



Introduction

We're in a series of messages called *Here in the In-Between*. So much of life takes place in the tension between where we've come from and where we're going. To help us explore this, we are looking at the book of 1 Peter. Here, Peter wrote to Christians and encouraged them to think of themselves as "temporary residents," living in one place on earth, but really belonging to God in Heaven. In this third lesson, we learn that we can face the in-between together.

To watch this week's sermon before your group discussion, go to www.journeyoffaith.com/sermons

Share Your Story

1. Imagine someone has just rubbed you the wrong way and made you angry. Then, they respond totally nice and loving. What's the most annoying thing about that?
2. What's one way you think God uses conflicts in relationships to help us mature spiritually?

Hear God's Story

1. Read 1 Peter 3:8-17 carefully straight through together outloud. Then, take a pause and jot down some notes on what Peter is actually saying here. After you've finished, share what you observed in this text with your group.
2. Read 1 Peter 3:8 again. How can we *actually* do the kind of unity that Peter is teaching here?
3. Read 1 Peter 3:9 and 3:14-17 again. What's Peter teaching us here to do when unity seems to fail? Next, what are some real-life scenarios in your life that you can imagine this playing out in?

Create a New Story

1. Who could you try to beat in a competition of humility and help this week?
(See 1 Peter 3:8 as a reference here.)
2. What radical act of love can you show an "enemy" this week?
(See 1 Peter 3:9, 14-17 as a reference here.)

Further Studies: Gentle Togetherness

Let's hone in on 1 Peter 3:16, particularly the word "gentleness" there. The original Greek word what we translate as gentleness or meekness that Peter used is *prautēs* (πραΰτης). The original readers would have understood this word to mean the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance.

Jesus modeled this gentleness as He practiced compassion, in His attitude of humility, and His rejection of violence; but, He was by no means weak or lacked authority. Also, the apostle Paul, though feared by many before his conversion, consistently encouraged believers to treat each other with gentleness at all times. Paul went on to say that gentleness was even a main characteristic of the mature Christian.

Let's take all of this and explore it together.

DISCUSS

1. How can the surrounding context (1 Peter 3:8-17) inform what Peter means by "gentleness" in 3:16?
2. We live in a cultural landscape where the practice of this kind of gentleness isn't as widely valued as Jesus, Paul, and Peter envisioned. What challenges you the most about this in your own life?
3. Does this teaching conflict with your sense of strength, authority, or personal rights to defend yourself in any way? If so, how?
4. What can all of this tell us about the true heart of God?
5. What's one thing you're going to work on this week to better align your heart with God's in this particular area? (i.e. a negative bias, personal pride, always having to be "right," a heart not willing to be considered less than others around you for their benefit, etc.)

For Parents: Repackaging for Youth

1. For those who have young children in the home, what are some ways you could teach this lesson to them that takes into account their age and learning level?

For questions about this curriculum, contact Pastor Matthew Jensen at matthew.jensen@journeyoffaith.com