

The Church: To Love, To Bless
1 Peter 3:8-12
Mercy Hill Church | August 31, 2025

Big Idea: As Christians, we are called to love one another and bless others, even as we are hated by them. We can only do so as we remember our Lord Jesus!

1. How to Live Life Together (as the Church): Growing Inward (v.8)

- (cf. Romans 12:9-13, 15-16)
- Chiasm: a literary device used in the Bible (and other ancient writings) where the structure forms a A-B-B'-A' (or A-B-C-B'-A') pattern. The center isn't always the main (or central) point, but often can be – other times it can be the bookends that are the emphases.
 - Chiasm in v.8
 - A - Unity of Mind
 - B- Sympathy
 - C- Brotherly Love
 - B' - Tender Heart
 - C' - Humble Mind
 - Possible chiasm in the household codes (1 Peter 2:13-3:12)
 - A - 1 Peter 2:13-17: Instruction for everyone
 - B - 1 Peter 2:18-20: Instruction for slaves
 - C - 1 Peter 2:21-25: Example of Christ
 - B' - 1 Peter 3:1-7: Instruction for wives & husbands
 - C' - 1 Peter 3:8-12: Instruction for everyone
- **Live in Unity & Humility (Our Mindset)**
- (cf. Romans 15:5-7, 1 Cor 1:10, 12:12-27, 2 Cor 13:11, Eph 4:1-6, Col 3:15)
- **Marshall Quote:** “They should live in harmony with one another. The Greek word (literally, “to be of like mind”) means that Christians should have the same basic aim of serving God and loving one another, instead of being guided by individual, selfish interests...”
- **John Stott Quote:** On the ideal vs. reality (of church)
 - “The ideal is beautiful. The church is the chosen and beloved people of God, his own special treasure, the covenant community to whom he has committed himself forever, engaged in continuous worship of God and in compassionate outreach to the world, a haven of love and peace, and Pilgrim people headed for the eternal city. But in reality we who claim to be the church are often a motley rabble of rather scruffy individuals, half educated and half saved, uninspired in our worship, constantly bickering with each other, concerned more for our maintenance than our mission, struggling and stumbling along the road, needing constant rebuke and exhortation...”
- **Live with Sympathy & Compassion (Our Heart Posture)**
- (cf. Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:12, Matthew 9:36, Luke 7:13)
- **Live with Familial Love (Our Commitment)**
- (cf. John 16:27, 1 John 3:11-16, 1 Corinthians 13)
- **Quote:** “Peter is certainly not suggesting that we should love one another within the church with a quality of love which is secondary to, or less than the quality of agapē. Instead, he is using “family

vocabulary” which is so central to the teaching of the New Testament. We are members of the “family of God” and are brothers and sisters in Christ with God as our Father.”

- Bernard of Clairvaux’s 4 Degrees of Love (from “On Loving God”)
 - 1) Love of Self for Self’s Sake: “I love myself for my sake.” This is a natural, initial self-centeredness.
 - 2) Love of God for Self’s Sake: “I love God for my sake.” One loves God (or others) because of the benefits and gifts received from Him.
 - 3) Love of God for God’s Sake: “I love God for God’s sake.” True worship emerges when one recognizes God’s intrinsic worthiness and loves Him for who He is, not just for what He gives.
 - 4) Love of Self for God’s Sake: “I love myself for God’s sake.” This is the culmination, a state of grace where one loves oneself because one is a beloved creation of God, finding identity and purpose in Him, seeing oneself only in relation to God.

- 2. **How to Respond to Haters: Growing Outward (vv.9-11)**
 - (cf. Romans 12:14, 17-21)

 - **Don’t Retaliate (v.9)**
 - (cf. 1 Peter 2:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:15, Romans 12:17)

 - **Bless instead of Curse (vv.9-10)**
 - (cf. 1 Peter 2:22, 2:1; Luke 6:27-36, 45; *Psalm 34:12-16*)
 - New Living Translation: “Don’t repay evil for evil. Don’t retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing”

 - **Pursue Peace (v.11)**
 - (cf. Hebrews 12:14, Matthew 5:9)

- 3. **How? Remember the Lord: Growing Upward (vv.9, 12)**
 - They key to responding like Jesus is to remember – keep in mind – Jesus!
 - **Remember our Call - to suffer like Christ (v.9b)**
 - (cf. 1 Peter 2:21)
 - “To *this* you were called” -- what precedes? Doing good in the midst of suffering
 - Remembering Christ Himself suffered for us!

 - **Remember our Hope - inheritance in Christ (v.9b)**
 - (cf. 1 Peter 1:3-4, Luke 6:43-45)
 - “Obtain” = inherit a blessing (eternal life)
 - Not a works-salvation but rather about roots & fruit (cf. Luke 6:43-45)

 - **Remember our Judge – the Lord sees & knows (v.12)**
 - (cf. 1 Peter 2:23b, Romans 12:19)
 - Jesus entrusted himself to Him (God) who judges justly (cf. 1 Peter 2:23b) in the face of accusations, insults, injustice and suffering

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Reflection/Application Questions

- Are you growing as a Christian? In what ways have you seen growth (or perhaps atrophy) in the different directions this past year?
- How have you seen our church community live out these qualities (in v.8)?
- Which of the 5 attributes do you struggle the most with when it comes to our church community? Why? Consider sharing this at your next home group or with someone in our church this following week so they can pray for you.
- How do you typically respond to “haters”? Think of the last time someone mistreated you – how did you respond? Why?
- How does remembering the Lord Jesus (& the Gospel) help you in the face of conflict or difficulties with others?
- Is there a current conflict or difficult situation where you need to apply this morning’s passage?
- Parent Corner: How are you modeling out what it means to love and bless others to your child(ren)? What are some ways you can teach and pray for your child to grow in these areas?