

Tuesday • May 12, 2026

Gentleness and Respect

1 Peter 3:15 — *Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.*

There is a version of 'doing good' that is not actually good. It is the version where we go after someone who is living contrary to the Christian life — not with love, not with prayer, not with patience — but with harshness, derision, or contempt. And then, when they push back, we convince ourselves that we are being persecuted for righteousness.

Peter closes that door. He tells us that yes, we are called to speak the truth, to give a reason for the hope within us, to stand for what is right. But the manner matters just as much as the message. Gentleness and respect are not optional accessories to be added when convenient. They are built into the very command.

This does not mean we never speak hard truths. The Christian life is not one of endless silence in the face of wrong. But there is a profound difference between speaking truth in love — patiently, humbly, with genuine care for the other person — and wielding truth as a weapon. One reflects the character of Christ. The other often reflects only our own pride.

If we suffer for the second kind of 'doing good,' we may simply be suffering the natural consequences of our own unkindness. But when we speak truth with gentleness and respect — when we love people even as we hold to what is right — and hardship comes anyway, that is the suffering Peter is commending. That is the harder and holier path.

Discussion Questions

1. Think of a time when you saw someone speak hard truth in a way that was gentle and loving. What made it different from simply being harsh?
2. Why is it tempting to skip the 'gentleness and respect' part when we feel strongly that something is wrong?
3. How can your family practice speaking truth with kindness this week — in your home, at school, or with friends?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, you spoke the hardest truth of all — that we are sinners in need of a Savior — and you did it by sending your Son, not to condemn the world, but to save it. Help us to follow that pattern. Give us words that are truthful and hearts that are gentle, so that the hope within us shines through even in difficult conversations. Amen.

Family Action Item

At dinner tonight, practice 'sandwich feedback' as a family — when someone needs a gentle correction, try framing it: say something encouraging, share the concern with kindness, then close with encouragement again. Talk about how this reflects 1 Peter 3:15.