

Canceled
A Roadmap for Living In Exile
1 Peter 3:8-12
Why You Should Treat People The Way God Expects

Introduction: The Bible is very clear that children are supposed to obey their parents and that it is vitally important for their future as adults. It is also clear that it's the parent's job to teach their children to obey. Listen to how these principles are all clearly taught in Scripture. The following is just a quick sample,

12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12)

15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him. (Proverbs 22:15)

15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. (Proverbs 29:15)

17 The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures. (Proverbs 30:17)

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (Ephesians 6:1)

20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. (Colossians 3:20)

Now in teaching our children to obey us, the very first and most important reason they need to learn is why they need to obey us. It can't be to earn a treat or get the right to do something they want; it has to first be because it's what you want. It is our job as a parent to teach them this foundation and the Bible makes it clear that it is fundamental to their future! A child who refuses to live submissively to his parent's authority will likely not do so with anybody else, which creates all kinds of problems at school, church, sports teams, and in the future society, work and marriage! In addition, a child who rebels against his parents will also likely struggle with relationships with other children. There is just simply no reason in the world for a parent to forget their first task with their child is to teach them to obey for no other reason than they are supposed to obey their parents.

However, eventually that child needs to start to understand the reasoning behind your instructions. For that child to start growing in wisdom, at some point they need to begin to understand the wisdom behind the things you are instructing them to do and not do. To those new parents who are wondering when you are supposed to start telling them why, don't worry, they will start making you aware of that need long before its time to actually fulfill it. It's a built-in alert system that starts pushing parents to think through their instructions and explain them! Your child will soon start asking why about everything; and

by everything, I mean an endless spiral of splitting the hairs of reasoning that will leave you with no other explanation other than the unexplainable existence of the eternal God!

Now when it comes to our relationship with the Lord, we are supposed to obey Him for the same reason a child is supposed to obey his parents, He's in charge! The very fact that He's God is enough logic to justify all should obey Him all the time! Solomon wrote,

13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

However, the Bible doesn't just stop with obey God because He's God. God, like any good parent, wants to develop us. There are tons of places all over the Bible that God gives us explanations; that is reasons why we should obey Him. They always lead back to the fact that He is God, but nonetheless, the Bible still demonstrates those reasons very clearly. God is not scared of the question why. We may not always understand the answers the Bible gives, but God is not one that is offended or threatened by the question.

As such, 1 Peter 3:8-12 is one of those places in the Bible where God gives us some reasoning on why we need to obey Him. Specifically, it's a combination both of how He expects us to treat people and the reasons for why! Will you stand with me in honor of the reading of God's Word.

8 Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. 10 For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; 11 let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." (1 Peter 3:8-12)

Proposition: 1 Peter 3:8-12 gives us 3 reasons why it makes sense to obey God in how He expects us to treat people!

The first reason why it makes sense to obey God in how He expects us to treat people is that

(1) You get blessed by others when you treat people right. (3:8-9)

- A. Peter begins with a list of ways we are supposed to treat people. Let me walk you through those real quick.
- B. **"8 Finally, all of you, have unity of mind,"**
 - 1. He tells all the people in all five of the churches he's writing, to do this. There is no concept then that we are not included.

2. Furthermore, it is not an option to have unity of mind, it is a command! It is a parent telling us this is what you are supposed to do.
3. However, this doesn't mean we have to agree on everything, but rather that there is something bigger than our differences that brings us together.
4. K.S. Wuest notes, **"The exhortation, "be ye all of one mind," literally "be ye all likeminded," cannot be pressed to refer to minute details but refers to a unity on the major and important points of Christian doctrine and practice that should be maintained among members of the Body of Christ."**¹
5. The Apostle Paul wrote about this a ton. Listen to a quick sampling:
6. **10 I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. 11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. 12 What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? (1 Corinthians 1:10-13)**
7. **4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (Romans 12:4-5)**
8. **4 There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call-- 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)**
9. **1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. (Philippians 2:1-2)**
10. Therefore, it is not denominations, worship preferences or religious traditions that unite us. It's not pastors or teachers that unite us. It's not your personal convictions, passions or vision for ministry that unites us. But rather, it is the belief in the identity and character of God that is revealed to us in the Bible that unites us. It is the love of the Jesus of the Bible that

¹ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 11, p. 85). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

unites us. It is a common belief in the core fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith and the relationship with God those doctrines produce. It is the purpose that Christ left us until His return; and as such it is the hope in His return that unites us!

11. Therefore, even though we may disagree on many of the subpoints of those core doctrines, even though we may have different personal preferences and convictions, even though we may have different ideas and visions for ministry – we refuse to put those on the table as measurements or requirements of what holds us together and as such the world sees that what we are about is not our opinions but JESUS!

C. “sympathy,”

1. If you read K.S. Wuest than you know this is where he shines. He does such a great job in his books of helping us understand the original words of the Bible.
2. **“The words “having compassion” are the translation of a Greek word from which we get our word “sympathy.” The word is made up of two Greek words, one word meaning “to be affected” by something, hence “to feel,” that is, to have feelings stirred up within one by some circumstance, the other word meaning “with.””²**

D. “brotherly love,”

1. The emphasis here is treating one another as family, that is of having real community with each other! Brotherly love emphasizes the relational connection. It doesn’t remove us from the expectation of “agape,” that is the unconditional, unwavering love that God has for us, but rather emphasizes how that should look on practical day to day level. So you say you love others as Christ loves you, well then, demonstrate by actively treating them as family.
2. ““Love as brothers.” Peter repeats what he has already written, for already in his first chapter he observes that the readers “have sincere love for [the] brothers” (v. 22). The Greek term Peter uses is general, so it includes both brothers and sisters in God’s household (refer to Rom. 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9–10; Heb. 13:1).”³

² Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 11, p. 85). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

³ Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953–2001). *Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and the Epistle of Jude* (Vol. 16, p. 127). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

E. “a tender heart,”

1. This is somewhat like sympathy, but it goes deeper. It tells us not to just feel with others and see things from their perspective but that we are to genuinely care about the burdensome hard situations people are in. We are to care about people! It’s not just about understanding, but it’s about caring for what you find out!
2. “The translation should be, “full of pity.” The Greek word means “tenderhearted.” The first century was cold and hard-hearted. Christianity, with its tenderizing influence upon the heart, had not had time nor opportunity yet to make much of an impact upon the callous heart of man. Today we have as a result of its benign influence hospitals, homes for the aged, charities of one sort or another. And yet how callous our hearts are to another’s pain. Only the overflowing love of God and the experience of much suffering in one’s own life can fit us to really sympathize with others in the sense of feeling their pain ourselves, thus suffering with them.”⁴

F. “and a humble mind.”

1. “having a modest opinion of one’s self.”⁵
2. This is not simply humble actions, it’s easy to act humble and yet not be humble! Peter is telling us to not settle for an arrogant prideful mind that sees ourselves better than we are or sees other as less than we are. The fact of the matter is that no matter what areas in life you outperform the people around you, you are still equally sinful, equally replaceable, equally in need of the grace of God, and equally fragile. Your life and mine can be over in a second no matter how successful or “liked” we are. Our life on this earth will end just like everybody else’s and the world will go on without us! So, let’s keep a humble mind and not get ahead of reality on who we think we are!
3. He continues his list in verse 9,

G. 9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called,

1. This should not be confused with just consequences, that is, it cannot be used as a proof text that it is unjust for people to be put in prison, have to pay a fine or even capital punishment. This has to do with just versus unjust treatment.

⁴ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 11, p. 86). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

⁵ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 11, p. 86). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

2. To do evil is to do something unethical or immoral to somebody that unjustly harms them.

Note: Evil means, “pertaining to being bad, with the implication of harmful and damaging—‘bad, evil, harmful, harshly”⁶

3. To revile a person is a form of evil but its specific, it means to verbally slander or unjustly insult somebody.

Note: Reviling – “**slander**, insult, verbal abuse”⁷

4. So, in other words, don’t do something unjust to a person to repay them for doing something unjust to you! For instance, don’t steal something from somebody because they stole something from you. Another example would be, don’t cheat on your spouse because they cheated on you.
5. The same is true for speech. Don’t go around spreading lies about a person because they have spread lies about you, and don’t share negative things or opinions about a person to people who have no purpose in knowing. For instance, people share stuff with me all the time about situations they are going through that involve others. They are seeking prayer and even counsel from somebody they trust will not spread the news of what they shared, nor be persuaded by it as it concerns the other person. That’s one of my jobs as the pastor. However, it’s one thing to share those things with people like me, and it’s another thing to tell everybody at the Barber Shop or post it on Social Media!
6. He then adds, instead of giving back the unjust evil people have given to you; bless them instead! To bless is to benefit a person, that is, to do something for them that makes their life better!
7. Jesus said,
8. **27 "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. (Luke 6:27-28)**
9. Now that’s a hard pill to swallow, but Peter gives us an incredible motive on why we should act like this! He writes,

⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [*Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 753). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁷ Swanson, J. (1997). [*Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)*](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

H. “that you may obtain a blessing.”

1. To bless is a verbal thing. It means to say something positive about a person and as such not only speak life into them, but also by speaking these things to others you help create a positive relational context for them with others. You speak things to them and about them that makes their life experience better!
2. So Peter says, if you will act in the way I just instructed you then you may still be reviled and slandered by people, but there will also be people who bless you. There will be people who will see your conduct and not only speak life directly into you, but they will also testify of you to others in a way that makes your life, ministry and even business more successful in the community.
3. So, if you want to be blessed by others, don't sit around waiting on them to bless you, be a blessing to them, even to those who revile you, and watch how God will raise up people around you that bless you! On the other side of it, if you don't live this way, you will be building up people around you who have no intention of blessing you and will even convince those who want to bless you to without!
4. This leads us to,

The 2nd reason why it makes sense to obey God in how He expects us to treat people.

(2) You create a positive life experience for yourself when you treat people right. (3:10-11)

- A. 10 For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; 11 let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.
- B. Veress 10-12 sounds a lot like something you would read in the book of Proverbs, but they are nonetheless a quote from Psalm 34:12-16.
- C. The psalmists starts and ends this passage with a positive opportunity. I'll focus on how he ends it in a minute, but for now, I want you to just think about the one Peter choses to begin this Old Testament quote with, "Whoever desires to love life and see good days."
- D. That is if you want to love the life you are getting to live rather than dread it; if you want to see good in your life experience instead of evil, then you need to do something to create the opportunity.

- E. Now be sure, this doesn't guarantee everything is going to work out for you, but it is absolutely guaranteed that not doing means things generally won't work out for you!
- F. What are the things we need to do and not do to have this positive life experience! Well, he says, "**let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; 11 let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.**"
- G. **There are three relational keys to creating a positive life experience for yourself,**

The first relational key to creating a positive life experience for yourself is

1. **Don't let your words make a mess of other people's lives!** - "let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit"
 - a. He just brought up the subject of evil in the verse 9 but here he speaks of it more precisely. Here Peter quotes the Psalmist about keep our tongue fully away from evil. We are to have nothing to do with speaking anything that is unjustly harmful of others; that is, you don't say things about people that is going to harm them unless it must be done for justice or the protection of others. Therefore, saying this kind of truth to those who have no need of hearing it is evil.
 - b. In addition, he adds to keep your words far from deceit. Deceit takes on all kinds of forms but at its core it means lying with just enough truth to cover up the lie! Whether its lying about our motives or intentions or lying about the actual matter we are speaking about, either way, deceit lies to cover the truth. Deceit is the trojan horse of communication. It is presented as good, but its purpose is selfish and wicked!
 - c. Therefore, if you want to create a positive life experience, then don't make a mess of people's lives by speaking evil or deceiving! It should be obvious why making a mess of other people's lives will likely result in your life being a mess as well!

The second relational key to creating a positive life experience for yourself is

2. **Don't be a part of actions that bring unjust harm to others, but instead be a part of what brings them good.** - "11 let him turn away from evil and do good;"

- a. Peter cites the psalmist's move away from words to actions and once again it should be fairly obvious on how doing harmful, unjust things to people reciprocates into people doing harmful, unjust things to you.
- b. Contrarily, do good to others; that is do things for others that benefit their life. Specifically do things that are morally and ethically right and have obvious value to them.
- c. Again, not doing evil to others in no way guarantees it won't be done to you, nor does doing good to others guarantee it will be done to you; but, doing evil to others and not doing good to others is about the most guaranteed way possible to not have a positive life experience!

The third relational key to creating a positive life experience for yourself is

3. Find ways to bring people together and put the effort in to making it happen. - "let him seek peace and pursue it."

- a. "Together with David (Ps. 34:14) Peter encourages the believer to seek peace and pursue it. Because peace itself is fragile and elusive, we can never take it for granted but must actively pursue freedom from strife and discord. The New Testament repeatedly exhorts us to live in peace with all men (see Rom. 12:18; 14:19; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:13; 2 Tim. 2:22; Heb. 12:14). Jesus himself pronounced the beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:9)."⁸
- b. Nothings more useless than a person with ideas who doesn't nothing with them! So the Psalmist makes sure to include the value of both searching for the way and then helping people achieve it!
- c. To many people are drawn to drama in relationships. They are motivated to be a part of feeding the division instead of being a part of the peace. When you feed division, you earn the favor of the people you are taking sides with. When you feed division, you feel closer to the tribe you're feeding. So there is no wonder why people get sucked up in to divisive stuff. Add to it that when you're trying to bring about peace it often times leaves you being hated by both sides, its no wonder people default to taking sides! But, nonetheless, Jesus said,
- d. **9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:9)**

⁸ Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953–2001). [*Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and the Epistle of Jude*](#) (Vol. 16, p. 130). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

- e. Jesus came to make peace between us and God, and oh by the way, He had to suffer the penalty of our sin to do it! Jesus was so committed to establishing peace that He gave His life for it and as a result God the Father has honored Him with the name that is above every name and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord! (Philippians 2:9-11)

The 3rd reason why it makes sense to obey God in how He expects us to treat people is that

(3) God is against those who DON'T treat people right! (3:12)

- A. He starts with an opportunity.
- B. **12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer.**
 - 1. Let me be ultra-clear that this in NO way means God does whatever we want as long as we are righteous. The text says He's "open." There are prayers I've prayed that I praise God that He didn't answer them the way I wanted; on the other hand, there are prayers I've prayed that I may never understand why He didn't answer them the way I wanted. But make no mistake, doing God's will to get Him to do your will is a total false teaching. It doesn't even make sense that we would want the all-powerful, all knowing, eternally loving God to do what we want!! If you understand the love and majesty that God is, then it only makes sense that we want Him to do what He wants!
 - 2. But, with that said, to understand what Peter is quoting here you have to understand that the word righteous means worthy of God, that is, you are worthy of God's praise, honor, love, presence and favor. You are worthy to be a child of God.
 - 3. However, the Bible makes it clear that of ourselves we can never be righteous! There is no action we can do that earns us this status! Paul, citing Psalm 14 and Psalm 53, writes,
 - 4. **9 What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, 10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." 13 "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips." 14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 in their paths are ruin and**

misery, 17 and the way of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Romans 3:9-18)

5. So how then do we get to a place that God is open to our prayers, that he is willing to positively respond to them? The answer is we have to be made righteous, and that's exactly what God, His grace, has done for us in Christ. Listen,
6. **27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:27-31)**
7. So, to all who have repented and believed in Jesus, they have been made righteous by Christ! Christ has set us apart from this world as God's child. Christ has redeemed us from the curse that left us incapable of obeying and loving God! And this work is not without evidence. It is not simply a resolution passed by some governing body that has no impact on our lives. The United Nations passes all kind of resolutions that sound so virtuous, but in the end, they are meaningless because there is rarely any ability to enact them, much less enforce them. What Christ has done for us is in no way comparative to the endless empty resolutions from the United Nations. What He did for us has enable us to not just be declared righteous but to live righteously,
 - a. **10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)**
 - b. **13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. (Romans 6:13)**
8. K.S. Wuest words are so good about this verse. He writes,
9. **"The word "over" is literally "upon." The eyes of the Lord are directed in a favorable sense for the good of those that are righteous. "Unto" is literally "into." God's ears are "into" the prayers of the righteous. What a picture of God bending down into the very prayers of His children, earnestly listening to their petitions, eager to answer them and come to the aid of those who pray. We have no far off deity to make**

propitious. We do not have to plead with God to make Him willing to answer our prayers. He is more desirous of answering them than we are to have them answered.”⁹

10. So it is Christ who has placed us in this position, and it is our faithfulness to God that the Lord smiles upon! It doesn't mean we get what we want, nor does it mean I'm in a better standing with God because of my measure of obedience, it just means God desires to hear the prayers of those who are first and foremost His children, and second who are striving to live faithfully as his children. On the other hand,

C. **“But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”**

1. It is not popular to say, but God is not for those who are not redeemed in the sense that if you have not repented and believed in God you are still under the curse that was issued to Adam and are cast out of the presence of God; not only as one who is left out of His goodness ,but worse, as one who is the object of His wrath!
 - a. **21 For behold, the LORD is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain. (Isaiah 26:21)**
 - b. **36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. (John 3:36)**
2. Now what about what we saw last week in 1 Peter 3:7 where Peter told husbands they better treat their wives with honor, or their prayers would be hindered. Being we are always struggling with sin, and we never fully honor our wife as God has honored her, does that mean our prayers are always going to be hindered? Let me answer this two fold.
 - a. First, the way God has made the universe to work is that we reap what we sow – period. Therefore, even if a person claims to be a believer but they rebel against and live their lives consumed with religion rather than Jesus, the Bible teaches God is not going to exempt them from the fruit of that rebellion.

Note: 7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to

⁹ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 11, p. 87). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:7-10)

- b. But second. It's not just the cold hard reality of the way things are but also the loving reality of the way He is. The Bible says,
 - 1. **6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." (Hebrews 12:6).**
 - 2. That is, when you and I as God's children rebel against Him, we should expect Him to not let us get away with it, in these sense of continuing to rebel without any consequences to motivate us to turn around. When a parent refuses to let their children deal with the consequences of their actions, that parent, whether they want to admit it or not, is determined to raise an immature and irresponsible foolish child.
 - 3. Therefore, it is out of His love, that God brings us pain and difficulty so that we can experience the fruit of our sin, and as such realize, and long for, the fruit of righteousness. And remember, sin is not just some random bureaucratic rules God made up, but rather they are literal death to us. God made us in His image and therefore He made us to experience life; sin is the opposite of both!
 - 4. So, as a child of God, if he turns His attention away from our prayers, He is doing so as an act of love to discipline us and rescue us from our sinful rebellion in the same way loving parents would do the same.
- c. So, to put this all together, the point is that God's face is formally against those who have not repented and believed in Him, however, to those who have, He is a loving Father who refuses to let us be entitled, spoiled rotten, narcissistic brats and thus He disciplines us, harshly, if necessary, to rescue us from death into life!

Challenge: Are you living like God is watching you? He is!

Next year, one of the books I'm going to take us through is the book of Joshua. I'm not going to go into detail today, but one of the pastors on our teaching team, Josh Sugg, suggested a story in Joshua as a way of demonstrating the point Peter is making. It's the story of Achan.

Before going in to destroy Jericho, God gave the Israelites some real clear instructions about what all was to be destroyed and what was to be given to the Lord ("devoted

things”). However, Achan lusted after some of things that were essentially going to be used for the care of the entire nation, a nation who was grossly short on resources after wondering in the wilderness for 40 years! But Achan took them and hid them for himself beneath his tent without anybody knowing, well that is nobody but God.

It all came to a head in Israel’s next battle. They were moving forward to conquer Caranna just as God had told them to, but they ended up suffering such an incredibly embarrassing defeat that Joshua was scared rumors would spread that they were cowards and such embolden their enemies to rally together to destroy them. The Israelites were massively out manned and outgunned, but the kingdoms across Canaan had heard about how God had destroyed the enemies of the Israelites, particularly the Egyptians, and as such it left them in total fear; such fear that they were almost guaranteed to be defeated by Israel!

However, Joshua knew it would totally change everything if they heard about the what happened in Ai. But God then told Joshua what happened, and Achan eventually confessed and told Joshua where they hid everything. The punishment was that the destruction God had condemned the evil kingdoms of Canaan to suffer at the hands of the Israelites would now also be suffered by Achan and his family. Achan, who once had thought he fooled everybody, including God, was marched to a valley with his wife, children and livestock and they were all killed, burned and buried under a pile of stones as a monument to never again forget God is always watching!

Now we will get much more into that story next year, but for now I just want you to be honest. Are you living as if God can’t see how you are treating people? Are you living as if God can’t see your heart in why treat people the way you do? Do you think because you have fooled the people around you, you have somehow fooled God as well? As a believer do you believe a holy and righteous God is going to continue to let you rebel like that and not do anything to rescue you? Do you believe a just God is going to issue no justice, or do you believe God simply doesn’t see what you’re doing? It’s amazing how often we think the sin nobody noticed in our life somehow went unnoticed by Him!

You are doing yourself no favors by rebelling from God, especially in your actions towards others; but you are really doing yourself no favors if you believe God’s not noticing! Listen to the Word of God,

1 There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:1-5)

19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. (Revelation 3:19)