

First Baptist Church Merritt Island

Do you want to live the good life?

1 Peter 3:8-12 and Romans 12:21

July 8th, 2018

Main Point

Those who love life and want to see good days are called to live with unity, sympathy, love, tenderness and humility toward others. That kind of life will prove to be a blessing to those around you and will bring a blessing to you.

Getting Started

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What do you think is the secret to happiness? What are some things that bring you the greatest joy?

What does it mean to live “the good life”?

Some may assume that only the rich and famous have arrived and are truly experiencing the good life. However, there is no one “secret to happiness,” but there are several things in our lives that can contribute to our overall joy. The most obvious is to have our relationship with the Lord Jesus be right. After that, things like fellowship with the church, getting along with family at home, getting enough rest, having a good attitude and serving others can go a long way to helping us live a joyful life.

Practicing such things is not only essential for our personal well-being, but they also play a part in our being able to help others. Paul admonishes us in Romans 12:21 that we must “not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good.” In today’s lesson, Peter will help us learn to overcome evil by showing us how to “love life and...see good days.” He will show us in essence how to truly live the good life.

Observation

Have a Volunteer read 1 Peter 3:8-9.

What qualities does Peter instruct his readers to gain? How would these qualities help people experience the good life?

What do you think it means to be “like-minded”?

What do you think Peter means by saying that we “can inherit a blessing”? What is the blessing?

To be “like-minded” does not mean that we all must think the same thing. This sort of unity is impossible in this life. Rather, Peter means that we ought to be like-minded in our attitudes. We all ought to value and practice sympathy, love, compassion, and humility. If we are like-minded in these issues, then when areas of disagreement arise, we can count on our brothers and sisters to listen patiently, to think the best of us, and to have the hope that we can come to a resolution.

In Matthew 5:11-12, Jesus says, “You are blessed when they insult and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven.” The ultimate blessing we will receive for following Christ is the reward of heaven.

Have a Volunteer read 1 Peter 3:10.

What does it mean to “love life”? Is there a right and a wrong way to do this?

What’s the psalmist’s prescription for experiencing the good life? What part of our lives and bodies does this verse address?

What did the psalmist mean by the phrase ‘keep his tongue from evil’? James addresses our use of the tongue in James 3:5-12.

Loving life does not mean that we are happy all the time or that we never mourn. Peter is speaking of contentment in life that comes from a clear conscience and a humble spirit. We might try to love life through material things, in our strength, or in our youth, but that kind of love cannot last as those things wither and fade. Peter wants us to love the things that cannot fade but grow stronger with time. Friendship, fellowship, service, and blessing give us returns on our investment throughout this life and in the life to come.

Lying demonstrates that we are not content with life because we are trying to change reality with our words. We are saying that one thing happened when actually another happened. The more we lie, the more trouble we create for ourselves for those we love. Fear makes us hide. Adam and Eve hid from God after they sinned. We hide behind false words with the real threat of being discovered as a fraud, and that will make us paranoid, not lovers of life.

Have two Volunteers read 1 Peter 3:11-12 and Romans 12:21.

What does the psalmist tell his listeners to do in these two verses? Summarize his instruction in your own words.

Who are the eyes of the Lord on and who does the Lord listen to according to verse 12?

Why is peace something we need to pursue and not something that just comes upon us? How do we pursue peace?

How does pursuing peace help us overcome evil with good?

Peace must be pursued because when disagreement comes, it is often easier to walk away than stay together. Sometimes when there is a problem, people will ignore it and refuse to talk about it. We are commanded to pursue peace, and so we attempt reconciliation. We pursue this peace by seeking forgiveness and by praying for others and ourselves. Peter reminds us that “the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their request.” We can be confident when we seek peace that if we pray, the Lord will hear us. That doesn’t mean things will be easy, but we will have the presence of the Lord. God’s presence is the most assuring thing to have by our side.

We overcome evil with good in this way because the natural reaction toward those who hurt us is to hurt them back. Jesus said, “If anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also,” and Paul commands us to “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse” (Matthew 5:39, Romans 12:14). Our joy is to forgive and seek to love those who may spitefully abuse us.

Prayer

Read through the qualities Peter identifies in verse 8. Earnestly ask God to cultivate those qualities in your life as you seek him. Prayerfully consider ways God is calling you to bless others. Ask him specifically to show you who he wants you to bless. Then look for opportunities to bless them.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How have you attempted to experience the good life up to this point? What did you learn from today’s passage about how to truly live the good life? What changes do you need to make to pursue the kind of good life God will honor?

How might the hope of our inheriting a blessing help us to persevere in the difficult work of peace-making? Read Matthew 5:9. How has God called you to make peace with those in your life? Share your answer with your group and ask them to pray for you as you pursue peace with this person.

How does lying demonstrate that we do not love our life?

This lesson raises the question, “Do you want to live the good life?” Read John 10:10. Who wants us to experience defeat and loss in this life? Who wants us to experience an abundant life? Share with you group how Jesus is helping you experience the abundant life. Share likewise how the enemy is keeping you from experiencing all Jesus has for you. Trust in Him! Surrender your life to him in this moment so you can experience all he has for you.

Commentary

1 Peter 3:8-12

The words, ‘finally, all of you’ provides a transition from the preceding specific instructions to a list of godly virtues that all believers are called to exemplify at all times. Those who bless others will receive a blessing from God, which Peter explains in the following verses. Peter draws upon Ps. 34:12-16 in verses 10-12. To love life and see good days is the result of the blessing of God in one’s life. Peter says this will come to the person who will keep his tongue from evil and will turn away from evil and do good. Obedience to God in daily life is the path to experiencing God’s blessing and by implication disobedience will lead to God’s discipline. Peter continues his quotation of Psalm 34: For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer. This does not mean that God keeps obedient believers from suffering, but that God will provide his grace to strengthen and establish believers during suffering and in times of great need.

Romans 12:21

12:17-21 Christians often suffer hatred and persecution from society (1 Pe. 1:6; 2:11-12; 3:14-17; 4:12-16; 5:9). The normal response is to retaliate, but Christians are called to serve and minister God’s grace to a lost and hostile world. Jesus is our model. As much as possible, we are to live at peace with everyone. God is the sovereign who can convert even a Saul who persecuted the church. God is the judge and the administrator of wrath. Our role is to display God’s grace and love in our lives. God in Jesus conquered evil on the cross. We are not to let evil conquer us.