

Scripture: 1 Peter 3:8-12

To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 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. For, "The one who desires life, to love and see good days, must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. He must turn away from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. 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 those who do evil."

Insight

The above verses come right after Peter offers specific guidance for husbands and wives in the way they interact with each other. He summarizes it with a call for both to live a life that focuses on blessing each other and not tearing each other down.

It is all too comfortable to feel justified in lashing out and responding in anger toward those we love whenever we feel disrespected, unloved, or offended. When we lack the patience to bite our tongue and take the time to relax before speaking, we inevitably hurt others and ourselves.

It is easy to respond in a nice way whenever our spouse says a kind word. However, we are called to a higher standard. We are called to respond in a nice way whenever we are put down, yelled at, or hurt in any way. It is not an easy thing to do, but it is a holy thing to do. Impossible? Yes, at least in our own strength. We must lean on the strength of Christ to help us respond with a blessing.

Sharing

During the week, talk about the following:

- How do we typically respond when we say hurtful things to each other?
- What causes us to respond in a harsh way when hurt?
- How did Christ respond to those that crucified him (Luke 23:34)?
- What are some ways we could improve in the way we respond to each other when hurt?

During the week, whenever your spouse (or other family member) says something that upsets you, make a point to stop and don't immediately respond. When you do respond, say something positive.