

1 Peter – Then and Now (Lesson 4 – Maintaining Good Relationships)

Introduction

- A. Peter has spent nineteen verses in a series of exhortations regarding our personal relationships. Now he gives two basic principles to summarize this section (3:8) and to stress their importance for our daily life (3:12).
- B. The teaching of the Bible and our own experience testifies to the value of good relationships – not only with God, but with family, friends and one another. In times of trial we learn how important it is to have the support and prayers of others.

I. Principle # 1 -- *Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another*, 1 Peter 3:8.

- A. Our problems with personal relationships may be due to some questionable reasons.
 - 1. Perhaps it's prejudice – name some examples.
 - 2. Perhaps it's due to false teaching – name some examples.
 - 3. Perhaps it's due to blaming others for not caring, helping, accepting us – examples.
 - 4. Perhaps its due to self-centeredness, "I'm a special case," "I deserve better,"
 - 5. Perhaps it's due to past neglect, ill treatment, unfaithfulness, teasing – examples.
 - 6. Perhaps it's due to the influence of the enemy.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Ephesians 6:12

How do we know if the enemy is involved in the relationship? If we do what the Bible says, forgive, pray, seek peace, (1 Peter 3:8-11), and the relationship doesn't change somewhat – then the enemy is involved! Resist him by speaking against the **source** of the problem. For example: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I break down the work of the enemy in my relationship with _____ and I command it has to stop and leave us."

Warning: Don't blame anyone – don't consider "possession," etc., don't talk about it with others and insinuate "They're having a problem with the enemy."

Wicked Spirits are a part of "*The kingdom of the air.*" They have the ability to build hurtful things that are invisible but powerful. One of their tricks is to build a "grid" between people – like family members. When the husband talks to the wife he speaks through the "grid" and the inflection and meaning are changed. His words may hurt her and she responds by speaking through the "grid" and it hurts him. We all know what happens then. Resist by joining together in speaking **to the grid** in the name of the Lord Jesus and command it be broken down and leave.

B. It may be helpful to ask ourselves some basic questions regarding relationships.

1. "Is it worth the battle?"
2. "Am I failing to distinguish between person and actions?"
3. "Am I holding a grudge, wanting revenge, holding the person for ransom?"
4. "What needs am I serving by this poor relationship?"
5. "What good am I trying to accomplish?"
6. "What error or sin am I practicing?"
7. "Do I want him/her to treat me the way I'm acting?" (The Golden Rule, Matt. 7:12)
8. "When I think or talk about the other person – why am I doing that?"
9. "Do I want God to treat me this way?"

C. Helpful directives regarding relationships.

1. The powerful help in confessing sins and error to God and others.
2. The powerful help in blessing prayer.
3. The powerful help in honest and continual forgiveness.
4. The powerful help in non-committal responses with difficult relationships.
5. The wisdom in seeking reconciliation with humility.
6. The necessity of maintaining a kind openness in irreconcilable situations.

II. Principle # 2 – *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,* 1 Peter 3:12.

A. The assurance of God's presence – *For the Eyes of the Lord are on the righteous.*

1. The statement is used 88 times in the Bible.
2. Consider the comfort of knowing we live in the presence of God.
3. Read Psalm 139:1-18, where David explains what God's presence means to him.
4. Consider what is available to us in God's presence: wisdom, strength, healing, etc.
5. Peter quotes this passage to assure us that we have God's help in maintaining good relationships.

B. The assurance that our prayers are heard – *His ears are attentive to their prayers.*

1. We are not victims of our circumstances – we can pray – and change the future.
2. Note Isaiah 38:1-6 and 2 Chronicles 16:7-9.

C. The warning – *The face of the Lord is against those who do evil.*

1. How can a person be successful – in the light of eternity – if working against God?
2. *What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?* Mark 8:36

