finally, and most importantly, if you treat her with respect, if you work to fulfill your wives needs, and “love your wife like Christ loves the church”, I guarantee submission on her part will be a whole lot easier.

- e) By the way guys, don't expect to change for say, two hours and expect total submission. ☺ Changed behavior takes time and practice. It will happen.
 - e) The next phrase says, "As heirs with you of the gracious gift of life".
 - i) This verse assumes the wife is a Christian as well as the husband.
 - ii) The point here is we as men should treat our wives lovingly because God loves them as much as God loves us. You have to remember that in 1st Century Jewish culture, men were supreme and this is a radical concept. God loves our wives as much as He loves us. God wants to mature our wives for eternity as much as He wants to mature us. Guys, part of our ministry is to our wives. This is why I argue earlier that men are the "high priest" of the family. If God makes the man the head of the family, then God also gives that man the responsibility of being in charge of the family and ministering to that family.
 - f) Finally, this verse says, "so that nothing will hinder your prayers".
 - i) I want to state something real clear here. I want nothing to hinder my prayer life.
 - a) If I'm crossing the street, trip and fall down in the middle of the street, and a truck is coming, I want nothing to hinder my prayer life. ☺
 - b) If I'm in the woods and a bear charging at me, I want nothing to hinder my prayer life. ☺
 - c) If I'm in the hospital, or one of my loved ones is in pain, I want nothing to hinder my prayer life.
 - ii) If we as husbands are not motivated by bible commands, to be considerate and loving to our wives, then the thought of our prayer life being hindered in any way, shape or fashion should motivate us!
 - a) I keep this verse in mind when I have an argument with my wife. This thought of "hindering my prayer life" motivates me to make up or at the least, to talk it out.
 - iii) People debate just what Peter meant by "hindering". Bible commentators argue over how severe God is "hindering" our prayers. Personally, I don't care. I don't want my prayer life hindered in any way, shape or fashion. I just see that truck coming at me. ☺ That motivates me to check my ego and say, "Honey, let's talk it out and resolve this!"
 - g) The point of this verse to guys is "Love is a decision, not a feeling". God calls us to minister to our wives and love them as Christ loved the church. It doesn't matter how wrong our wives are in the argument. ☺ What matters is what God command us to love them. If we love and fear God, then God commands us to love and serve our wives despite our circumstances and not based on the circumstances.
 - i) This ties back to the idea of the Christian and suffering. Yes we as believers get hurt. That is a part of life. We can't always control our circumstances but we can control our attitude during those circumstances. These last seven verses are Peter's application of that principal to marriage.
7. Verse 8: Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. 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.
- a) Let's start with the phrase "all of you". We are now addressing all Christians.
 - b) The next phrase is "live in harmony with one another".
 - i) I don't believe Peter is just addressing husbands and wives as couples. Peter is talking about all Christians getting along. I say that because Peter says, "love as brothers". I don't think that reference was meant in the context of marriage.

- c) Let's go to something Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35 NIV)
 - i) Notice what Jesus did not say, "People will know you are Christians by the big bibles you always carry under your arms." Or, "People will know you are Christians by the pretty diamond cross necklace you always wear!"
 - ii) Jesus gives us the command to love one another. To be a Christian not only means that we accept Jesus as payment of our sins, but to accept the fact that Jesus is Lord (i.e., "in charge") of our lives. As our commanding officer, Jesus orders us to love fellow Christians. Further, this is to be the "sign" to others that we're believers.
 - iii) What does that mean practically? It means that other Christians become a priority over ourselves. The needs of others take precedent over our own needs. (Yes, I know there is a balance, as I watched people "kill themselves" trying to please everyone else and are never happy.)
 - iv) The outsider to the Christian church should say, "You know, I don't agree or care for all that religious stuff, but I have to admire the way they help each other out all the time and support one another."
- d) With all of that in mind, now let's look at how Peter says Christians should treat each other here in Verses 8 and 9: "Live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing."
 - i) It is important to emphasize the obvious here. People are not all alike. That applies to Christians as well. Some people have more obnoxious personalities and it is more challenging to love some Christians more than others. Jesus command is to love the fellow Christian, faults and all. That means supporting, praying and giving priority to other Christians, even the ones you can't stand.
 - ii) The idea of "live in harmony" is often compared to a symphony. Each musician may have a different instrument, but all work together as a team for a common goal. I take the view that the primary mission of Christians is to "build up the body of Christ" (See Ephesians 4:12). That subject includes missionary work, bringing in new believers and helping to mature, comfort and just-plain-help-out fellow Christians.
 - iii) Now notice Peter's phrase, "Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult".
 - a) Remember that Peter is talking to believers about believers. The "insults" are those from fellow Christians! I see nothing has changed in the church over the last 2,000 years. ☺
 - b) The big topic of this letter is about dealing with persecution. This particular chapter focuses on "persecution from within". The "within" refers to within the marriage and now, within the church.
 - c) The way you hand the "Christian problem person" who has insulted you is with compassion and humility as Peter states in Verse 9. The easy thing is to strike back. That is what the "world" expects you to. Peter is saying to us, "Be above that. God commands us to love our fellow brethren no matter how wrong they are."
 - iv) Did you notice the parallel pattern in this chapter between the husband/wife friction and the fellow Christian friction? In both cases, Peter is giving the same advice on loving one another as a priority over the specific friction of the moment.
- e) Verse 9 ends with, "Because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing."
 - i) The same way I don't want my prayer life to be hindered, I also want blessings.

- a) Does the blessing refer to something special in this life or the next life? Either way, I don't care. I want it. ☺ Peter is using a special benefit (a blessing) from God as a motivation tool for us to be obedient.
 - b) The blessing in this life includes a peaceful relationship. Personally, I want that much more than the arguments.
- 8. Verse 10: For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. ¹¹ He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."
 - a) Verses 10 through 12 are a direct quote of Psalm 34:12-16. Personally, I'm impressed with Peter's ability to quote Scripture. He didn't have bible software to look it up. ☺
 - b) Notice Verse 12. It says God ("The Lord") is attentive to the prayers of those who do good and God ignores ("face of the Lord is against") those who do evil.
 - i) When Peter said the prayer life of the arguing couple is hindered back in Verse 7, that is not an original thought by Peter. This quote of Psalm 34 also states that our prayer life becomes hindered whenever one does something evil.
 - ii) Remember this section of the letter is written to Christians about Christians.
 - iii) It's easy to say, "Well, those rotten nonbelievers out there are ridiculing me! Let's see if God answers their prayers in time of need." This section of 1st Peter is about Christians dealing with their spouses and fellow believers. I'm pretty certain Peter is talking about us being "evil" at any given moment in our relationship with other Christians. We tend to think of evil as murder or some horrible violent crime. Peter is expanding that definition based on how Christians treat each other.
 - iv) Psalm 34 is implying that if we're not motivated to be better people because God commands us so, we should be motivated by the fact it affects how God hears our prayers at any given moment.
 - a) Again, I don't know to what extent "hindrance" means. Does that mean God will completely ignore us in time of trouble? I doubt it. Still, I don't want any sort of prayer hindrance and this is a good motivation. At the least, the anger we have at such moments blocks our relationship with God because we are focusing on that anger.
 - c) I heard a good quote that paraphrases verses 10-11: "A happy life is the best revenge".
 - i) The idea is that if people hurt us, deep down they expect revenge, or they enjoy the power-trip of their superiority to us on that issue. If we can have a happy life despite the pain caused by others, then we have our proper "revenge".
 - ii) Peter is talking about turning from evil and doing good. The idea here is that in the moments of pain and suffering caused by others, the proper focus is on God's love and not on who hurt us and how we can get even. Revenge doesn't make the pain go away, and if anything, it escalates the problem. This is a separate issue from resolution. Sometimes issues cannot be resolved. This is about our attitude when those moments come.
 - iii) Let me end this section with a prayer: "Lord, I'm really angry at (fill-in-the-blank) right now. They did horrible things to me and it really hurts. Right now, I'm going to focus on how much You love me. Right now, I'm going to remember that you commanded me to love the fellow Christian. If You have given me this command, then I will trust that You will provide the strength and the ability to execute such a command. Guide me as I deal with this situation. Help me to see that person as someone who is hurting. Help me to be compassionate and filled with your love, Amen."

9. Verse 13: Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?
- The idea here is if someone wants to harm you, and they see you being nice to them, or they see you being good to others, the “hurter” will feel guilty about their actions.
 - This is not a guarantee they will stop, but their conscious will bother them about hurting you when they see you act in a better manner.
10. Verse 14: But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed.
- Paul says that all Christians go through suffering. (Ref.: 2nd Timothy 3:12).
 - I think the idea here is, “Look, we’re going to suffer anyway. You might as well suffer for doing right than doing wrong.”
 - This ties to Jesus statement, “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5:11-12 NIV)
11. Verse 14a: "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened."
- This is a quote of Isaiah 8:12. The verse can also be read to not be afraid of their threats.
 - Is Peter talking about nonchristians threatening you? What do they fear?
 - The reason some nonbelievers “fear” Christians is because they are a threat to the “status quo” of their lives. To live the Christian life means to give up a live-for-the-moment immoral lifestyle. That was and still is a threat. Others persecute for reasons of power Some want Christians to convert to their religion. One of the reasons the 1st century Jewish leaders saw the Christians as a threat is that it affected their power structure.
 - Throughout history, Christians have been persecuted for their faith. Yes, there are also demonic forces behind those actions. Let’s face it, a dead Christian is not busy telling others about Jesus! A scared Christian is too afraid to tell others about Jesus. A Christian who wants to be popular with other nonchristians is afraid to talk about their faith.
 - If any of these are issues to you, pray for boldness. That is what the early church did when they were faced with persecution. (Reference Acts 4:29).
12. Verse 15: But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.
- Look at the first sentence of Verse 15: But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord
 - This touches on something I stated earlier: It is one thing to accept Jesus as payment of your sins. It is another action to accept Jesus as Lord of your life.
 - The idea here is about being obedient to what the bible commands us. We ought to have love for others around us despite the hurt they have caused us because our Lord Jesus commands it of us.
 - I can just hear some of you saying, “Well, that’s easy for you to say! You don’t know what my spouse is like or that person in church, or my neighbor.”
 - The first step to healing is to pray for that person. It’s tough to be angry with someone you are sincerely praying for! Don’t pray for their destruction or repentance. Simply pray for them. Watch what God will do! Next, give that pain to God and say something like, “OK God, this person is blocking my relationship with You. You go deal with them! My job is to be obedient to You and that person is “your problem!” Give me the heart and strength to deal with them.”
 - The second sentence is about being prepared to give an answer for your faith.
 - Let’s face it, if someone treats you badly and you’re nice to them, they are going to want an explanation! ☺

- ii) In times of persecution, they may say, “look, I don’t have to kill you or harm you, just deny your faith.” It is times like that where Peter is commanding us to be prepared and give an answer for the hope that is within is.
- c) The second sentence is very popular in the field of apologetics. Apologetics has nothing to do with apologizing. It is about defending the faith. For example, if you go to a Christian bookstore, there is usually a section called “apologetics”. You will find books on defending your faith against cults, atheists, etc.
- d) I should also add that I don’t believe people come to faith in Jesus by logic. It usually comes by hearing the Gospel message, realizing that they are a sinner and need Jesus as a remedy for that sin. My point is don’t expect conversions by “logically” explaining your faith in Jesus. What giving one’s testimony in such situations does do is make people reflect upon their own lives. If they see you having joy despite the pain, it makes them long for a similar situation and may draw them to God.
 - i) Notice the end of Verse 16 says, “may be ashamed of their slander.” That is the guilt one feels when they see someone doing good, and they are punishing you despite your joy, despite the fact you are treating them well in those situations.
- 13. Verse 17: It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.
 - a) Again, Paul states in 2nd Timothy that all Christians will suffer some sort of persecution. If at any given moment is “God’s will” for us to go through such a trial, it is better if we act in a way that is good than evil. Read this verse again. The focus is not on the fact we are being persecuted, the focus is how we react to that persecution.
- 14. Verse 18: For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,
 - a) Do you want an example of how to react in times of persecution? The answer is to look to Jesus himself. Peter’s point in Verse 18 is that Jesus suffered for our sake.
 - b) The text says, “the righteous for the unrighteous”.
 - i) The righteous is Jesus himself. The unrighteous refers to Christians. Jesus died for all people, especially for those who choose to accept Jesus payment of sin.
 - ii) The reason I say it is “especially for believers” is the next phrase in Verse 18 is “to bring you to God”. Jesus payment on the cross is the bridge that draws us to God.
 - iii) Which reminds me, there is a false-concept called “limited atonement”. It means that Jesus only died for believers and not for unbelievers. John 3:16 says, “God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son”.
 - c) “Made alive by the Spirit” means that somehow, the Holy Spirit was involved in the resurrection process. We’ll have to ask God the technical details one day. ☺
- 15. Verse 19: through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison²⁰ who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,
 - a) OK, it’s time to get weird. ☺ The next few verses are the toughest in the chapter to discuss. Bible commentaries vary as to the meaning.
 - b) It may help to keep a couple of things in mind: First, Peter is writing primarily to Jewish Christians who understood the Book of Genesis and the story of Noah. Next, keep in mind that Peter’s topic is dealing with suffering because one is a Christian.
 - i) I say this because you can draw all sorts of strange analogies based on Verses 19-22. If you keep these two ideas in focus, it helps to understand Peter here.
 - c) Verse 19 states that after Jesus died, and before Jesus rose again, Jesus preached to the spirits in prison.
 - i) The word “prison” is a word for hell. It is a Greek term that refers to the lowest parts of hell. The idea is that it is a location for the worse sort of prisoners.
 - ii) We can assume these are demonic spirits. I doubt good spirits are in hell. ☺
 - iii) Whoever these spirits are, they go back to the days of Noah and the flood.

- d) The idea of “preaching” here is not about giving a sermon and hoping the demons repent. It is about pronouncing judgment upon them. The text is saying that once Jesus died on the cross, He descended to this “hell jail” to pronounce judgment on these demons.
 - i) It would help to look at what Peter said in his second letter: “For if God did not spare angels (the same guys!) when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; if he (God) did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah a preacher of righteousness, and seven others”. (2nd Peter 2:4-5 NIV)
 - e) So apparently, the demons who lived at the time of Noah were so horrible that God locked them up for all eternity, and now Jesus went to see them after the cross and before he was resurrected to pronounce judgment on them.
 - i) This leads to all sorts of questions: If these demons were already locked up in hell, what sort of judgment did Jesus have to pronounce? They’re already in hell. How much worse can it get for them? ☺ Why are they in jail and not other demons? The book of Acts mentions demons being on earth long after Jesus was resurrected in Chapter 19. Why isn’t Satan himself locked up with these demons?
 - f) Let’s start with these demons that existed at the time of Noah. Apparently, whatever they did, it caused nobody to get saved other than Noah and his family. Genesis stated that it took Noah 120 years to build the ark as implied in Genesis 6. Peter says Noah was a “preacher of righteousness”. That could have been his day job while he was building the ark or the fact that no one cared to join him for all those years while the ark was being constructed in Noah’s driveway. ☺
 - i) There are interesting theories that these demons mingled sexually with humans prior to the flood, causing the offspring to be corrupt. It’s an interesting theory based on the text of Genesis 6:2-4. Whatever happened, it was bad enough for God to lock them up. Apparently, God didn’t want that to happen twice, so they were locked up for all eternity.
 - g) I believe Jesus judgment on these demons is to say in a sense, “Look, you guys corrupted mankind once, and you are locked up so it won’t happen again. Still, the existence of sin made it on the ark with Noah and his family. You demons thought you successfully corrupted mankind because sin still existed. Well, I’m here to tell to that “sin” no longer separates God and man as the price has been paid. You guys lost the battle.”
 - h) Which leads to the question, “Why are other demons not locked up and these guys are?” The answer is that God wants us to come to Him out of free will. You cannot have a two-way love relationship if you are forced to love someone. To prove to God that we love Him, God “allows” alternatives to exist to prove we love God out of our own free will. Further God also allows demonic forces to exist to “keep us on the straight and narrow” path toward God.
 - i) In other words, “There is nothing like pain to have an effective prayer life. “ ☺
 - ii) If we are persecuted, it draws us closer to God in our dependence upon Him.
 - i) This leads us back to 1st Peter. Peter’s illustration, as strange as it is us, is “Look folks, I know you are being persecuted for your faith in Jesus. The fate of nonbelievers is sealed forever, just like the fate of the demons at the time of Noah. Yes, it is painful what you are going through right now. That is nothing in compared to the eternal fate of nonbelievers and whatever demonic forces are behind those attacks. If Jesus condemned those demons for what they did long ago, imagine what he’ll do to those who persecute you!”
16. Verse 21: and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,²² who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

- a) Let's start with the phrase "this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you".
 - i) Remember that Peter is talking about the story of Noah. In Noah, water was used to judge the earth. Noah and his family were preserved through the water.
 - b) Peter is comparing this idea to baptism. The concept here is that we are saved by what Jesus did for us and like Noah we too are preserved for heaven no matter what the world throws at us.
 - c) It's strange to think of the story of Noah as a "baptism". I believe Peter is focusing on the idea of preservation as opposed to the Christian act of baptism as a symbolic gesture.
 - d) It is important to state that we are not saved by baptism, but baptism is a symbolic gesture to publicly declare our allegiance to Jesus and our acceptance of Him.
 - i) I believe that's Peter's point in the second sentence of Verse 21. Peter is trying to state that baptism itself does not save you, but our faith in Jesus does.
 - ii) We should look back at our baptism as a reminder of what Jesus did, not as an act of our salvation.
 - e) It's best to think about these verses in context to Peter's theme of Christians and suffering.
 - i) To paraphrase Peter, "Just as God preserved Noah through the suffering he had to deal with, so God will persevere you through the suffering you and I must face. Right now Jesus is at God's right hand, which is symbolic of Jesus' authority. All power over angels, authorities, heaven and earth are in His control. We, who are "temporarily" dealing with problems have to keep the eternal focus in mind. We too will be there one day. We too, must keep the eternal focus in order to deal with the internal pain we are dealing with at the moment.
17. Speaking of internal suffering, my apology for running long. ☺ Let's pray.
18. Heavenly Father, We thank you for these lessons on dealing with human suffering. The pain we face is real and it causes us to have fear. Help us to focus on You. Give us the boldness, the strength and the love to deal with those who have hurt us in ways that glorify You. We give you the pain of our suffering so it does not block our relationship with You. Guide us as we show love to one another no matter how we are treated. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen!