

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Live Commendably in Your World
1 Peter 2:11—3:8

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #...). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Read over and be familiar with the material that will be read during the gathering time.

Bible Study Leader:

Have plenty of sheets of paper and pencils ready. You may want to list the commandments from verses 8-9) on a white board or large piece of paper.

Worship Time Leader:

©2001-2010, Eternal Interactive, LLC, All Rights Reserved. www.homechurchonline.com

2

Live Commendably in Your World – 24-51-04-en

Unless otherwise noted, scripture taken from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. All rights reserved throughout the world. Used by permission of International Bible Society.

Music Sources:

Wonderful Merciful Savior, *The Worship Hymnal* #162; CCLI #106879
They'll Know We are Christians, *The Worship Hymnal* #385 CCLI #26997
Surely Goodness and Mercy, *The Worship Hymnal* #91; CCLI #15032
He is Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* #277; CCLI #5178348

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Live Commendably in Your World

Focal Text

1 Peter 2:11—3:8

Background

1 Peter 2:11—3:12

Main Idea

Christians are to live in their world in such a manner that people who know them glorify God.

Question to Explore

How can we live as faithful Christians in our world so that people who know us glorify God?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to describe ways to live commendable Christian lives today in relation to government, work, home, and church.

Gathering together:

Sing:

Wonderful Merciful Savior, *The Worship Hymnal* #162; CCLI #106879

They'll Know We are Christians, *The Worship Hymnal* #385 CCLI #26997

First thoughts:

An ancient legend is told about a monk who found a precious stone, a precious jewel, in fact, and then quietly kept it in his bag. A short time later, however, he met a traveler, who said he was hungry and asked the monk if he would share some of the provisions. When the monk opened his bag, the traveler saw the precious stone and, on an impulse, asked the monk if he could have it. Amazingly, without much thought, the monk gave the traveler the stone.

The traveler departed quickly, overjoyed with his new possession. However, a few days later, he came searching for the monk again. (The monk was, of course, was both curious to see the traveler again, wondering what might have happened to the precious jewel, and frowning at what else the traveler would want.) Surprisingly, the traveler returned the stone to the monk and asked for something else. The monk gasped and shook his head in disbelief. What else would he have that the traveler would be interested to have? Finally the traveler said, "Please give me that which enabled you to give me this precious stone!"

What do you have that would make someone else want Jesus? It is the presence of Christ in you. Do not mask Him. Let Him be visible. Most will see you long before they hear you.

As you study together today we will be reminded of several visible signs that we can give to others that speak of our love and devotion to Christ. These are things like submitting to others, loving others, and not seeking revenge.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

There are many sites on the internet where one can get and print children and youth activity sheets.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Live Commendably in Your World

Focal Text

1 Peter 2:11—3:8

Background

1 Peter 2:11—3:12

Main Idea

Christians are to live in their world in such a manner that people who know them glorify God.

Question to Explore

How can we live as faithful Christians in our world so that people who know us glorify God?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to describe ways to live commendable Christian lives today in relation to government, work, home, and church.

Introduction to your personal study:

As you study this passage keep in mind that Peter is writing to a society that existed 2000 years ago. It was predominately a pagan society. As you place this in today's context you must keep that in mind. You can apply principles to today's society, but you must not change the original context.

The church must walk the talk. ***“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”*** (Matthew 5:16)

Peter had been on the mountain when Jesus delivered His sermon on Christian ethics (Matthew 5, 6, & 7). In the sermon Jesus sets the bar very high for Christians. As far as Christian ethics is concerned it is without question a very difficult goal for Christians to attain. But, it is attainable. It is attainable because Christ gives His Spirit to each believer and it is Christ in the believer that makes it possible. Christ never asks more than He is willing to supply.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Focusing on the Meaning:

In order for a believer to live commendable in his/her world Peter points out five areas of submission. He urges his readers to make them a practice in their lives.

I. Submit Not to Sin.

“Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us” (vs. 11-12).

Friends might be translated “beloved”. The church is the object of God’s immeasurable love. It is right for the church to do the things that are asked of her by God. The believers lived alongside of nonbelievers and as such were in constant scrutiny by them. They were ***“aliens and strangers in the world”*** just as believers are in today’s world. This is an interesting contrast to the words of verse 9 which said that believers are ***“a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God”***. We like those words, but are not so fond of being aliens and strangers in the world. Yet the one leads to the other.

Remember holiness can be defined as not partaking in things unholy. Peter had already defined for the church the sinful desires or works of the flesh. They are malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. Stay away from them. By so doing peace will come.

Peter’s requests come because Christians did not have a good reputation among the pagans. For one thing their worship rites were considered cannibalistic. They ate the body and drank the blood of Christ.

The word translated pagans is the word translated often as ethnic or aliens. Peter instructs them to live good lives before them, all the different people groups. He had heard this instruction from Jesus while on the mountain (Matthew 5:16).

The word pagan has come to have undesirable connotations of superiority of one group over another. We would be wise to avoid its use. Unreached people groups is a term accepted by mission groups to indicate those which have not become Christian or may not even ever have heard the Christian message.

Desires begin in the heart and mind. If dwelt upon enough they will become overt actions. A Christian has two natures. He has a spiritual nature given to him at his new birth. He has the old nature Satan tries to resurrect. To wage war means that Satan continues to influence the believer (verse 11).

Christians live in glass houses. Everything done is open to scrutiny by others. Make sure that your deeds and words are so in tune with Christ that no charge can be brought against you for misconduct. The light that you shine in the world is not to reveal the sins of others it is to reveal the good works of the believer (See Matthew 5:16). The word for "good" is *kalos*. It means something beautiful in appearance.

If you abstain from sinful desires you must replace them with positive beautiful actions. In the Old Testament you will find the phrase ***turn from evil and do good*** (Psalm 34:14 is one such admonition, but it is a common theme in the Old Testament). As you empty your life of your old way of living you fill it with God's Spirit and all the fruit of the Spirit which He brings. (See Galatians 5: 22-23 where the fruit of the spirit is listed as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control). Saints (those who have been saved by faith in Christ) have the ability to do what is right.

This entire letter is couched in the doctrine of Christ's second coming. He is coming again. The witness of a believer is to help others follow Christ and be ready for His return. Always remember that a believer's reason for being is to share the Gospel with others by word and deed. Christ created the church to reach the lost.

Warren Wiersbe has a little different twist on the phrase "***the day he visits us***" (verse 12). The witnessing church gives the Holy Spirit an opportunity to deal with hearts and minds. Christ will visit them and call them to Himself. Then those who respond in a positive way will give thanks to those whom they formally had persecuted.

Dr. Constable writes that this refers to the Great White Throne judgment of unbelievers. Unbelievers will not glorify God but will persecute the saints. A time is coming when they will be judged and they will glorify God.

"Visits" is an interesting word. It means that God is going to take a hard look at the lives of everyone. The Greek word can be translated as "overseer". God is always looking over His creation. The eyes of God are always upon the believer and the lost.

Now Peter begins to speak about the good life that is going to be lived out before others.

II. Submit to Civil Authorities.

“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves. Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor” (vs. 13-17).

Look carefully at this passage. You will see that Peter applies submission to a citizen, a worker, a marriage partner, and a member of the church.

It is possible for a believer not to submit to a corrupt person in authority. But, believers are to submit and respect the office or the institution. Christian citizens are not to be rabble rousers for the sake of stirring up trouble.

Peter gives the reason for submissiveness. It is “for the Lord’s sake”. It is not slavery or subjugation. It is recognizing God’s authority on our lives. Submitting is an act of the will on the part of the one being submissive. It is not imposed from without. It is a willful decision based upon the will of God.

The act of submission is good witnessing. It is the kind of testimony that will silence those who ignorantly speak against the church. It is one of the best apologetics for the testimony of the church.

An example of this is found in Acts 22:20. Paul is speaking about the time of Stephen’s death. He stood by while Stephen was stoned and held the raiment of those doing the execution. But, Stephen’s testimony and death made an impact on Saul. He was later converted and became the great Apostle Paul. It was one death for many lives. (Read Acts 6:9-15.)

The church is free to be submissive. Do not use it as a cover-up for evil. You are slaves to God.

The church has four responsibilities: respect everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, and honour the emperor. These are not given as suggestions.

III. Submit to Owners.

“Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”

“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

“When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ‘He himself bore our sins’ in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; ‘by his wounds you have been healed.’ For ‘you were like sheep going astray,’ but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (vs. 18-25).

Peter deals with a situation that came about when slaves and their owners became believers in the same assembly. Slavery was a large institution in the Roman world. Most of the population were slaves.

Slaves were not encouraged to rebel. They were encouraged to submit to their masters whether they were considerate or harsh. It is a commendable act for a slave to bear up under unjust suffering. This was done to Christ too. Christ’s suffering was an example of unjust punishment. He did not seek retaliation against the Jews or the Romans.

When things get tough people can respond with fright, flight, or fight. Peter reminds the church that nothing they will go through will come close to what Christ experienced for them. He died for their sins. Now, it was up to them to live righteously. It was up to them to get the job done right. They had made a 190 degree turn in their lives and they should continue in that direction

There is to be no revenge. Vengeance belongs to the Lord. He will take care of those who are making their lives miserable.

“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is min; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:18-19, King James Version).

IV. Submit to One Another at Home.

“Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own 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, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather 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. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear” (vs. 1-6).

In the same way slaves submit to their masters, wives are to be submissive to their husbands. If a husband is not a believer he might be won to Christ by the behaviour of believing wives. It will not be by outward beauty and trappings. It will be by the purity and reverence of their lives. The inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, these will witness to a husband. God honors that kind of life.

The theme continues to unfold. The proper God-like life lived by a believer in front of others is a powerful witness.

“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” (v. 7).

Notice the phrase “in the same way.” Just as slaves were to submit, and wives were to submit, so husbands are to be submissive to your wives. Wives are the weaker partners, therefore, treat them with respect. This idea might come from women’s place in society which limited them from speaking or doing much outside the home. It might also refer to the weaker physical strength of women. Women in New Testament days had little status. They were dependent upon their husbands. To have a husband who was considerate would be a great blessing.

Do not sin. Sin is missing the mark in life. It is rebellion against God. Do not do anything to hinder your prayers.

Verses 2:18-3:7, deal with customs and relationships in the first century home. Take a look at similar passages in Ephesians 5:21-6:9 and Colossians 3:16-4:1. They are not identical in the subjects and details. The readers of Peter would have been aware of the household codes of the day.

V. Submit to Your Brothers.

“Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing” (vs. 8-9).

Peter has used many of the lessons he learned from the Sermon the Mount. Once again we see him telling the church that there are certain ethical obligations that must be met. The word “submit” is not in these verses but the principle is. Putting one another first will put the Golden Rule into practice.

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12, King James Version).

Believers are to start with the right outlook. This is to be followed by the right attitude. If this is done then the proper actions toward others will follow.

Be like-minded. Be in unity. Believers share a common heritage or faith. The word translated “like-minded” means “concordant” which means harmonious. The church must face the persecutions with unity.

Be sympathetic. It is not easy to walk in the shoes of someone else. It is not easy to step up and help carry a load when that load might be persecution which would put one’s life at risk. But, this is what must happen if the church is to have an attitude of unity.

Love one another. The Greek word translates as brotherly love. Believers are brothers and sisters in Christ. The love they share is a witness to the lost.

Be compassionate. Jesus showed compassion (Matthew 9:36; Matthew 14:14; Matthew 15:32; Matthew 20:34). Compassion is an active word. When Jesus had compassion on the multitudes (Matthew 15:32) He instructed His disciples to feed them. They actively shared in His compassion.

Be humble. Humility is a virtue. It is not self-sought; it is seen by others.

Do not retaliate. Peter heard Jesus give this principle as part of the Sermon on the Mount. Four times in Scripture is found **“the just shall live by faith”** (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38). Who are the just? It is those who have been justified through the blood of Christ. They have placed their faith in Him. The same faith that one has in coming to Christ is the same faith that sustains one in times of persecution. One is to rely upon God to take care of vengeance. **“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord”** (Romans 12:19, King James Version).

Bless others who despise you. This is crucial for churches being persecuted. It is an easy statement when there is none, but very difficult to put into practice in time of trials.

“For, ‘Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and the lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. 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’” (vs. 10-12).

This is a quote from Psalm 34: 12-16. Peter is also echoing what he heard from Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. If one wants to live long and prosper then they must do what Jesus taught.

Do not speak evil.

Do not speak deceit. What is spoken is to be true without any guile.

Turn from evil and do good. This is a picture of true repentance. A life that is cleansed of evil must be filled with goodness.

Seek peace and pursue it. Peace does not just happen. It must be sought. ***“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God”*** (Matthew 5:9, King James Version).

God is listening to those who do these things. He is against those who do not these things. He is for those who follow His teachings. He is against those who are disobedient. That is simple. Do not make it hard. Do not try and justify what some do.

As you consider all this information remember that the early churches were mainly house churches. Members were more intimately connected than in today’s institutional church. It was easier to help and hold one another accountable.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

One of the finest ways to lead is by example. Take what you are about to teach a class and check it out against your life. Is there a gracious beauty in your life that makes other take a second look? Are you practicing the principle of submission in your life?

For Personal Reflection:

In light of what you have studied in this passage ask yourself:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Live Commendably in Your World

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

1 Peter 2:11—3:8

Background

1 Peter 2:11—3:12

Main Idea

Christians are to live in their world in such a manner that people who know them glorify God.

Question to Explore

How can we live as faithful Christians in our world so that people who know us glorify God?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to describe ways to live commendable Christian lives today in relation to government, work, home, and church.

Connect with Life:

As the group gathers have them answer one or more of these questions:

How can I be a better husband or wife?

How can I be a better brother or sister?

How can I be a better friend?

How can I be a better employee?

How can I be a better church member?

Take time to let some read their answers as they choose to participate.

Guide the Study:

Say, we will study four aspects of submission. The word submit will not always be stated but the idea is always there.

Have the class look carefully at the following passages. Say: Peter applies submission to a citizen, a worker, a marriage partner, and a member of the church.

Define submission for the class: Submitting is an act of the will on the part of the one being submissive. It is not imposed from without. It is a willful decision based upon the will of God.

I. Submit Not to Sin. “Abstain from sinful desires.”

Let them know: Sin is anything that separates a person from God. Sin must be dealt with before submission will become possible. It is living close to Christ that enables a believer to submit.

Say: Peter indicates how harmful sin can be. Sin wars against the souls of individuals.

Point out to them: “Dear friends” could be translated “beloved”. The church is the object of God’s immeasurable love. As recipients of God’s love, the church to abide by His desires.

Therefore, the church is to make God visible to everyone around. The lives of church members should be good. The Greek word for good means something beautiful in appearance. God’s people are to be beautiful people. They are to be such that nonbelievers will want to become Christian.

Tell the group: The word translated pagans is a Greek word also translated ethnic and alien. All the different people they came in contact were to be beneficiaries of their beautiful witness.

Tell them the entire letter is couched in the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. The witness of believers is to help others follow Christ and be ready for His return. A believer’s reason for living is to share the Gospel with others.

Question: Have you ever thought that God has left you alive to be able to share His love with someone else?

Ask: Why does Peter write about the “day he visits us”? (He wants the church to be concerned about the lost who are persecuting them.)

Inform them of the thoughts of Dr. Constable. He thinks this refers to the Great White Throne judgment of unbelievers. Unbelievers will not give glory to God, but will persecute the saints. But, there is a time coming when they will be judged and they will glorify God. That is a little different take on the “day he visits us”.

On Submission:

Call attention to this: We are now going to look at the passage regarding the attitude required of Christian slaves, wives, and husbands. As we do so, bear in mind that Peter was speaking to Christians who lived under an oppressive government in a time, place, and culture that is radically different than most of the 21st century world—even where severe restrictions of women, allowance of slavery, and religious intolerance exist in today’s societies and cultures.

Most Christians today believe that the principles taught for humbleness, modesty for both sexes, respect, and appropriate submission should be applied for all time and all cultures. It should be noted that there are some sincere Christians who interpret the details of Peter’s instructions as needing to be rigidly and literally applied to today’s world. However, slavery as a way of life for today; women held in subservience to men; girls not allowed equal educational or vocational opportunities; and other repressive conditions are not appropriate applications of God’s Word.

II. Submit to Civil Authorities. “*Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority.*”

Carefully lead the church to see this: It is possible for a believer not to submit to a corrupt person in authority. But, believers are to submit and respect the office or the institution. They are not to go around stirring up trouble.

Question: What reason does Peter give for them to be submissive? (It is for the Lord’s sake.)

Remember: Submitting is an act of the will on the part of the one being submissive. It is not imposed from without. It is a wilful decision based upon the will of God.

As always: The act of submission can be a good witness. It is the kind of testimony that will silence those who ignorantly speak against the church. This kind of witnessing is one of the best apologetics for the Christian life.

Have someone read Acts 22:20.

Tell the class: Paul is speaking about the time Stephen was stoned to death. He stood by and watched while holding the cloaks of those who were doing the stoning. He

never forgot and was later to come to Christ on the Damascus Road. One man died that many might live.

III. Submit to Owners. “*Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters.*”

Say: Peter is writing when the majority of people in the Roman Empire were slaves. Some were converted and came to be a part of the church.

Tell the class: Peter does not encourage slaves to rebel. Rather he encouraged them to submit to their masters whether kind or cruel.

Question: Whose example were they to follow? (Christ.)

Say: Christ died for their sins. Now it was up to them to live righteously. Nothing they experience will equal what Christ had done.

Remember: They had repented and made a 190 degree turn. It is in that direction they should continue.

Say: The slaves were not to take revenge upon their masters. God handles vengeance (see Romans 12:18-19).

Question: Is there any correlation between slaves and masters in Peter’s time and employees and owners today?

IV. Submit to One Another at Home. “*Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands.*”

Say to the class: As slaves submit to their owners wives submit to their husbands. The similarity might be that owners might not have been believers and husbands might not have been believers.

Question: What does Peter say is not a good way for wives to witness to unbelieving husbands? (adornments,)

Question: In what ways does Peter say women should submit and witness to unbelieving husbands? (a gentle and quiet spirit.)

“*Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives.*”

Say: Peter now addresses husband believers. He is to do the same thing, be submissive.

Tell the group: Notice that Peter characterizes wives as the weaker partner. This may come from the culture image of women at the time. They were not to go out and speak

or work. It might simply be that he thought women were physically weaker in an agriculturally demanding world.

We must be sensitive to the differing attitudes toward women which exist today. Submission is a choice of the individual, not an outwardly imposed condition. It brings harmony and is only truly possible when respect is mutual. The emphasis upon the mutuality of consideration (verse 7) would have been very unusual in the New Testament world.

Ask: What hinders prayer? Does sin hinder your prayers?

Have the class read similar passage concerning relationships within the home. They are Ephesians 5:21-6:9 and Colossians 3:16-4:1. Say: The passages are not identical in their subjects and details. However, the readers of Peter's day would have been aware of the household codes.

V. Submit to Your Brothers. *“Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.”*

Say to the class: It is obvious that Peter is including in his letter some of the lessons he learned from the Sermon on the Mount. As we study together we see he is emphasizing certain ethical obligations that must be met.

Pick a class member to read Matthew 7:12.

Say: Believers are to start with the right outlook. This is to be followed by the right attitude (submission). If this is done then proper actions will follow.

Take each one of the commands and study them. You may want to list them on a white board or large piece of paper.

Peter wrote: Be like-minded. That means to be in unity. Unity is possible because they all share a common heritage of faith. The word translated like-minded also means harmonious.

Next: Be sympathetic. It is not easy to walk in the shoes of someone else. It is not easy to step up and share a load that might include persecution. However, this must be an attitude of the believers if harmony is to exist.

Say: The love that was to be shared was brotherly love. Believers are brothers in Christ. They were to be looking for others to add to the brotherhood.

Say: The next characteristic is compassion. Compassion is an active word. If a person has compassion then that person will find a way to help the one needing compassion. In Matthew 15:32 Jesus saw the multitudes and had compassion. He told His disciples to feed them. They became actively involved in His compassion.

Next comes humility. Humility is a virtue. It is not self sought.

Ask: How hard is it to refrain from retaliating? Peter says do not do it. Live by faith and live by Christ's example. Even though He could call upon angels to help He never did.

Have someone read Romans 12:19 and discuss its implications for life.

Say: Peter is speaking directly from teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. Bless others who despise you. Wish for the very best. This is a crucial instruction for persecuted believers.

Have someone read verses 10-12.

Tell the group this is a quote from Psalm 34:12-16. Notice the four admonitions Peter gives.

They are do not speak evil. Do not speak deceit. Turn from evil and do good which is a picture of true repentance. A life that is cleansed must be filled with righteousness. Seek peace and pursue it. Peace does not happen by itself.

Question: Would you be willing to change your life to align it with these teachings so that your prayers might be heard?

Say: God is listening to those who do these things.

Ask: if an unchurched person was to come into our midst would he see in us the principles Peter is sharing with the churches of Asia Minor?

Encourage Application:

Be the right kind of example. A disciple who makes the Word less valid in his/her life makes the himself or herself seem small. This does not diminish the validity of God's Word, but it may make it harder to others to hear and obey God's Word.

Make submission a practice in your life, towards government, at work, at home, and at church.

The emphasis in this epistle is upon knowing and doing. Like the Epistle of James it is about obedience. You cannot do what you do not know to do. The first thing necessary is to have Jesus and His Word firmly embedded in your life. It might not be seen until you act, but it must be there in order to act properly.

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Live Commendably in Your World

1 Peter 2:11—3:8

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

How Do You Live your Life?

Ask the group: Where do you spend most of your day?

Give the group time to respond. One of the answers will be school.

Ask: Do you think what you spend most of your time doing represents what you believe about God?

Ask: Have you ever thought about what others think about your spiritual life? Have you ever indicated to others that you have decided to follow Jesus?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Live Commendably in Your World*****1 Peter 2:11—3:8****Beginning the Service:**

You may already have sung **They'll Know We are Christians**. However, it so clearly speaks to today's study that it would be well to sing it again.

They'll Know We are Christians, *The Worship Hymnal* #385 CCLI #26997

Surely Goodness and Mercy, *The Worship Hymnal* #91; CCLI #15032

He is Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* #277; CCLI #5178348

Offering:

Romans 9:6-8. ***“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”***

As one gives to God so God gives. If you want your good works to be abundantly funded then choose well what you will give.

Praying for the World:

Peter wrote to churches surrounded by people who would do them harm. Think about what Peter heard Jesus say about praying for one's enemies. Before praying for your enemies listen to the words of Christ.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children 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. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:43-48).

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

How to Live in Enemy-Held Territory

The following instructions will tell you how to stay safe in the world today:

Avoid riding in automobiles because they are responsible for 20% of all fatal accidents.

Do not stay home because 17% of all accidents occur in the home.

Avoid walking on streets or sidewalks because 14% of all accidents occur to pedestrians.

Avoid traveling by air, rail, or water because 16% of all accidents involve these forms of transportation.

Of the remaining 33%, 32% of all deaths occur in Hospitals. So, . . . above all else, avoid hospitals.

You will be pleased to learn that only .001% of all deaths occur in worship services in church, and these are usually related to previous physical disorders. Therefore, logic tells us that the safest place for you to be at any given point in time is at church. And—Bible study is safe too. The percentage of deaths during Bible study is even less. So, attend church and read your Bible. IT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE! (Anonymous.)

Obviously, the above statistics are designed to be humorous and are only meant to make a point and get us to thinking. However, we do live in a very real and very dangerous world.

This world in which you and I live is enemy-held territory. God has given it over to Satan for a season. We live here but we are not citizens here. Our citizenship is in heaven. If more believers realized that they were living in enemy territory they might act differently.

If a believer were to read **The Hiding Place** by Corrie Ten Boom he or she might not ever feel the same. The story is about Corrie and her family who gave refuge to Jewish

©2001-2010, Eternal Interactive, LLC, All Rights Reserved. www.homechurchonline.com

23

Live Commendably in Your World – 24-51-04-en

Unless otherwise noted, scripture taken from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. All rights reserved throughout the world. Used by permission of International Bible Society.

people during the events of World War II. Corrie and her sister eventually were sent to a German concentration camp where her sister died. Corrie was able to forgive her captors – one in particular and spent the years after the war sharing how important forgiveness is.

Believers today suffer as well. Recently, a Nigerian church was the site of a car bombing in which a number of people were killed. Evil is present in the world.

Satan has dulled our senses and lulled us into a false sense of security. We think that everything is all right and it is not.

The Bible teaches us how to live in this world and at the same time help others to do the same.

I. When living in enemy territory stay in communication with your Commander. Pray.

There are missionaries and other believers who are in areas which are held by the Enemy. We pray for them and support them, but we cannot know where they are. They are truly in “enemy-held territory”. What they do on a daily basis is what we need to do on a daily basis. Pray.

When in enemy-held territory you need to be sure you communicate with the commander. Pray often.

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” (Matthew 6:9-13, King James Version)

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray he included in a petition for deliverance from evil. It might be better translated “deliver us from the evil one.” It is God who provides and we need to let him know what we know of our need. Ask for help when living in enemy territory. Prayer brings help.

“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4, King James Version).

When you let Christ come into your life you have all the power you need to stand against the devil. You cannot stand in enemy territory without Him nor should you try. The words of a popular hymn are as follows: “Without him I could nothing. Without Him I’d surely fail.”

II. When living in enemy territory, wear your armour.

When in enemy territory soldiers today do not go out without their Kevlar which is a protective armour.. They wear armour when exposed to harm. They are prepared for any battle that might come. A believer should be too. The devil is like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). Anyone unprepared can fall victim.

“Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the ruler, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms”.

It is time that the church understands that it is an eternal battle for the souls of men. Church is not play time. It is preparation time. The church gathers together to study the Word, pray, sing, and do all the things we do in worship so that we can leave and jump straight into battle.

III. When living in enemy territory, do good works for the glory of God.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”. (Matthew 5:16, King James Version.)

Don’t walk in darkness. Walk in light. It is light which shines upon what you do that enables others to see and give God the glory. We are not to hide out in the enemy territory but we are to be the beacons of hope for all who are under the bondage of sin.

This is perhaps where we fail the most. When we do the good deeds it draws attention to us as well as to the Lord. Sometimes we are afraid that we will be persecuted and lose friends if we are too obviously serving Christ.

IV. When living in enemy territory, share what you have with others.

“Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.” (Matthew 10:8).

“Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.” (Ephesians 4:28).

This goes along with the good deeds that you are to do. You have work, a job, because God gave it to you. You work with your hands so that you might have to give to those in need. What better way to communicate the love of God and the compassion of Christ than to minister to the needs of others out of the abundance God has given you?

Ministering to the needs of others is perhaps one of the best ways to model Jesus.

V. When living in enemy territory stay close to other believers.

In one sense it is you against the world. That is the situation in which Peter and the churches of Asia Minor found themselves. Believers need each other. They always have needed each other. Christian believers are a spiritual support group.

“. . . not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another---and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

The early church met often. They needed each other. The early believers knew that their values were in opposition to a hostile world. In some places, believers have so compromised with the world today that people do not see Christians as living a distinctly different life. If we are living holy lives in an unholy world, we should come together as a church with the same love and fervor that we have in family reunions. The joy of being with like-minded people should be overwhelming. Each time the church meets it ought to be a reunion with those we love best and most intimately.

VI. When living in enemy territory, do all you can to sabotage the enemy.

“On the contrary:

***If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In so doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.***

The greatest way to sabotage Satan is to do good works. Every time you do that you make his job harder. He tries to tell those who are his that believers are the enemy and will not do anything for anyone else. We make him a liar when we genuinely serve others.

Conclusion

I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be fully sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

Jesus sends us into the world with a prayer. We are not to try and flee the enemy territory. We are to be like resistance fighters who stay behind the enemy lines and wreak havoc. Do not fear. He is with you.

Listen to a message found on the back of one believer's shirt.

“The Decision has been made, the die has been cast, and I have stepped over the line. As a Disciple of Christ and the Lord as my strength, I won't look back, let up, slow down back away, or be still. I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotion, power, or popularity. I don't have to be recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded .I now live by faith, walk in victory, and labor in love. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the enemy, pander at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I won't give up, shut up, or let up, until I have prayed up, praised up, paid up, and spoken up for my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I AM AN UNASHAMED FIRM BELIEVER IN CHRIST ! ! !” (Morehead, Bob, *The Fellowship of the Unashamed*. From the testimony of a Rwandan believer who was forced to choose between his faith and death)

That's the kind of person who lives without fear behind enemy lines.

Call to Commitment:

Are you struggling with trials and tribulations and need help? Ask your fellow members to pray for you.

Are you trying to battle Satan all alone? Ask Christ to come into your heart. He is the help you need. Then join with others who are in the battle too.

Never try to be a Christian without the company of others. Christianity is a cooperative effort with God and other believers and church members.

Concluding the Service:

Sing **He is Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #277; CCLI #5178348.