

**Letters From A Fisherman**  
**Week 13**  
**1 Peter 3:8-12**  
**“Submission (Conclusion) - The Good Life”**

**Introduction**

**Finally, all of you be like-minded and sympathetic, love one another, and be compassionate and humble, not paying back evil for evil or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing, since you were called for this, so that you may inherit a blessing.** **1 Peter 3:8-9**

As I read this passage, I am reminded of a lot of preachers I know. They make you think they are wrapping up their sermon with the words, “In conclusion..”, but then they go on and preach three or four more points! When Peter says, “Finally”, he isn’t wrapping up his letter, but rather, he is simply concluding his thoughts on the doctrine of submission. He has told us to (1) submit to The Spirit by forsaking our fleshly desires, (2) submit to those who persecute us, (3) submit to those in civil authority, and (4) to those who are our bosses or superiors, and finally to (5) submit to one another in our own marriages.

To conclude these points, he reminds us all that if we are to be happy, if we are to live “*the good life*”, then this can only be achieved by doing things as God intends. We need to come together in a single-minded focus to be one in Christ Jesus. Peter lists some of the attributes of those who are being united in Christ by The Spirit: (1) They are sympathetic to one another’s feelings, (2) they are bound together by love, (3) they show compassion for each other, and (4) they humble themselves. The child of God is to be conditioned to offer beauty in return for ugliness (**1 Peter 2:12**). The word that he used (translated “*honorably*” in the CSB) literally means “*beautiful*”. So we do not retaliate. We simply leave those things to God. We are called to submit as Christ submitted Himself to the cross. We are to respond with blessings, when met with cursing. In the flesh, this is impossible, but by The Spirit we *can* live out a life of quiet submission. Or as Paul would say:

**Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others.** **Philippians 2:3-4**

When I had a secular job, I always had this verse written down on my desk pad in order to remind me of how I was to conduct myself when confronted by even the rudest of clientele. God sees all that we endure for His glory, and rest assured, He will reward us for our quiet submission. Or as Peter has reminded us, “*You were called for this, so that you may inherit a blessing.*”

Everyone these days is so consumed with living the so-called “*good life*”. Advertisers use this natural desire in order to sell us a multitude of products. “Buy this car,” they say, “and you will live the good life.” “Use this shampoo, or cologne, or even this laundry detergent... and your life will be so much better.” Sadly, most people’s idea of the so-called “*good life*” has to do with material possession, or even the basest desires of our fleshly natures such as power, sex, or the unrestrained consumption of drugs or alcohol. None of these things will ultimately fulfill our desires to live the good life. *The Bible* is clear on the subject. The good life can be found only by living life according to God’s plan.

**How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the company of mockers! Instead, his delight is in The LORD’S instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears it fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.** **Psalms 1:1-3**

Now *that*, my friends sounds like the good life to me.

In his conclusion regarding the submission of the Believer, Peter uses King David's wisdom from *Psalm 34* to give us a three step method that will put us on the path to the good life. It really comes down to trusting God enough to obey His commands, submitting ourselves to His will and trusting that He will take care of everything else. In order to live the "good life" that God has desired for each of us, we must: *Tame our Tongues, Take Control of our Fleshly Desires, and Take Up our Cross*. For God sees all and will reward those who delight in His ways and meditate upon His Word. Please allow me to explain.

### **Tame Our Tongues (vs 10)**

**For the one who wants to love life and to see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.** **1 Peter 3:10**

As I mentioned earlier, this portion of Peter's message is a quote from *Psalm 34*, sometimes referred to as "The Deliverance Psalm". It was written by King David, and it speaks of a series of events in David's young life that were not exactly his finest hour. You see, David was all the rage in Israel and Saul, the king, despised him for it. In a fit of jealousy, Saul had determined to kill David given the first opportunity, so David fled the country. Not knowing where to go, he first went to a place called Nob, where the tabernacle of The LORD was being guarded by a company of priests under the authority of Ahimelech.

The old priest was suspicious to see David and a few of his loyal troops, especially because they were unarmed and undoubtedly appeared to be anxious. So, Ahimelech questioned the young man as to why he had come. Rather than being honest with the old man, David led him to believe that he was on a secret mission from the king. The lie may have seemed innocent enough, but in the end Ahimelech was executed by Saul for giving aid and comfort to the enemy.

David had obtained the sword of Goliath from Ahimelech in order to arm himself as he continued on his journey. Apparently the sword had been given as an offering to The LORD as a means of thanks for David's victory over the giant Philistine. So David took the sword and headed for Philistine country in the hopes that these foreigners would grant him refuge. His next mistake was in going to Goliath's hometown of Gath, where everyone knew exactly who David was, and what he had done to their champion. And to make matters worse, in walked David carrying the slain warrior's sword no less!

As the people gathered round him and started to make a scene, David pretended to be insane and started drooling on himself and scribbling on the palace gates. So convincing was his charade that the king of Gath sent him away, saying, "Do I not have enough crazy people around me as it is?!" Like I said before, it wasn't David's finest hour. And afterwards, he felt nothing but shame and remorse for what he had done. He had tried to use his own wits to preserve his life, rather than trusting in God.

So David did what he often did. Not only did he own up to his personal failings, but he penned a song in order to prevent others from following after his own mistakes. Is it any wonder that this was a man after God's own heart? David has given us instruction for all time, so that we may know how to live "the good life". And it is not by doing what we think is best, but rather, what God commands of us.

First, if we want "*to love life and see good days*", which is simply a Hebrew phrase meaning to have a long and prosperous life, the first thing that we must do is to control our own tongues. We neither are to slander others, nor to speak falsehood. Everything that comes out of our mouths should always be both encouraging and honest. David had learned this particular lesson the hard way, as he used his words to deceive and beguile. And although some might think that he got away with his foolishness, for his life was spared, his lies cost eighty-five priests, who had done no wrong, their lives. For Saul had the entire company executed for aiding David's escape (*1 Samuel 22:18*). When we use our tongues to deceive and speak evil, very often it is others who are hurt as a result. The tongue is a powerful little thing that can destroy lives.

**And consider ships: Though very large and driven by fierce winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So too, though the**

**tongue is a small part of the body, it boasts great things. Consider how a small fire sets ablaze a large forest. And the tongue is a fire. The tongue, a world of unrighteousness, is placed among our members. It stains the whole body, sets the course of life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. Every kind of animal, bird, reptile, and fish is tamed and has been tamed by humankind, but no one can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we bless our LORD and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in God's likeness. Blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers and sisters, these things should not be this way.** **James 3:4-10**

If you want to live the “good life”, it starts by putting your tongue under the subjection of The Holy Spirit. For an uncontrolled tongue is the enemy of a peaceful and happy life. Nothing but strife and contention will follow a man who does not know how to tame his tongue. The fruit of The Spirit is self-control. And an uncontrollable tongue is the antithesis of The Spirit-filled life. Or as James himself would say:

**If anyone thinks he is religious without controlling his tongue, his religion is useless and he deceives himself.** **James 1:26**

### **Take Control Of Our Flesh (vs.11a)**

**And let him turn away from evil...**

**1 Peter 3:11a**

It should come as no surprise to us by now that our greatest adversary in our walk with the LORD is none other than our own fleshly nature! A lot of people like to blame the devil for everything, but the truth of the matter is, he doesn't really have to work on us all that hard, when he has our own fleshly desires to do his bidding for him. The Apostle Paul said it plainly when he wrote:

**For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. For I do not do the good that I want to do but I practice the evil that I do not want to do. Now if I do what I do not want, I am no longer the one that does it, but it is the sin that lives in me.**

**Romans 7:18-20**

Peter would also concur that we need to do something about the flesh:

**Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and exiles to abstain from the sinful desires that wage war against the soul.** **1 Peter 2:11**

So God's Word and the apostles are in agreement, in order to live the good life, we must do something about our own fleshly desires. They must be brought to bear, or we will be unable to follow after God. But how can we do this when even Paul makes it sound nearly impossible to take control over our own flesh? The simple answer is that you cannot. **But Christ can.** In order to turn away from evil, we must turn ourselves over to The Holy Spirit and allow Him to control us. As was stated previously, “the fruit of The Spirit is *self-control*.” The closer you walk with Christ, the further you will distance yourself from your own fleshly desires. The two are not in the least bit compatible.

**I say, then, walk by The Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is against The Spirit, and The Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want. But if you are led by The Spirit, you are not under the law.** **Galatians 5:16-18**

The night before He went to the cross, Jesus promised His followers that He would not leave them as orphans (**John 14:18**). He kept that promise by sending His Holy Spirit to indwell every Believer, so that they would have God's guidance living within them. We must rely on *His* guidance. One must yield himself over to The Spirit by prayer and The Word, in order to be led in paths of righteousness. So pray. Pray without ceasing. Pray before you speak. Pray before you act. Seek the counsel of The Spirit in all things. In this, you will take control of your flesh. You will turn away from the evil that so easily ensures us all. Without The Spirit's guiding hand, we can never hope to live... the good life.

A lot of Christians do not fully comprehend that we must not only turn *away from* evil, but we also must turn *to* God. I know a lot of people who measure their personal faith by the things that they no longer do. But Christianity isn't about just doing nothing. It is about turning away from some things in order to pursue something far better! Which brings me to the next point! Don't miss out on this one, or you most definitely will NOT live the good life!

### **Take Up Our Cross (vs.11b-12)**

**...and do what is good. Let him seek peace and pursue it, because the eyes of The LORD are on the righteous and His ears are open to their prayer. But the face of The LORD is against those who do what is evil.** **1 Peter 3:11b-12**

Some of the most miserable people I have ever known were actually in church! I'm gonna let that statement sink in for a minute. How is this possible? After all, do not these very Scriptures tell us that if we tame our tongues and turn away from evil, then we'll live the good life? Well... sort of. But there is one more step. You see, some of the most miserable people I know think they are serving Jesus by all that they have given up. They will give you a whole list of things that they have stopped doing since they got saved. You know the list I'm talking about: Drinking, drugs, cursing, carousing, watching less than wholesome movies... and so on. They think that because they no longer do those things then somehow their lives are pleasing to God. In fact, many of them look around and can see a ton of stuff that other Believers shouldn't be doing, and they feel even better about themselves than before!

So why are these people, who have (to their own way of thinking) given up so much for the cause of Christ, why then are they still miserable. Because they don't DO anything, that's why. Listen to what Peter (and David) actually have to say on the matter:

**And let him turn away from evil AND DO WHAT IS GOOD!**

You see, so many today think that following Christ is about what you don't do, but no one has ever followed someone by standing still! Being a Christian is about getting rid of the stuff in your life that is KEEPING you from *following* Christ. In other words, we repent of evil so that we can get busy serving God! Every Believer has been given spiritual gifts, so that they can serve within the body of Christ (**1 Corinthians 12**). And if anyone wants to know why the church is struggling these days, it is because a lot of really well equipped people have gone into an early retirement!

Every Christian should be ready with an answer if asked the question, "So what is your ministry?" But sadly, many could only respond with a blank stare. It stands to reason, that if we are called to love one another as ourselves and to esteem others better than our selves, then we ought to be following up by serving one another does it not? Of course it does! So if you want to live the good life, get busy turning away from evil and *do what is good*. For God stands ready to bless those who serve Him faithfully. No one should ever have to beg a Christian to lend a hand. One look at the cross of Christ, and we should be more than willing to do our part. Jesus commands that we all have a cross to bear.

**...“If anyone wants to follow after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me will find it. For what will it benefit someone if he gains the whole world yet loses his life?”** **Matthew 16:24b-26a**

Peter finishes his quotation of **Psalm 34** with, “*Let him seek peace and pursue it.*” It just stands to reason that if we learn to *tame our tongues, take control of our flesh, and take up our crosses*, then we’ll probably be at peace with those around us. After all, a person will get themselves in a lot fewer fights when they don’t go around looking for one! **“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9).** The word for “peace” in *The New Testament* is “*eirene*” (*pronounced i-ray’-nay*). It is the root from which we derive our word “serene”. And can I tell you that the only truly serene people I know are devoted followers of Christ. No exceptions. These are those that are living “*the good life*”. No matter what may come their way, they have the peace of knowing that they are right with God, and that He alone is in control. And that my friends is the very definition of... the good life! Once again:

**How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the company of mockers! Instead, his delight is in The LORD’S instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears it fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does... prospers.** **Psalm 1:1-3**

TRUTH!!!