

1 PETER 3:10-12 HOW SHALL I THEN LIVE?

¹⁰ For, *“Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.*

¹¹ *He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.*

¹² *For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

The context for this quote from Psalm 34 (vv12-16) is found in the verse that precedes it. *Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD* (34:11). The key to holy living is fear of the LORD. Awe at the love and mercy of God and the desire to please God as the appropriate response, form the motivation for honesty, good works, and peace-making. It is the fear of the LORD that keeps this from being instruction on works righteousness. The fear of the LORD transforms the question “What must I do to be saved?” to “How shall I act since I’m saved?” It is the fear of the LORD that moves our belief from lip service to service of God and neighbor.

Any day with the LORD is a good day, no matter the circumstances. Any life lived in the presence of the LORD is a life worth loving. We can only experience such days and such a life through obedience to God. I say we can only *experience* such days and such a life, because through disobedience we turn our back to God, declare our independence and live as if God were not with us.

Have you ever tried to ride a bicycle backwards? I mean, sitting on the handle bars and holding onto the seat, facing away from the direction you are trying to travel. What do you think your ride would be like? Obviously, it would be a short, miserable experience fraught with danger and injury. Yet that is what we are doing when we are dishonest in what we say about people (and God), when we deceive people, when we cause conflict by our actions and attitudes, and when we choose evil instead of good. What father would answer his child’s request to help him ride his bike backwards down the street in direct disobedience to the father’s imperative?

Dear God, teach me how to fear you so that I might learn to live a holy life. Help me to understand that to truly know you is to love you and to love you is to obey you. Empower me to pursue honesty, good works and reconciliation in all areas of my life, so that others might see you. Amen.