

4Ws live in hope

LIVING WITH HOPE: WHEN RELATIONSHIPS ARE DIFFICULT

MAY 23, 2021

WORSHIP

Nothing is Impossible,
Grace That Won't
Let Go, Hope in the
Precious

WELCOME

How would you
describe a “toxic” or
difficult person?

WORD

READ IT!

1 PETER 3:1-12

In the same way, you wives, be subject to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won over without a word by the behavior of their wives, ² as they observe your pure and respectful behavior. ³ Your adornment must not be merely the external—braiding the hair, wearing gold jewelry, or putting on apparel; ⁴ but it should be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. ⁵ For in this way the holy women of former times, who hoped in God, also used to adorn themselves, being subject to their own husbands, ⁶ just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; and you have proved to be her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. ⁷ You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. ⁸ To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, loving, compassionate, and humble; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you would inherit a blessing. ¹⁰ For, “THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT. ¹¹ HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT. ¹² FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST EVILDOERS.”

PARAPHRASE IT!

Restate the verses in your own words.

TALK ABOUT IT!

- What did you like about these verses?
- What did you learn about God?
- What did you learn about the people?
- What did you learn about dealing with difficult people from this passage?

POINT IT OUT!

There is an interesting phenomenon in Japan called JOUHATSU wherein people purposely “vanish into thin air”, hiding themselves in anonymity for years and decades to escape domestic tensions and abuse, debt, job loss, failures, and the like.

Stress does not only come from external problems but may also come from family relationships. The difficult people in our life may be our loved ones. However, sometimes, the most difficult person in our lives would be ourselves! Reflect and ask yourself: “**how is it like living with me?**” Many times, we don’t realize that we can be difficult to live and deal with.

As we continue our study on 1 Peter, we encounter Peter’s views and wisdom regarding how we are to relate with others. **1 Peter 3:1** begins with “In the same way” pointing us to the previous verses written in the context of living with difficult people. God’s will for us is to submit with respect to authority, do what is right even in suffering, and not to revolt and fight but learn to respect them just as Christ has done. Jesus committed no sin but when he suffered injustice, He submitted Himself to God who judges righteously (**1 Peter 2:21-22**). God can use difficult people to train us. His methods can be counterintuitive. For example—to be a leader, we must be a servant; to be the greatest, we must be the last (**Luke 22:26-27**). Human relationships are complex, and it is important that we understand and follow God’s design for relationships to achieve the best results. We must see God’s wisdom and live it out.

There are 3 important principles from **1 Peter 3:1-12** on how we can live with difficult people with hope—**K.F.C.**:

1. KNOW GOD’S WILL

“God’s will” talks about His design. It is different from “God’s way” which focuses on how to carry out that design and the practical ways it can be exhibited. The Bible reminds us in **Romans 12:2** to not copy the ways of the world instead be transformed by the renewing of the mind. God wants you to know His will and prove that His will is good, acceptable, and perfect. **James 1:22** also commands us to prove ourselves as doers of the word. When we know God’s will, it becomes easier for us to follow His ways. Many times, His ways are contrary to the ways of the world as what we have seen in chapter 2 and we now see in chapter 3.

2. FOLLOW GOD’S WAY

Peter starts with instruction for wives and encouragement for them to be chaste and respectful in their behavior (**1 Peter 3:2**) despite the cultural setup where women had no rights. The



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wives' dilemma seems to have even increased after coming to Christ because of two things: the authority of their husband and the concept of freedom in Christ. So, wives are encouraged to submit from the heart with respect, with a gentle and quiet spirit even if their husbands didn't treat them as equals as God sees them. The power of modelling this virtue of Jesus can be one's silent witness to others, even to unbelieving husbands. In **vv.5-6**, Peter goes back to the Old Testament and uses Sarah as an example of a gentle and quiet spirit. She demonstrated how it was to hope in God. The more you know and trust God, the more you can live out God's ways.

God's ways are always balanced. The Bible also provides the ways by which husbands and wives should interact with one another (**Ephesians 5:22, 25**). A wife's submission must be done "as to the Lord" and husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the church. Follow God's way—no excuses. Peter expounds the husbands' role as well (**1 Peter 3:7**). Husbands are told to live with their wives in an understanding way. Understand your wife and see that her needs—physical, emotional, and spiritual, are met. The verse also describes the precious and more physically fragile nature of women and husbands must show her **honor and respect**. This is not a concept of inequality as the Bible is clear that we are one in Christ Jesus (**Galatians 3:28**). Different roles do not mean superiority or inferiority. True spirituality is tested in the home life and in committed relationships where you can't run and escape from. We must relate others with respect, honor, and understanding through the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. CLING TO GOD'S PROMISES

Peter sums it up by emphasizing love in action in **1 Peter 3:8-9**. This is an applicable value for everyone. He stressed the qualities by which we should be interacting with others, especially our family members—in harmony, with sympathy, kindness, and even in humility. You and I are called to inherit a blessing, and Peter tells how we can inherit God's blessing—obedience to His will, His way. Clinging to God's promises and the blessing of answered prayers are always connected to **OBEDIENCE**. In God's economy, you cannot separate the two. **1 Peter 3:10-12** is an exact quotation from the Old Testament. Do you desire to see good days? Peter tells us to "**keep our tongue from evil**". Deal with the sins of the heart as **Luke 6:45** also emphasized. Turning away from evil and doing good (**1 Peter 3:11**) is the condition for us to enjoy God's blessings.

The key to blessing is to understand the condition: repentance, seeking and pursuing peace, and continue in righteousness. Peter gives an assurance of the promise that God sees, God knows, and God cares. We often don't realize that God wants us to be motivated by His promises. Living by His promises allows us to show our faith in Him. We will indeed face trials, but we can live with hope. **Deuteronomy 30:19-20** shows us the contrast between life and death, blessings and curse. God's blessing can only be experienced when know (and obey) **God's will**, follow **God's ways**, and cling to **God's promises**.

We all face difficult people but are we able to influence them? Either God changes the person or God will change us. God can use difficult people to sanctify us, to train us, and to transform us into better people—more like Jesus! May we really show that we are **people of hope** as we interact with others in our relationships. Let us put this love and hope in action today!

WORKS

APPLY IT!

Based on this lesson on LIVING IN HOPE WHEN RELATIONSHIPS ARE DIFFICULT, write down your action point to apply what you learned. Make it your "I will..." statement and follow the S.M.A.R.T. guideline to come up with a do-able action point.

- Simple
- Measurable
- Appropriate
- Realistic
- Time-bound

"I will _____"

SHARE IT!

Who will you share these truths to this week?

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for the "difficult" people in your life to have the eagerness to know God's will, God's ways, and God's promises in the Bible. Extend an act of kindness today to someone whom you find hard to relate with. Share the hope that you have in Christ to people experiencing relational difficulties.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation
- Wisdom and timely, effective response to the pandemic

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends



⁸ To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

1 PETER 3:8-9

