

Study 20

A SUMMARY THUS FAR

First Peter 3:8-10

Like most preachers, Peter throws in a “finally” (like, “*in conclusion, let me finish by saying...*”) well before he has actually finished! Perhaps this is to almost give the impression to his readers that he has nearly finished and they should pay close attention to the remaining portion. We note that *Paul* also did a similar thing (refer to Phil 3:1; then 4:8). But in this sense of Peter saying “finally”, it means *let’s state the result of what we have just been saying*. Thus, we might best understand this passage to be a *summary* of what Peter has just said in his epistle.

ALL OF YOU

The Holy Spirit uses Peter to tell believers that they must do some things. These things are not just for the few. They are to be done by all. Therefore these things are not *gifts* or *ministries* but are the expected standard of all believers.

1. We could list five things in 1Peter 3:8 that we are instructed to do. What are these five things?

The fact that we are commanded to do these things shows us that they do not come naturally. They require work. They demand that we make an effort, despite how we feel. The challenging aspect to these things is that they involve other people. In fellowshiping with others, we are to make all the adjustments and place no demands on others to accommodate to us. Naturally we let people know about things that we find really offensive, but the responsibility to get along with others depends on us changing. Some people would rather flee fellowship, than allow it to make us more Christ-like.

2. In what way did Paul change and relate to other people who may have been very different from himself? (1Cor. 9:19-22)

3. How did Paul say we should change and relate to others, despite what we are going through? (Rom. 12:14-16)

WE SOW BLESSING

At times we may feel like cursing someone, rather than blessing them. This is especially so when we are treated maliciously by someone. But we are instructed to return blessing for any evil we are shown.

4. What descriptive term does Paul use in Romans 12:20 to make the point that we should not curse anyone?

To heap burning coals onto a person's head was an Oriental act of hospitality toward weary travellers. The coals were apparently put into a cloth or leather bag and used like a hot-water bottle for the head to counter the chill of a freezing winter's night. It was a much appreciated act of kindness. Therefore, Paul was *not* saying that by doing an act of kindness, we would be, in effect, *hurting* someone who was evil to us. Rather, he was making the point that we should respond to acts of evil by doing acts of *kindness* which would be like *taking the chill out* of cold-hearted acts of evil. By responding with kindness to a person's cruelty, we are sowing blessing which we will surely reap.

5. If we return blessing for evil, what will we inherit? (1Peter 3:9)

SEE GOOD DAYS

Peter gives us an indication where he sees the main source of evil coming from. When people commit acts of evil against us, it is often their words that they are inflicting on us. To respond to evil *with evil* would be to speak back to them in the same way.

6. What are we told to keep our tongues from? (vs 10)

By guarding our tongue we are investing into our future. When our investment matures, we will reap peace and goodness. All of this because we guard our tongues! What a difference a godly mouth can make to the direction that a person's life takes.

7. Turning from evil is now replaced with what? (vs. 11)

8. How does this compare with Hebrews 12:14?

Peter finishes this section by suggesting that when we live peaceably, the Lord is attentive to our prayers. The implication is that if we refuse to show kindness to those who are evil and don't guard our lips from deceit and evil, we are not going

to have our prayers answered. This is a hard lesson to learn. But may God give us the strength and grace to put it into practice.

Amen.