

**1 Peter 3:13-18 NIV**  
**“Can you answer the big question?”**



“Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?

<sup>(14)</sup> But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.

<sup>(15)</sup> But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, <sup>(16)</sup> keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

<sup>(17)</sup> It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. <sup>(18)</sup> For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. “

**How should we react to the evil going on around us?**

**Our text tells us we should follow Jesus' model.**

**You possibly think: Bob this is old-time stuff.**

**Give us something timely for today.**

**We're mistaken if we think our world differs from the first century world.**

**People of every former time agonized over the same things that trouble us:**

• **Loneliness for instance.**

**Of television:** “It is the medium of entertainment which permits millions of people to listen to the same joke at the same time and yet remain lonesome.”<sup>1</sup>

For different reasons, folks become lonely.

**“He spent a small fortune to cure his halitosis only to find his friends didn't like him anyway.”<sup>2</sup>**

**We suffer loneliness for many reasons:**

- Loss of self-esteem;
  - Worry about life's necessities;
- Anxiety about death;
  - The need to be appreciated.

**You may know, the name, George MacDonald. He was a Congregational minister in a small parish in England in the middle of the nineteenth century. One day his deacons came to him to report that it was impossible for them to continue his salary.**

**He would have to move on.**

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<sup>1</sup> Anon.

<sup>2</sup> Anon

McDonald innocently offered to remain and support himself by writing and teaching. His wife, however, had insight that George did not.

**"George," she said, "it isn't that the people here are too poor to pay us.**

**They don't want us."**

**We feel the pain in those words,**

**"They don't want us?"**

MacDonald distinguished himself later as a poet and a novelist, but the memory of that rejection stayed with him.



Ample evidence proves that human life does not change over the centuries.

Take for example this statement:

**"Lawsuits spring up like poisonous weeds in a plowed field."**

**That writer didn't live in Los Angeles, Dallas, Des Moines, or New York City.**

**The fellow who wrote, "Lawsuits spring up like poisonous weeds in a plowed field," was named Hosea and he lived in Israel 2700 years ago.**

**Over the millennia, people have not changed.**

**That's why the Bible's advice is up-to-date.**

Let's look briefly at it today in *1 Peter 3*.

- 1. One of the most difficult of life's challenges is: "How should I react when people injure, harm, or insult me?"**

**Few of us get through a day without at least one of those happening to us.**

**Former Tampa Bay Buccaneers pro football coach John McKay was in the midst of a long, losing season.**

A reporter asked McKay what he thought of his team's execution.

**"I'm in favor of it," quipped McKay.**

**In regard to insults, and wrongs against us, Peter advised in verse 9:**

**"Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing."<sup>3</sup>**

**Have you felt insulted by anyone this past week?**

**Here's Jesus' advice.**

**Don't call a neighbor, a lawyer, or a governmental agency and complain,**

**"You know what that so-and-so did to me?"**

**If we follow Jesus, we don't deal with offenses by gossip, revenge, or complaint.**

**We bless the person.**

**"Bob, I'm not a priest or a minister. I can't bless anyone."**

**The New Testament church had no clergypersons, no special priests, or people they called *Reverend*.**

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Peter 3:9 NIV

**As we saw in *Revelation 1:6* two weeks ago:  
We're all priests.**

**Jesus** “has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever!”<sup>4</sup>

A Bible blessing doesn't mean waving your hand above a “lesser” person and reciting,

**“Bless you my son or daughter.”**

**The word bless comes from the term from which we get our word *eulogy*.**

When someone dies, we usually ask a minister to say a eulogy at the funeral service.

**We expect the minister to say some good words—to praise the deceased.**

**Voltaire defined *satire* as:** “lies about literary men while they are alive, and *eulogy*, lies about them when they die.”

**Our text says,**

“Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.”

**When someone insults us or wrongs us, we don't escalate the problem by saying bad things about that person or taking vengeance.**



**We say good things about the person—we praise him/her.**

**God's word says that if we expect God to praise us on Judgment Day, we need to praise and say good things about people who wrong us.**

**2. Next Peter asked:**

“Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?”

**If you eagerly do good things, most people treat you well.**

**Yet Peter said something that might shock us:**

“But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed.”

**That's a tough demand isn't it?**

Usually, we think, “If I had done something wrong I wouldn't have minded, but I was doing right and he still insulted me. I'm not going to take that.”

**Why should we have to suffer for doing right?**

**Peter rephrased what Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount:**

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven . . .”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> NIV

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 5:11, 12 NIV

- We repay evil by saying good things about those who wrong us.
- If we gladly suffer for doing right, God will reward us.

If we expect a heavenly reward, we may be disappointed unless we bless those who persecute us and insult us.



### 3. Peter advised:

**"Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened."**

The world worries about losing power, being humiliated, and losing status.

**Those are age-old concerns.**

**"But set apart Christ as Lord," Peter said. Peter meant that if Christ is Lord, he'll take care of us if we trust him and model his behavior.**

**"Jesus Christ . . . has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him."**

**The Bible word authority (exousia) relates to the ability, power, and right of a king.**

**We're talking about the kingdom or rule of God.**

**Jesus reminded the Apostles that power, ability, and authority belong to God.**

No commoner would ever go before a king and say:

**"King, I demand that you do this by January 1!"**

**It'd be the commoner's last request.**

**Only God can set times and dates today, tomorrow, or anytime.**

We make plans; God often has a different agenda.  
**God is in charge here; He rules totally.**

**In Acts Chapter One, Jesus promised the Apostles tremendous power.**

**The next facts might shock you.**

**The Pope wields worldly power, but he doesn't have the authority many credit him for.**

**You have a lot more power than you realize.**

I'm not hedging or stretching the truth.

Notice what Jesus told the Apostles the day he ascended:

**"Do not leave Jerusalem but wait."<sup>6</sup>**

**If there were no war there, it would be fun for us all to go to Jerusalem, Israel and see the sights.**

**But I'm not trying to sell you a tour.**

**It's "the wait" part that's vital.**

**Jesus wanted the Apostles to wait and trust him.**

**Being in the kingdom means waiting and trusting God's control.**

That brings huge conflict for us.

**We like to be in control of our lives.**

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<sup>6</sup> Acts 1:4

**Jesus kept saying: trust me, don't worry, love everyone, and don't be afraid.**

**That isn't easy, is it, to trust our lives to God?  
I often get into a dither about control.**

I get worked up because things don't go my way.

**I get upset with God, with Norma, the family, and lots of folks.**

**In trusting God, I resemble Pooh, our late cat.  
When Pooh developed medical problems, we took her to veterinarians in Marcus, IA.**

**Once we tried to take Pooh in vet-provided cardboard box with tiny breathing holes.**

**Pooh didn't like that box.**

She spent the entire 12 miles trying to escape.

**We were trying to help her—we were concerned about her safety and wellbeing.**

**For her own good, we had her in that tight spot.**

**She didn't trust us.**

She growled; she scratched; threw fits; made a terrible mess of her box chewing big holes in it.

She spent the whole trip extremely unhappy.

**Been in one of those tight spots?**

**You can't understand why God has you "boxed in" like this and why you have to suffer.**

**You fret, you worry, scratch and even tear up things—maybe ruin some friendships.**

God likely has you in that tight spot for your good.

The cross proves that God loves us.

**Being in God's kingdom means we submit to Him and trust His control.**

God willing, next week we'll talk more about waiting on God and how to enjoy His control.

We deal with unloving people by trusting God's rule--loving and forgiving others.

In the meantime, we'll find good kingdom-guidance by reading **Matthew 18 and Luke 12.**

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Pooh, the late cat.