

1PeterWeek6 3:8-17 **The Love of Grace reflects Grace**

Community Group Questions

1. How do you treat your fellow believers?
2. Have you ever had a problem with another Christian?
3. What are some blessing that you have experienced because you were doing the right thing?
4. How do you treat unbelievers?
5. Do you feel you are always “prepared to give an answer for the hope that is in you”?

Seeing our reflection in a mirror can be helpful or hurtful..

-Helpful because we can see what our problem is and correct it.

-Hurtful because we can see what our problem is and not be able to correct it. High magnification mirrors (yikes)

A mirror reflects how we externally look, but does not reflect the inside...how much time you spend in front of a mirror may reflect the inside 😊

But what reflects what is going on inside of us? It is the things that we do, the things that we say and how we treat the people around us.

When you love something it shows by what you do, so what we do is a reflection of what we love.

Do you love the grace that God has had on you? GOSPEL If so you should reflect grace.

Today in 1 Peter 3:8-17 we will learn that if we love the grace that Jesus had on us we will reflect that grace...

**Reflect grace to the church Vrs 8-9a** (fellow Christians)

**-Unity of Mind-** When do you have an argument with someone?

Normally when you disagree on something. As the church we need to strive for a “unity of mind”. The way we do that is agreeing on what God wants us to do. What is the church supposed to do?

You and I may not be able to agree but thankfully Jesus gave us “The Great Commission” Matthew 28:18-20 this is where everything we do as church flows from. Then in Acts 1:8 we find Jesus says to the believers to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. We can agree and have unity that the people right in our community need Jesus and that is where we start...if this were written specifically to us it would say...Lacey township, ocean county, New Jersey and the ends of the earth. Imagine if every Christian followed this in their community.

**-Sympathy-** ready to rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn. Remember Paul said about the Body of Christ *“when one suffers all suffer when one rejoices all rejoice”* in a church our size we suffer and rejoice each day because there is always someone doing well and always some not doing so well.

The point here is that you actually care. Did you know that most people really want others to care about what is going on in their life? Why do you think social media is so popular? Social media screams “CARE ABOUT ME AND MY LIFE”.

Social media can be a tool to find out what is going on in others lives. But the real way you show sympathy for others is being involved in their lives, the best way to achieve that is by being in fellowship with other Christians through the local church.

Sometimes it is difficult to care because there is so much to care about. It is not that you don't care about someone its that because of everything going on in your own life and the lives of the people very close to you that you lack the time. But when you connect with them once a week at worship and make it a priority it is built in for you.

**-Brotherly Love-** “We love because he first loved us” we are siblings because God is our Father. Christians need to stick together because Jesus said that others will know you follow Him by the love you have for one another. That is why it is inappropriate for Christians to harshly criticize other Christians and be judgmental of them. Even if someone is in sin you will not win them by a verbal beat-down of criticism, you will win them by loving concern for their spiritual well-being. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer said “I can no longer condemn or hate a brother for whom I pray, no matter how much trouble he causes me”* The best way to show love is hold our fellow Christians up in prayer.

The next two go hand in hand, the condition of your heart and the condition of your mind.

**-Tender heart-**this is the opposite of a hard heart and if your heart is hard chances are you are full of pride so you don’t have a humble mind.

**-Humble mind-**we can learn from anyone in the body of Christ so do not think you are better than anyone because of success, money, achievement or age.

*CS Lewis said “True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.”*

**-Not Repaying Evil** “*don’t wrestle with a pig*” why? You will get dirty and the pig likes that.

Truth be told sometimes Christians have other Christians as their enemies. It is a bizarre state of affairs when that happens but it does. Obviously the temptation when someone wrongs you is to wrong them back. Listen to what *Markus Aurelius said “The best revenge is not to be like your enemy.”*

As Christians we need to reflect the grace to our fellow Christians. In the next few verses Peter talks about the blessings of reflecting grace

by quoting Psalm 34:12-16 which is a Psalm of David in which he changed his ways and was communicating that the Lord is good and if you want blessing in life do good.

### **Reflecting Grace brings blessings Vrs 9b-12**

**-Love of life vrs 9b-11-** do you know how other people know you do not love your life? By what comes out of your mouth...

Evil tongue=gossip, slander, hate filled comments. Do you have a tendency to point out the negative in others? Do you find that you rarely encourage others or are positive?

Speaking deceit= exaggerate the truth, white lie etc, all these things come from pride and being discontent with your life.

Deeper than that the more you do these things the more you hate yourself because no one truly is fulfilled in being nasty to other people. (and if you are you are really messed up)

Good will overflow from us if we love the life that God has given us...we love our eternal life and what Jesus has done for us...we love our gifts talents and abilities, we love our stage and situation in life. Paul said he has *learned to be content in all situations*

The second blessing of reflecting grace is...

### **-Our Standing in Christ vrs 12**

Let me remind you Jesus forgives sin but he does not reward sin. I have 3 kids...if they do something wrong intentional or unintentional and ask forgiveness, I will forgive them, I will have mercy and grace on them because of our relationship. But after the offense and after the forgiveness, mercy and grace that I extend I am not going to reward the sin that they committed. I am their dad and I have their back if someone wants to harm them.

In the same way Jesus does not reward sin but He does have our back because of our relationship, so as **Vrs 13** no one can truly harm you because Jesus is looking out for you...and against those that harm. But **verse 14a** says even if we do suffer...this is now transitioning to what the unbelievers may do to you. They may have intentions to harm you and you may suffer but we will see blessing when we... **Reflect grace to the unbelievers Vrs 14b-17** tells us four ways we do this and why it is so important.

**-Do not fear man...** We communicate to the unbelieving world by standing firm in our faith. Remember the account of Daniel, it was against the law to worship God but He stood strong in his faith. It communicated to King Darius that the Lord was more important to Daniel than fearing man and his laws.

**-Honor Jesus**, set Him of highest esteem. That means we strive to act toward unbelievers how he acted...grace, mercy, love & sacrifice. If he is the most important then obviously the example He set should be the one we follow.

### **-Be prepared to answer**

Ready to tell of the great hope. Two traps...

-Thinking good deeds do all the talking...God gave you a mouth to speak His truth...Romans says that faith comes by hearing...hearing the Word of God. Christians are called to do good and speak the truth in love.

-Feeling like you can't tell others about the Lord because you do not have it all together.

Remember the Holy Spirit does the work and desires to use broken vessels to bring forth His truth to the lost and dying world.

**-Do right before the Lord** "good conscience" if God says it do, don't be embarrassed by your commitment to the Lord.

Why? To give them no validity to persecute or criticize you and actually they will look foolish if they do

*If you love the grace of God you will reflect the grace of God to fellow believers and unbelievers and there will be blessings that follow.*