

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Peter 3:8, with Romans 12:3 (NIV based)

TITLE: Mandates From God, For Conduct Among True Believers

BACKGROUND:

- - In previous verses of 1 Peter 3:1-6, the topic was focused on how wives are to conduct themselves in their marriage.
 - - Then next in verse 7, the focus was on how husbands are to treat their wife.
 - - Now here in verse 8, the focus is on how "all of you" true believers are to conduct yourselves in relation to each other.
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v.8 - READ

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, determine, expand on, and then explain the implications and applications of the concepts contained in each phrase in verse 8, and those contained in Romans 12:3.]

SECTION POINT: God gives mandates to all true believers about how they are to always be and conduct themselves towards other true believers.

"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another;"

- - Here in verse 8, the mandates and teaching focus to include "and" "finally, all of you" - in other words, 'and now to all of you true believers'. (Strong's #1161)
- - All true believers are mandated by God to "live in harmony with one another" - being "of one mind, like-minded, harmonious". (Strong's #3675)
- - In order for a group of people to successfully 'live in harmony with one another', they need to 'be in agreement' - holding the same perspective and the same philosophy, and abiding by the same principles and the same set of guidelines.
- - The best and most productive way to accomplish this 'being in agreement' in a church or ministry is to establish the Scriptures, and sound interpretation of the Scriptures, as the guideline that every member in the church or ministry is to follow.
- - Most churches and ministries have some kind of process, or class, or training that potential new members need to successfully complete before they become an actual member.
- - Normally, this amount of training is usually sufficient initially. However, because the Scriptures are so extensive, then ongoing training is needed to bring and maintain every member in conformity with the Scriptures, thereby firmly establishing and persistently maintaining 'harmony' amongst the members in those churches or ministries.

"be sympathetic,"

- - All true believers are mandated by God to also "be sympathetic" - which can be defined here as having "mutual understanding, sensitivity, thoughtfulness, and favorable regard and inclination that arise from a relationship or an affinity between people, even to the extent in which whatever affects one person correspondingly affects the other persons". (AHD - 'sympathy')

- - This virtue of 'being sympathetic' needs to be genuine, and felt from the heart. Otherwise, it risks being understood by other persons as superficial, unpleasant, not helpful, and perhaps even offensive and counterproductive in encouraging those persons in their time of distress, misery, or suffering.
- - Clearly, God wants His true believers to extend godly sympathy to each other, in order to help those persons among them to weather and recover from the distress, misery, or suffering that has come upon them.
- - God's intention is that all of His true believers foster well-being in each other, and in other people around them.

"love as brothers,"

- - All of us true believers are mandated by God to "love as brothers" - to regard and extend love to every person around us as if they each were our close and dearly loved brother or sister.
- - With other true believers, we have a common bond in our religious faith, in our striving to live out our faith in righteousness, in our being indwelt by the same Holy Spirit, in our love of God, and in our purpose and mission to build God's church so that together we go and make disciples. (Matthew 28:16-20)
- - With this spiritual common bond, loving each other should come naturally to us and should be fairly easy to establish and maintain.
- - However, the reality is that loving each other is difficult when there is thinking, speaking, and behaving in a sinful manner, which we all do at times because we have not attained perfection in this life.
- - So, we have to work at 'loving each other as brothers', and deliberately extend love even when our brothers or sisters in the faith are behaving sinfully.

"be compassionate"

- - Another mandate by God is to "be compassionate" - being "deeply aware of the suffering of another person, coupled with being easily moved by the desire to relieve that suffering". (AHD - 'compassion', 'tenderhearted', from Strong's #2155)
- - The objective for this mandate is to develop a compassionate regard toward other people and then extend that compassion to them.
- - This involves identifying with someone in their suffering situation, which means to in a sense take on their suffering situation almost as if it were happening to one's own self personally, and then find ways to express the resulting deep-felt compassion to the suffering person that will be beneficial for that person. (For example, in verses 33 and 35 of John 11:1-45, Jesus' reaction when He encountered the mourners of the death of Lazarus.)

"and [be] humble."

- - The last mandate cited in this verse 8 is to "be humble" - having a genuinely "meek or modest" mindset, which permeates and characterizes one's "attitude, speaking, behaviors, spiritual life", and etcetera. (AHD - 'humble')
- - Logically, in order to possess a genuinely humble, meek, and modest mindset, a person must conduct a self-evaluation of what is truth and what is reality about his or her achievements and how he/she arrived at those achievements.
- - If his/her achievements are indeed substantially above what is normal or average, then the self-evaluation naturally proceeds to ascertain whether or not the person's own

intelligence, skills, or actions are the primary reason why that person accomplished such above-average achievements.

- - Within this self-evaluation process, we true believers are to follow what God has mandated in Romans 12:3, **"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you"**.

- - We are to avoid or abstain from over-valuing or too-highly valuing our own intelligence, skills, actions, and achievements - to "not" [be] thinking of [ourselves] more highly than [we] ought".

- - And we are to carefully and accurately evaluate our own intelligence, skills, actions, and achievements with "sober-mindedness or sound mind", so that we arrive at a determination or "judgment" that is correct in God's sight. (Strong's #4993)

- - If we proceed through the self-evaluation process in this godly manner, then the only correct judgment is that our own intelligence, skills, actions, and achievements are "in accordance with" or are a direct result of the "measure of faith" or the "portion" or "degree" of various kinds of gifting that "God has given" each of us personally. (Strong's #3358)

- - Any above-average intelligence, skills, actions, and achievements that we may personally have are a result of God's above-average gifting of us personally.

- - So for us true believers, we are to conclude, operate from, and live within the knowledge, truth, and reality that God is the ultimate source behind whatever goodness (Romans 3:9-12) and whatever above-average intelligence, skills, actions, and achievements that we have in ourselves, as declared in James 1:17, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights,...".

- - By staying within and mindful of this truth and reality, we true believers are content in 'being humble', and we refrain from everything that is contrary to 'being humble'.

- - "Every one of us" true believers are to develop and live by this mandate of "be humble". (Romans 12:3)

-- Notice an interesting overall dynamic to consider here, what conditions would be like in groups of true believers, or churches, or ministries, if every true believer, "all of you", were genuinely possessing these mandated virtues in this verse of 1 Peter 3:8.

Potentially, there would be:

- - - - an atmosphere of "harmony" - everyone is like-minded and agreeable;

- - - - thereby, an atmosphere of unity - everyone is amicably connected together as a whole;

- - - - an atmosphere of "sympathetic" - everyone has understanding, sensitivity, thoughtfulness, and favorable regard and inclination towards each other person in the group;

- - - - thereby, an atmosphere of acceptance - everyone is wanted and approved to be present in the group;

- - - - thereby, an atmosphere of appreciation - everyone is valued, respected, and held in high esteem;

- - - - an atmosphere of "love" - everyone is sincerely loved and feels loved;

- - - - an atmosphere of "compassion" - everyone is caring and sincerely concerned about the well-being of each other person in the group, which is characterized by

coming along side and extending compassion to those persons who are hurting, or are in distress, or are suffering;

- - - - an atmosphere wherein everyone is genuinely "humble" - having a genuinely meek and modest mindset that permeates and characterizes their attitude, speaking, behaviors, and spiritual life;

- - - - an atmosphere of friendliness - wherein friendships are intentionally sought out, cultivated, sprouted, nurtured, and flourish;

- - - - an atmosphere of spiritual vibrancy - wherein many or most of the people in the group naturally exude spiritual aliveness, energy, zeal, and activity;

- - - - an atmosphere wherein there exists a prevalent joy and excitement about being in that group, church, or ministry with these people of God, loving, worshiping, and serving God, loving other people and helping them love God;

- - - - an atmosphere that is overall pleasant, peaceful, attracting, edifying, helpful, and beneficial to everyone;

- - - - an atmosphere wherein all of the mandates in verse 8 are being followed, resulting in the creating of conditions in which spiritual growth is substantially occurring;

- - - - an atmosphere where all of these spiritual aspects serve as substantial, credible, and solid evidence that obviously God is real, present, and at work in that group, church, or ministry.

BIG IDEA: All true believers have responsibility and accountability before God to always be harmonious, sympathetic, loving, compassionate, and humble towards each other.

APPLICATIONS:

- - For all of us here who are true believers, do you conduct yourself in all the ways that are mandated by God here in 1 Peter 3:8? Always and completely? Be honest.

- - Do you 'live in harmony with one another' in this church, ministries, and groups?

- - Or instead, are you pushy, or demanding, or blow up in an angry outburst when you do not get what you want?

- - Do you genuinely feel sympathy and then extend it to other true believers who are enduring and trying to recover from distress, misery, or suffering that has come upon them?

- - Down in your heart, do you 'love' the other brothers and sisters in the faith? Even when they are behaving sinfully?

- - Do you have compassionate regard toward other people and then extend that compassion to them?

- - Are you 'humble', meek, and modest comprehensively, in your attitude, speaking, behaviors, and spiritual life? If not, why is that?

- - Within whatever ministries or groups that you attend in this church, do you actively and substantially contribute to an atmosphere that is overall pleasant, peaceful, attracting, edifying, helpful, and beneficial to everyone? If not, why is that?

- - From this study and review of each of the mandates from God in 1 Peter 3:8, do you have any aspects of these mandates for which you need to make corrections?
- - If so, are you going to indeed make those corrections? Or instead, are you going to in fact dismiss thinking about those corrections, and thereby not make any of those corrections that God wants you to make?

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File name: 1peter3_8-sermonorlesson.____ (.htm, .rtf, .doc, .pdf)

Translation used: NIV, quoted or referred to in various places within this document

Source: www.BelieverAssist.com