



The First Letter of Peter
Bible Study Session 14
1 Peter 3:8-12
“Live compassionately”



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Greek NT

8 Τὸ δὲ τέλος πάντες ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὖσπλαγχοι, ταπεινόφρονες, 9 μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἢ λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας τούναντίον δὲ εὐλογοῦντες, ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλήθητε ἵνα εὐλογίαν κληρονομήσητε. 10 ὁ γὰρ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπᾶν καὶ ἰδεῖν ἡμέρας ἀγαθὰς παυσάτω τὴν γλῶσσαν ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ χεῖλη τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι δόλον, 11 ἐκκλινάτω δὲ ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποιησάτω ἀγαθόν, ζητησάτω εἰρήνην καὶ διωξάτω αὐτήν· 12 ὅτι ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ὦτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν, πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιοῦντας κακά.

La Biblia de las Américas

8 En conclusión, sed todos de un mismo sentir, compasivos, fraternales, misericordiosos y de espíritu humilde; 9 no devolviendo mal por mal, o insulto por insulto, sino más bien bendiciendo, porque fuisteis llamados con el propósito de heredar bendición. 10 Pues EL QUE QUIERE AMAR LA VIDA Y VER DIAS BUENOS, REFRENE SU LENGUA DEL MAL Y SUS LABIOS NO HABLEN ENGAÑO. 11 APARTESE DEL MAL Y HAGA EL BIEN; BUSQUE LA PAZ Y SIGALA. 12 PORQUE LOS OJOS DEL SEÑOR ESTAN SOBRE LOS JUSTOS, Y SUS OIDOS ATENTOS A SUS ORACIONES; PERO EL ROSTRO DEL SEÑOR ESTA CONTRA LOS QUE HACEN EL MAL.

NRSV

8 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 9 Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called — that you might inherit a blessing. 10 For “Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; 11 let them turn away from evil and do good; let them 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.”

NLT

8 Finally, all of you should be of one mind, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds. 9 Don’t repay evil for evil. Don’t retaliate when people say unkind things about you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God wants you to do, and he will bless you for it. 10 For the Scriptures say, “If you want a happy life and good days, keep your tongue from speaking evil, and keep your lips from telling lies. 11 Turn away from evil and do good. Work hard at living in peace with others. 12 The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil.”

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Introduction

Peter brings this section of moral admonitions in 2:11-3:12 to a close (= Τὸ δὲ τέλος) with a miscellaneous collection of encouragements to the Christian community as a whole.¹ Just as he began this material with exhortations to the entire Christian community in 2:11-17, he returns to the community at large with the conclusion in 3:8-12. The individualized *Haustafeln* section in 2:18-3:7, with Peter’s creative adaptation of it, is tucked in the

¹“The adjectives and participles of vv 8–9 maintain the participial form for exhortations used throughout much of 2:13–3:7, and the phrase τὸ δὲ τέλος suggests that Peter is now drawing a line of thought to its conclusion.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 174.]

middle. This pattern of grouping a series of short generalized admonitions in paraenetic material was very common in the ancient world, so there is nothing unusual about the way Peter brings the material together. The focus on behavior is mostly regarding relationships with others both inside the community of believers and also with outsiders not a part of the Christian community.

Additionally, the emphases in 3:8-12 find close affinity with Paul's admonitions in Rom. 12:9-21:²

Group/Individual Emphasis	
2:11-3:12	
* 2:11-12	(group)
* 2:13-17	(group)
* 2:18-25	(individual: slaves)
* 3:1-6	(individual: wives)
* 3:7	(individual: husbands)
* 3:8-12	(group)

9 Don't just pretend that you love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. **Stand on the side of the good.** 10 **Love each other with genuine affection**, and take delight in honoring each other. 11 Never be lazy in your work, but serve the Lord enthusiastically. 12 Be glad for all God is planning for you. Be patient in trouble, and always be prayerful. 13 When God's children are in need, be the one to help them out. And get into the habit of inviting guests home for dinner or, if they need lodging, for the night. 14 If people persecute you because you are a Christian, don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. 15 **When others are happy, be happy with them. If they are sad, share their sorrow.** 16 **Live in harmony** with each other. **Don't try to act important, but enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!** 17 **Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.** Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. 18 **Do your part to live in peace with everyone, as much as possible.** 19 Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, "I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it," says the Lord. 20 Instead, do what the Scriptures say: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink, and they will be ashamed of what they have done to you." 21 Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good.³

While no one can seriously claim that Peter depended on Romans for his ideas, both passages do reflect generally similar thinking about Christian responsibilities.⁴ Perhaps a common pool of general teaching used by Christian leaders that followed the apostolic gospel may lie behind this material, but that is not certain. With Romans written a bit earlier by Paul from Corinth to the church in Rome, and Peter being in Rome after the receiving of this letter from Paul by the church there, it should not be surprising to find similarities of ideas by these two apostles. Add to that the common link of Silas and his close friendship with both of these men.

Peter has some important ideas here that modern churches would do well to ponder and implement in their fellowships.

I. Context and Background⁵

a. Historical

External History. In the copying of this passage over the first eight centuries of Christian history, not many variations of wording surface in the several thousand Greek texts of this passage that we have access to today. The UBS 4th revised edition of the Greek New Testament lists only one variation that the editors considered important enough to impact the translation of the text. The Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition Greek

²The places of close affinity with First Peter 3:8-12 are in **bold italic red print**.

³GNT: 9 Ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος· ἀποστρυγόντες τὸ πονηρὸν, κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ· 10 τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι, τῇ τιμῇ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι, 11 τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί, τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες, τῷ κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες, 12 τῇ ἐλπίδι χαίροντες, τῇ θλίψει ὑπομένοντες, τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτεροῦντες, 13 ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἁγίων κοινωνοῦντες, τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες. 14 εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς διώκοντας, εὐλογεῖτε καὶ μὴ καταρᾶσθε. 15 χαίρειν μετὰ χαιρόντων, κλαίειν μετὰ κλαιόντων. 16 τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονοῦντες, μὴ τὰ ὑψηλὰ φρονοῦντες ἀλλὰ τοῖς ταπεινοῖς συναπαγόμενοι. μὴ γίνεσθε φρόνιμοι παρ' ἑαυτοῖς. 17 μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες· φρονοοῦμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων· 18 εἰ δυνατόν, τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν μετὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων εἰρηνεύοντες· 19 μὴ ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδικοῦντες, ἀγαπητοί, ἀλλὰ δότε τόπον τῇ ὀργῇ, γέγραπται γάρ· Ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω, λέγει κύριος. 20 ἀλλὰ ἐὰν πεινᾷ ὁ ἐχθρὸς σου, ψάμιζε αὐτόν· ἐὰν διψᾷ, πότιζε αὐτόν· τοῦτο γὰρ ποιῶν ἄνθρακας πυρὸς σωρεύσεις ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ. 21 μὴ νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ, ἀλλὰ νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν.

⁴The Romans text that is **bold/italic in red** represents points where Peter and Paul intersect one another with similar ideas. In addition to the thought expression, both texts employ some similarly creative uses of Greek grammar that are not common elsewhere in the New Testament.

⁵Serious study of the Bible requires careful analysis of the background and setting of the scripture passage. Failure to do this leads to interpretive garbage and possibly to heresy. Detailed study of the background doesn't always answer all the questions, but it certainly gets us further along toward correct understanding of both the historical and contemporary meanings of a text. This serious examination of both the historical and literary background of every passage will be presented in summary form with each of the studies.

text lists a total of seven variations of wording.

The first listing common to both modern Greek texts is with ταπεινόφρονες in verse eight. A small number of late manuscripts read φιλόφρονες (*courteous*) rather than ταπεινόφρονες (*humble*). An even smaller number subsequently try to correct this by including both words: φιλόφρονες ταπεινόφρονες.⁶ The overwhelming weight of both external and internal evidence favor the reading ταπεινόφρονες.

The N-A 27th ed. Greek text will reflect in *verse nine* some late manuscripts reading εἰδότες ὅτι (*because of knowing that...*). But little evidence supports this reading, and all the significant early manuscripts support only ὅτι (*because*). The use of Psalm 34:13-16⁷ in verses ten through twelve occasion some variations in wording as well. *Verse 10*: αὐτοῦ (*his*) is inserted between τὴν γλῶσσαν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ... and χεῖλη αὐτοῦ τοῦ.... The impact is to more clearly say, “*his tongue...and his lips...*”. Again the evidence is overwhelmingly against inserting the pronoun for ‘his.’ One manuscript, P⁷², has the present tense infinitive λαλεῖν rather than the Aorist infinitive λαλῆσαι. *Verse 11*: A few manuscripts omit the conjunction δὲ (*but*), but most of the major manuscripts include it. *Verse 12*: A couple of late manuscripts along with some of the Latin and Syriac versions add the phrase τοῦ ἐξολοθρεῦσαι αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς (“*to destroy them from the earth*”) at the end of the verse in order to extend the quote from Psalm 34:16 (LXX). But again very little manuscript evidence exists in support of this addition.

Again, as we have consistently observed, this passage has been preserved in tact over the centuries of copying and no variation that impacts its meaning to any significant extent has ever surfaced.

Internal History. The time and place markers in 3:8-12 are minimal as well as indirect, and thus will be treated in the exegesis of the passage below.

b. Literary

Literary Form (Genre). The literary form of this passage, especially the small genre, falls into two categories. Verses eight and nine are standard *paraenesis* (moral admonition), while verses ten through twelve are a scripture allusion. Verse eight follows a typical structure for an ancient virtue list.⁸ These various patterns are brought together by Peter in this summary passage in order to finish out his emphasis on Christian behavior begun in 2:11.

Virtue Lists in the ancient world are found among both Greek and Latin philosophers, and especially among the Stoic philosophers who stressed standards of behavior as essential to a stable life and a stable society.⁹ Although many of the same virtues will be listed by the pagan philosophers of this time that are found in the New Testament, important differences are present mostly in how and why they are achieved. In general, Stoic philosophers especially saw individual achievement of virtue as a basis for personal pride and necessary for a successful life and for a stable society. In the New Testament, virtue is not something the individual achieves. Rather, it is the product of God’s actions in the believer’s life, e.g., the fruit of the Spirit, and thus stands as an expression of devotion to God for His glory, not for personal achievement before God. Unfortunately, Roman Catholic theology fairly early on adopted the philosophical perspectives into its system of the Christian achieving ‘grace’ before God in order to establish his/her relationship with God. Still to this day, such a definition of grace has impacted streams of Protestant thinking to the point that we must achieve a certain level of ‘good deeds’ before God if we are to maintain our standing with Him. All of this represents a horrific corruption of the biblical concept of vices and virtues, and only serves to twist the understanding of the Christian life into something far less than what God intended.

Scripture allusion / quotation. The use of the Old Testament by New Testament writers is an important topic of study.¹⁰ In verses ten through twelve, Peter finds in Psalm 34:13-16 from the Greek translation called

⁶“Instead of ταπεινόφρονες, the Textus Receptus, following later manuscripts, reads φιλόφρονες (“courteous”). In a few witnesses (including L and some editions of the Vulgate) both words stand side by side—obviously a growing text.” [Bruce Manning Metzger and United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 621.]

⁷Psalm 34:13-16 NRSV: 13 *Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. 14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. 15 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. 16 The face of the Lord is against evildoers, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*

⁸For a listing of the virtue lists in the New Testament see my “New Testament Virtue Lists,” at cranfordville.com.

⁹In addition to my discussion of this online, Fa. Felix Just has a helpful discussion on his web page, “Virtue and Vice Lists in the Bible,” at catholic-resources.org. A broader discussion of virtue is found at “Virtue,” Wikipedia online.

¹⁰For a helpful online introduction, see Barry D. Smith, “The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament,” at abu.nb.ca:

the Septuagint (= LXX) a passage that provides an authoritative support for his admonitions to the believing community.¹¹ A comparison of the LXX text in Greek in the previous footnote with the Greek text of First Peter quickly reveals that Peter took the Greek text and adapted it to fit his purposes of use; he did not quote it literally as would be expected in a modern context, although here he made only minor adjustments to the LXX text. Peter takes the essential ideas of the Psalm and reapplies them to a Christian setting on the assumption that these words have divine authority behind them and also are relevant to his emphasis on Christian behavior in 3:8-9. What he does here is relatively commonplace among New Testament writers. This ‘scripture proof’ adds weight to his admonitions, especially for the Jewish Christians among the first readers of this text.

Literary Context. The chart on the right highlights what has already been mentioned. First Peter 3:8-12 stands as the third and climatic section of the large section on Obligations in 2:11-3:7. Peter even signals this with the ‘finally’ (Τὸ δὲ τέλος) in verse 8. But one should also note that this text transitions into the following section on Persecution in 3:13-5:11. In good Jewish scribal fashion, he links suffering abuse in 3:8-12 to suffering persecution in the following section. We have already noted a similar tendency by Peter that when he comes to the end of a topic he uses the final unit to set up the next major section. Thus, what we see here is consistent with his writing style prior to our text, as well as in the remainder of the letter.¹²

Outline of Contents in First Peter:

Praescriptio: 1:1-2

- *Superscriptio, 1:1a*
- *Adscriptio, 1:1b-2a*
- *Salutatio, 1:2b*

Proem: 1:3-12

- *Core, 1:3a*
- *Expansion, 1:3b-12*

Body: 1:13-5:11

- *Holy living 1:13-2:10*
 - *Ideals 1:13-25*
 - *Privileges 2:1-10*
- *Obligations 2:11-3:12*
 - *Civic 2:11-17*
 - *Haustafeln 2:18-3:7*
 - *Social 3:8-12*
- *Persecution 3:13-5:11*
 - *Encouragement 3:13-4:11*
 - *Explanation 4:12-19*
 - *Proper Conduct 5:1-11*

Conclusio: 5:12-14

- *Sender Verification, 5:12*
- *Greetings, 5:13-14a*
- *Benedictio, 5:14b*

Even a superficial reading of the New Testament reveals how frequently its authors and those about whom they write quote from the Old Testament. This should come as a surprise to no one familiar with the authoritative role that the scriptures played in Jewish religious life. What may come as a surprise, however, at least to the modern reader, is the variety of ways in which scripture is interpreted and used by Jesus and the early church. In their hands, the meaning of the Old Testament is not restricted to its so-called literal and historical meaning, but has other dimensions of meaning. Moreover, with one exception, the interpretive methods adopted by Jesus and the early church are identical with those used by other Jewish interpreters of the second-Temple and early rabbinic periods.

One can identify three interpretive methods used by Jesus and the early church that have parallels to texts from the second-Temple period and to early rabbinic exegesis. First, a text from the Old Testament can be interpreted literally, according to the author’s intended meaning. Second, Jesus and the early church find subtle and not-so-obvious interpretations for Old Testament texts, in some cases, using certain rules of exegesis known from early rabbinic texts. This interpretive approach could be called *midrashic*. Third, one finds what scholars call *peshet* interpretations in the New Testament; these are characterized by finding a second, eschatological (including messianic) meaning for an Old Testament text that is not originally eschatological (or messianic) in meaning. In addition, unique to the New Testament is what is called typological interpretation, in which a person, place, thing or event in the Old Testament is assumed to foreshadow an eschatological reality to which it is analogically or functionally similar.

¹¹**Psalm 33:13-17:**

- 13 τίς ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος ὁ θέλων ζῶην
ἀγαπῶν ἡμέρας ἰδεῖν ἀγαθάς; †
- 14 παῦσον τὴν γλῶσσάν σου ἀπὸ κακοῦ
καὶ χεῖλη σου τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι δόλον. †
- 15 ἔκκλινον ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποιήσον ἀγαθόν,
ζήτησον εἰρήνην καὶ δίωξον αὐτήν. †
- 16 ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους,
καὶ ὅτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν. †
- 17 πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιοῦντας κακὰ
τοῦ ἐξολεθρεῦσαι ἐκ γῆς τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῶν. †

By this section of the Psalms, the chapter and verse numbering of the LXX become different from the English Bible which is based upon the Latin Vulgate. Thus, what is chapter 34 in the English Bible is chapter 33 in the LXX with one verse differently numbered.

[Septuaginta: SESB Edition, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Ps 33:13–17.]

¹²“The content of this exhortation is similar to the exhortation found elsewhere in the NT and reflects early Christian paraenetic tradition (Selwyn 1947, 407–15; Piper 1979; Goppelt 1993, 229–32) unrelated to the household-management (*oikonomia*) tradition influencing the foregoing instruction. However, the hand of the author is evident in the precise formulation of this tradition: four of

Literary Structure.

The block diagram below highlights visually the flow of ideas in this passage:

3.8 And
 finally
31 **let all be harmonious,**
 sympathetic,
 having brotherly love,
 compassionate,
 humble,
32 3.9 **let all not pay back evil for evil,**
 or
33 **let all not pay back abuse for abuse,**
 but
 on the contrary
34 **let all speak blessings**
 because to this you were called,
 that you might inherit a blessing.

3.10 For
 the one desiring to love life
 | and
 | to see good days
35 **let him cease his tongue**
 | from evil
 and
36 **let him cease his lips**
 | from speaking slander,
3.11 and
37 **let him cease**
 | from evil,
 and
38 **let him do good,**
 |
39 **let him seek peace,**
 and
 |
40 **let him pursue it,**
3.12 because the eyes of the Lord are
 | upon the righteous
 | and
 His ears are
 | for their petitions,
 | but
 the face of the Lord is
 against those doing evil.

the five adjectives of v 8 occur nowhere else in the NT, and the content of vv 8–9 is closely related to that of other units of the letter. Together, these verses form an important part of the letter’s stress on qualities fostering the mutual humility and internal cohesion of the community (see 1:22–23; 2:17b; 3:1–7; 4:7–11; 5:1–6) and on honorable interaction with outsiders (2:12, 13–17, 18, 23; 3:1–2).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 600-01.]

Also helpful: “While no other social code in the NT ends with such a general exhortation,¹³ the content is familiar to Christian tradition (e.g., Matt 5:44; Luke 6:27–28; Eph 4:1–3, 31–32; Col 3:12–14; 1 Thess 5:13b–15; Did. 1.3; Polycarp Phil. 2.2).¹⁴ That it more specifically reflects portions of Rom 12:9–18 and hence shows that 1 Peter was dependent on that passage is of course possible, but the limited overlap of vocabulary, and the different order in which the elements are treated,¹⁵ render such dependence less than certain. More likely is a common dependence on elements of early Christian tradition,¹⁶ in each case used for the specific purpose of the author.^{17”} [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 221.]

The division of thought in 3:8-12 is clear. Verses eight and nine (statements 31-34) contain a series of admonitions to moral behavior. Verses ten through twelve are taken from Psalm 34:13-16 (#s 35-40) as the scriptural reason for the admonitions. In the first section (#31-34), the admonitions fall into two groups: # 31 and #s 32-34. The first set (#31) is a virtue list of four positive traits needing implementation into church life. These seem more focused in internal relationships inside the Christian community. The second group (#s 32-34) contain two synonymous parallel negative admonitions (#s 32-33) that stand in contrast to the positive admonition in #34. These three admonitions stress more Christian relationship with outsiders who are hostile to Christianity.

The scripture quote in #s 35-40 are structured mostly after the LXX text of the Psalms being used. Peter makes some adaptations of the LXX text, mostly to make the text fit grammatically his expression in verses 8-9 that are linked to the Psalm text. The common subject of all six strophes is ὁ θέλων ζῶην ἀγαπᾶν καὶ ἰδεῖν ἡμέρας ἀγαθὰς.... Anyone wanting to love life and to see good days must incorporate specific patterns of behavior into his living. The six strophes specify what this is. Strophes 35 & 36 are synonymous parallels dealing with speech control; 37 & 38 are antithetical parallels on negative and positive actions; 39 & 40 stress the pursuit of peace. Peter restructures the Psalm by inserting a causal connection (ὅτι) for the final strophes in verse 12. Thus the Psalm both advocates specific behavior and -- in Peter's interpretation of it -- gives a set of reasons for it. These are cast in two synonymous parallels that then stand in antithetical connection to the third strophe. The Lord favors those following the right path, and opposes those who don't.

II. Message

The above assessment of the structure of the passage provides the organizing structure for our examination of the verses: 1) Live righteously; 2) Scripture reason for doing so.

a. Live righteously, vv. 8-9

8 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind.
9 Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.

8 Τὸ δὲ τέλος πάντες ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὐσπλαγχοὶ, ταπεινόφρονες, 9 μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἢ λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας τούναντίον δὲ εὐλογοῦντες, ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλήθητε ἵνα εὐλογίαν κληρονομήσητε.

Notes:

These two verses divide out into two natural sections. First, is the virtue list in verse eight. Then comes a set of admonitions with a Hebrew Bible tone in verse nine. Peter opens this section with the unusual expression Τὸ δὲ τέλος, "Finally."¹³ The phrase signals a conclusion or ending to a unit of material, but not necessarily a summation of the material in the unit.¹⁴ Instead, just as he had begun in 2:13-17 with admonitions to the entire Christian community, he now closes this section by returning to speak to the entire community of faith.

Virtue List: Peter begins with a listing of five virtues to be implemented into the lives of the believers: ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὐσπλαγχοὶ, ταπεινόφρονες ("unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind"). Although the basic ideas in these virtues surface elsewhere in the New Testament, most of the Greek words that Peter uses are unique to this letter with words found only here: ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, and ταπεινόφρονες. The remaining word εὐσπλαγχοὶ is found only here and in Eph 4:32. What are these qualities to be put into practice?

^{13c}τὸ τέλος: (an idiom, literally 'the end') a marker of a conclusion to what has preceded, but not necessarily the conclusion of a text—'finally, in conclusion.' τὸ δὲ τέλος πάντες ὁμόφρονες 'finally, all should be of the same mind' 1 Pe 3:8." [Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament : Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996), 611.]

^{14c}The opening adverbial phrase (τὸ δὲ τέλος, 'finally')²⁶ shows this to be the final paragraph of this section (2:13–3:12), and as such brings it to a conclusion.²⁷ As in the case of the other passages that were addressed to various groups (2:18; 3:1; 3:7), this passage, addressed now to all readers (πάντες),²⁸ may similarly be understood as dependent on the imperatives of 2:17, and as assuming the participle ὄντες to complete the meaning of the adjectives: 'All of you, [fulfill the commands by being] of one mind.'²⁹ However the sentence be understood, it is clear that desirable characteristics of the whole Christian community, rather than of a more limited group within it, are here described and recommended." [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter : A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 222.]

ὁμόφρονες (*homophrōn*): “unity of spirit” (NRSV), “of one mind” (NLT), “Haltet in derselben Gesinnung zusammen” (GNB), “sed todos de un mismo sentir” (BdA).¹⁵ Just this sampling of the translations used in the two sets of First Peter studies reflects the diversity of translation wording that surfaces. Vice and virtue lists from the ancient world are very difficult to translate into modern languages. This is mainly because such lists are dominated by adjectives defining attitudes and dispositions that are inward. Modern psychology has redefined much of this terminology with meaning that may or may not overlap with ancient ideas about emotions etc. Consequently, a wide diversity of wording will usually surface in a comparison of various translations of these adjectives in such lists.

The essence of ὁμόφρονες is a spirit of harmony and unity present in a group of people.¹⁶ Peter calls for unity inside the communities of faith. This is similar to Paul’s admonition in Romans 12:16, “Live in harmony with one another” (τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονοῦντες). This doesn’t demand uniform thinking, but rather respect for one another’s views and a willingness to work together in the church.¹⁷

συμπαθεῖς (*sympatheis*): “sympathy,” (NRSV), “full of sympathy toward each other” (NLT), “und habt Mitgefühl füreinander” (GNB), “compasivos” (BdA). Closely connected to ὁμόφρονες, this adjective stresses a positive, helpful posture to others.¹⁸ It is closely related to the verb συμπαθέω, which is found in Heb. 4:15¹⁹ and 10:34²⁰. The idea is to be able to share similar or the same feelings with another, especially in difficult times.²¹ The challenge here is to reach out to others in sincerity and with a desire to experience what they are experiencing.

φιλάδελφοι (*philadelphoi*): “love for one another,” (NRSV), “loving one another” (NLT), “Liebt euch gegenseitig als

¹⁵“The Greek word is used only here in the whole New Testament (although Paul expresses the same idea in Rom 15:5; Phil 2:2), and means both oneness in opinion (compare NEB ‘one in thought’; NAB ‘like-minded’), and in outlook, attitude (compare Brc ‘one in your attitude to life’), disposition, and sentiment.” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 97.]

¹⁶“ὁμόφρων, ον (ὁμός ‘common’, φρήν; Hom.+; Plut., Mor. 432c; OGI 515, 4; Kaibel adv. ‘in sympathy’ 493, 5f; Ps.-Phocyl. 30, s. ὁμόνοια) **pert. to being like-minded, united in spirit, harmonious** (w. συμπαθής et al.) **1 Pt 3:8** (Strabo 6, 3, 3 ὁμόφρονας ὡς ἂν ἀλλήλων ἀδελφούς).—DELG s.v. φρήν. M-M. Spicq.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 709-10.]

¹⁷“The first two terms, ‘united in spirit’ and ‘sympathetic,’ are unique in biblical literature, but common in Greek ethical discussion. Yet while the words are unique, the ideas are well known in the NT. As Paul repeatedly argues (Rom. 15:5; 2 Cor. 13:11; Gal. 5:10; Phil. 2:2; 4:2), unity in heart and mind is critical for the Christian community. This is not the unity that comes from a standard imposed from without, such as a doctrinal statement, but that which comes from loving dialogue and especially a common focus on the one Lord. It is his mind and spirit that Christians are to share (1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5–11), and therefore have access to a unity that they are to experience. Because humility was the mark of Jesus (Matt. 11:29; Phil. 2:8), this unity will revolve around being “humble” (Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 5:5). This does not mean a poor self-concept (‘I’m no good’), but a willingness to take the lower place, to do the less exalted service, and to put the interests of others ahead of one’s own interests. This attitude of Jesus is surely a necessity if a disparate group is to be ‘united in spirit.’” [Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 124-25.]

¹⁸“**συμπαθής, ἕς** (since Eur., s. below; Aristot. et al.; CIG 9438; OGI 456, 66; LXX, Philo) **sympathetic, understanding** (Eur., TGF 164 ἄριστον ἀνδρὶ κτῆμα συμπαθής γυνή=‘the best thing for a husband is an understanding wife’; Polyb. 2, 56, 7; 8, 22, 9; Plut., Eum. 594 [18, 5], Mor. 536a; Jos., Ant. 19, 330) **1 Pt 3:8**.—TW. Spicq.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 958.]

¹⁹**Heb. 4:15, NRSV**: “For we do not have a high priest **who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses**, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.”

²⁰**Heb. 10:34, NRSV**: “For **you had compassion for those who were in prison**, and you cheerfully accepted the plundering of your possessions, knowing that you yourselves possessed something better and more lasting.”

²¹“They must have the same feelings (literally ‘feel sympathy for one another’). Again, the Greek adjective is used only here in the whole New Testament and may mean sharing in the feelings of others, whether those feelings be of joy or of sorrow. A similar idea is expressed in Romans 12:15 ‘Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep’ (compare Heb 10:34; 1 Cor 12:26). You must all have ... the same feelings may be expressed as ‘you must feel sympathy for what happens to one another,’ or, as expressed idiomatically in some languages, ‘your hearts should go out to one another’ or ‘you should feel pain when others are hurt and feel happy when others rejoice.’” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 97-98.]

Brüder und Schwestern!” (GNB), “fraternales” (BdA).²² The idea here is ‘brotherly love’ expressed by the adjective, rather than the more commonly used noun φιλαδελφία (brotherly love), which is found in 1 Peter 1:22, 2 Peter 1:7, Rom. 12:10, 1 Thess. 4:9, Heb. 13:1. The emphasis continues on developing and expressing genuinely positive postures toward others.²³

εὐσπλαγχνοὶ (*eusplanchnoi*): “a tender heart,” (NRSV), “with tender hearts” (NLT), “Seid gütig...zueinander!” (GNB), “misericordiosos” (BdA). Here the translation is more challenging because of a very different way in the ancient world of associating human feelings and emotions with different body parts.²⁴ The intestines were understood to be the seat of feeling in the ancient world, not the ‘heart’ as in modern western society. The idea is one of a deeply felt posture of caring for another person.²⁵ Although the adjective εὐσπλαγχνος, -ον is only found here and in Ephesians 4:32 in the New Testament, the noun σπλαγχνον²⁶ and the verb σπλαγχνίζομαι²⁷ are commonly found in the New Testament, with similar meanings at the figurative level.²⁸

ταπεινόφρονες (*tapeinophrōn*): “a humble mind,” (NRSV), “and humble minds” (NLT), “Seid...zuvorkommend zueinander!” (GNB), “y de espíritu humilde” (BdA).²⁹ Interestingly, the pagan Greek speaking world did not con-

²²“φιλάδελφος, ον (for the prim. sense ‘loving one’s brother/ sister’ in ref. to siblings s. φιλαδελφία; Soph., X.+; on gravestones [Sb 6234; 6235; 6653]; 2 Macc 15:14; 4 Macc 13:21; 15:10; Philo, De Jos. 218) in our literature only in the transf. sense **having affection for an associate, having brotherly love, having mutual affection** (cp. Socrat., Ep. 28, 12=sociable; 2 Macc 15:14=loving one’s compatriots) **1 Pt 3:8**.—New Docs 3, 87 (ins reff., incl. one fr. Bithynia: TAM IV, 111). M-M. TW.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1055.]

²³“They must *love one another as brothers* (literally ‘love for the brothers’). For this, see 1:22. There may be a difficulty in a literal rendering of *love one another as brothers*, since in at least some societies brothers are expected to be rather competitive. This problem may be overcome by rendering ‘love one another as brothers should.’” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 98.]

²⁴“They must be *kind*. Here the Greek word (*eusplanchnoi*) is derived from the noun *splanchna*, which means the internal organs (for example, liver, kidney, heart, etc.), and in an extended sense, the internal organs as the seat of emotion and feeling. So in the New Testament, to have *splanchna* is to feel deeply for someone, in terms of love, compassion, pity, kindness. Perhaps no English expression is strong enough to capture the impact of such a word, although many translations have tried to do justice to its rich meaning (for example, Brc ‘You must be deeply concerned for others’). In view of the important connotations in the Greek term here translated *kind*, it is frequently not possible to provide an equivalent rendering apart from some rather extensive idiomatic equivalent, for example, ‘feel deeply in your hearts for’ or ‘show how much you are pained on behalf of’ or ‘let your kindness demonstrate how much you feel for others.’” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 98.]

²⁵“εὐσπλαγχνος, ον (s. prec. entry; in the mng. ‘with healthy intestines’: Hippocr., Protrrh. 2, 6; Hesych.) **pert. to having tender feelings for someone, tenderhearted, compassionate** (so Prayer of Manasseh [=Odes 12]: 7; TestZeb 9:7; JosAs ch. 13 cod. A [p. 57, 25 Bat. w. φιλόφρονος]; ApcEsd 1:10 p. 25, 2 Tdf. [w. πολυέλεος, so also Cat. Cod. Astr. IX/2 p. 165, 4 of the goddess Selene]; ApcSed 15:1 [w. ἀναμάρτητος]; PGM 12, 283; Just., D. 108, 3) of God (as in the pass. already given) w. ἐπιεικῆς 1 Cl 29:1.—Of humans (TestSim 4:4; Syntipas p. 106, 23; Leontios 46 p. 99, 15; Nicetas Eugen. 6, 193 H.) 54:1. (W. φιλάδελφος, ταπεινόφρων) **1 Pt 3:8**. W. numerous other qualifications: of deacons Pol 5:2 and elders 6:1 (for the mng. *good-hearted* in *1 Pt 3:8* and Pol 6:1 s. ESelwyn, First Peter ’46, 188f). εὐ. εἰς τινα toward someone **Eph 4:32**.—DELG s.v. σπλήν. TW.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 413.]

²⁶Cf. Acts 1:18, Luke 1:78, Col. 3:12, Phil. 1:8, 2:1, 2 Cor. 6:12, 7:15, 1 John 3:17, Phlm. 12, 20.

²⁷Cf. Matt. 9:36, 14:14, 15:32, 18:27, 20:34, Mark 1:41, 6:34, 8:2, 9:22, Luke 7:13, 10:33, 15:20.

²⁸The translations “a tender heart” and “with tender hearts” adopt a legitimate translation method of replacing an ancient figurative expression with a different modern figurative expression that has similar meaning. When confronted with figurative language in the source text, Bible translators have three options for translating it into the receptor language: 1) use the same figurative expression so long as the meaning is the same; 2) translate the figurative expression by a non-figurative direct meaning; 3) use a different figurative expression that has similar, if not the same, meaning as the figurative expression in the source language. For details see Lorin L. Cranford, “Translating the Text,” cranfordville.com.

²⁹“ταπεινόφρων, ον (ταπεινός, φρήν) gen. -ονος (in Plut. Mor. 336e; 475e and Iambl., Protr. 21, 15p. 115, 23 Pistelli=‘fainthearted’) in our lit. **humble** (Pr 29:23; Leontius 26 p. 56, 22) **1 Pt 3:8** (v.l. φιλόφρονες); B 19:3; Hm 11:8 (w. πραῦς and other adjs.). πρὸς τὰς μεγαλορημοσύνας αὐτῶν ὑμεῖς ταπεινόφρονες you are to be humble in contrast to their boastfulness IEph 10:2 (w. πραεῖς).—Subst. ὁ ταπεινόφρων 1 Cl 38:2 v.l. τὸ ταπεινόφρον humility 19:1. S. Leivestad s.v. ταπεινός.—DELG s.v. ταπεινός. EDNT. TW. Sv.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 989-90.]

sider this a virtue, but rather a weakness.³⁰ Although the adjective ταπεινόφρων, -ov is only found here, the verb ταπεινώ³¹ and the noun ταπείνωσις³² are commonly used expressions in the New Testament. One has to carefully distinguish between the idea of being humble and of suffering humiliation. Both ideas are carried by the verb and the noun. The adjective is used with the sense of 'humble' only. The adjective here is closely linked to εὐσπλαγχνοι, which precedes it in this list.³³

The listing of these five adjectives is done in typical virtue listing fashion without a stated verb: πάντες ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὐσπλαγχνοι, ταπεινόφρονες.... (= all harmonious, sympathetic, loving brothers, tender hearted, humble...). This, along with only the participle verbal expressions, ἀποδιδόντες & εὐλογοῦντες, in verse nine, reflect the dependency of 3:8-12 on the foundational concepts in 2:11-13.

Peter challenges us to give serious consideration to incorporating these important traits into our living and relationships with others around us, and especially to fellow believers. Unlike in the pagan moral teachings of the Stoicism et als. of Peter's day, these are not qualities to be incorporated through self-disciplined determination and thus to be viewed as significant personal achievements that make us a superior person. Rather, they are qualities emerging from the very character of our God who through His Spirit in us enables these qualities to be developed in ways that bring glory and honor to God. Thus, we must never wear them as 'spiritual badges' that parade our 'righteousness' before others!

Responding to abuse: μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἢ λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας, τούναντίον δὲ εὐλογοῦντες ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλήθητε ἵνα εὐλογίαν κληρονομήσητε.³⁴ The focus shifts somewhat here to relations with non-Christians who possess hostility to the believers. The semi-poetic nature of the expression makes use of Hebrew parallelism in the following manner:

- μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ (-1) = actions
- ἢ ----- λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας (-2) = words
- + τούναντίον δὲ εὐλογοῦντες (+3) = words

The first two strophes are negative in thrust and are synonymous in nature, while as a unit they stand as the opposites of the third strophe, which is in antithetical parallelism to them. The present tense participle ἀποδιδόντες ("giving back") governs the first two strophes and references seeking revenge.

Believers are not to return κακὸν and λοιδορίαν in kind, following even the OT eye for an eye principle. The concept is about seeking revenge.³⁵ Instead, for κακὸν and λοιδορίαν they are to give back the actions

³⁰Cf. They must be *humble*. Humility was not considered a virtue in the Hellenistic world, but in the New Testament it is spoken of as a good quality of life (compare Eph 4:2; Phil 2:3 and following; Gal 5:23). Perhaps the attitude of Jesus (for example, Matt 11:29) has influenced Christians to think of humility as a virtue rather than as a sign of weakness. An expression equivalent to humble is frequently expressed from a negative standpoint, for example, 'do not feel proud' or 'do not make yourself big'." [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 98.]

³¹Cf. Matt. 18:4, 23:12, Luke 3:5, 14:11, 18:14, Phil. 2:8, 4:12, 2 Cor. 11:7, 12:21, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6.

³²Cf. Luke 1:48, Acts 8:33, Heb. 11:20, Phil. 3:21.

³³εὐσπλαγχνοι, ταπεινόφρονες 'have compassion and be humble in your attitudes (toward one another)' 1 Pe 3:8." [Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament : Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996), 747.]

³⁴μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ, 'Do not return evil for evil.' At the same time that the participial imperative is resumed, the parallel with Rom 12 becomes markedly closer. The whole expression agrees word for word with Rom 12:17, except for μὴ in place of μηδενί (cf. also 1 Thess 5:15; Pol. Phil. 2.2). Though Peter (like Paul) may still have in mind relationships among believers and incidents that could occur even in that context, he now concentrates more (again, like Paul) on relationships with outsiders, in Peter's case especially with those who slander the Christian community (cf. 2:12, 15). Goppelt rightly observes (225) that although the thought agrees with Jesus' commands in the synoptic Gospels to love enemies, the terminology is more closely related to catechetical tradition largely preserved in Paul's letters. The likely purpose of such tradition was to instill among new converts in the simplest way possible the core of Jesus' teaching on nonretaliation (for similar formulations, cf. Polyaeus, *Strategemata* 5.11 [ed. J. Melber, repr. 1970]; also *Paroemiographi Graeci*: Apostol. 18.33: both cited in BGD, 398.3)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 177.]

³⁵The noun λοιδορία is found in the NT only here and in 1 Tim 5:14, where 'the enemy' (probably Satan, 5:15) is explicitly in view. The verb λοιδορεῖν is used significantly in a context of nonretaliation, both by Paul (referring to himself) in 1 Cor 4:12 and by Peter (referring to Jesus) in 2:23 (on which see Comment). Paul's contrast of λοιδορούμενοι and εὐλογοῦμεν in 1 Cor 4:12 (cf. also Diogn. 5.15, characterizing Christians generally) may have been part of an early catechetical formulation (loosely based on a saying of Jesus similar to Luke 6:28) that influenced Peter as well. In any case, the choice of words (both here and in 2:23) is attributable in part to Peter's apparent fondness for rich and varied vocabulary in describing the sins of speech: cf., e.g., καταλαλεῖν ('accuse,'

of blessing. Paul had something similar to say in Rom. 12:17, “Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all” (μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες· προνοούμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων). Peter and Paul both echo Jesus’ words in Matt. 5:38-42:

38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; 40 and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; 41 and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. 42 Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

A close affinity of wording here with 2:23 in the non-retaliation stance of Christ stands clearly in the background of Peter’s admonition.³⁶ Christ has set the example that believers must follow when they experience hostility from non-believers.

Thus Peter calls upon believers to implement certain virtues into their living, and by so doing, have their responses to hostile treatment tempered by the non-retaliation that Jesus exemplified when appearing before Pilate during His Passion. Peter skillfully made use of two distinct sets of paraenesis materials, some of which most likely was circulated as an early Christian set of instructions to believers. He stands with the apostle Paul in encouraging similar stances for believers to adopt.

The challenge is incorporating them into our daily living. But the beautiful aspect is that we are not left to our own feeble resources like the pagans of Peter’s day when the philosophers pushed similar sets of virtues off on them. They were called upon to rigidly discipline themselves and their wills in order to live by such rules through sheer determination. The consolation was the pride of personal achievement that lifted them to a superior level over common people without such virtues.

For the believer, however, the incentive is expressed at the end of verse nine: “It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing” (ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο³⁷ ἐκλήθητε ἵνα εὐλογίαν κληρονομήσητε). God has summoned us to live at this higher level of non-retaliation. Why? So that He can bless us.³⁸ The primary focus of the language of ‘inheriting a blessing’ is eschatological. The blessing is the eternal life granted to us at the coming of Christ. Believers in this life are on a journey headed for home. When others criticize or throw up obstacles to distract them from this journey, believers don’t try to extract revenge either through words or actions. Rather they ‘bless’ such enemies in the manner both taught and exemplified by Jesus. Their focus is on getting home to the Heavenly Father to realize the ultimate blessing of God in eternity. Revenge and retaliation are distractions from this journey that they don’t have time for.

This is our challenge from the apostle Peter!

b. Scripture basis for doing so, vv. 10-12

10 For “Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; 11 let them turn away from evil and do good; let them 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

2:12; 3:16; cf. 2:1), ἐπιηράζειν (‘denounce,’ 3:16); βλασφημεῖν (‘blaspheme,’ 4:4, 14b); ὀνειδίζειν (‘ridicule,’ 4:14a).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 177.]

³⁶ὅς λαιδορούμενος οὐκ ἀντελοιδορεῖ,
πάσῃ οὐκ ἠπέλει,
παρεδίδου δὲ τῷ κρίνοντι δικαίως·

³⁷What τοῦτο (‘this’) refers to is debated. Probably, it reaches back to the non-retaliation statements that preceded it. But it can easily be understood also to reach forward to the purpose clause ἵνα εὐλογίαν κληρονομήσητε. Alternatively, the pre-position of εἰς τοῦτο may very well be intended by Peter to cover both references.

³⁸“The phrase εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλήθητε repeats 2:21a, where τοῦτο pointed back to the responsibility of slaves to ‘do good,’ even in the face of unjust suffering, in 2:18–20. The phrase here points back in a similar way to a similar responsibility—i.e., to repay abuse and insult with blessing. Some (e.g., Kelly, 137; Goppelt, 228) have suggested instead a reference forward to the ἵνα-clause that follows: ‘for to this you are called—namely, to inherit blessing’ (cf. εἰς τοῦτο ... ἵνα in 4:6). Both the strong analogy with 2:21 and the immediate highlighting of the virtues of vv 8–9 in the psalm quotation of vv 10–12 support the reference to what precedes (cf. Best, 130; Piper, 224–28). Ethically, Christians are called to holy conduct and nonretaliation (cf. 1:15; 2:21); eschatologically, they are called to God’s ‘marvelous light’ (2:9) or ‘eternal glory’ (5:10). The thrust of vv 8–12 is ethical, even though Peter affords his readers a momentary reminder of their eschatological reward (cf. Luke 6:37b–38: ‘... forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given you.... with the measure that you measure, it will be measured to you in return’; similarly here, the thought is, ‘Bless, and you will be blessed’).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 178-79.]

against those who do evil.”

10 ὁ γὰρ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπᾶν καὶ ἰδεῖν ἡμέρας ἀγαθὰς παυσάτω τὴν γλῶσσαν ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ χεῖλη τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι δόλον, 11 ἐκκλινάτω δὲ ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποιησάτω ἀγαθόν, ζητησάτω εἰρήνην καὶ διωξάτω αὐτήν· 12 ὅτι ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ὤτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν, πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιούντας κακά.

Notes:

Peter next gives a reason for his admonitions, taken from Psalm 34:12-16. The conjunction γὰρ introduces this quote from the Old Testament as the basis for what he has just said in verses 8-9. The apostle doesn't follow the standard pattern used by the gospel writers to introduce a quote from the Old Testament, such as Matthew 3:3, οὗτος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ῥηθεὶς διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος... (“For this is what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet saying...”). Even more common is that in Mark. 1:2, Καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐᾳ τῷ προφήτῃ... (“Just as it stands written in Isaiah the prophet...”).³⁹ Whatever his reasons, Peter instead opts to weave the OT text directly into his discussion. In order to strengthen the basis for such encouragement Peter turned to the Psalms for a text that advocated something similar to his words. He found it in Psalm 33:13-17 (34:12-16 in English Bible). The apostle adjusts the wording of the LXX to make it fit his use here, as the comparison below illustrates:

Psalm 33:13-17 (LXX)		1 Peter 3:10-12	
13	<i>τίς ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος</i> ὁ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπῶν ἡμέρας ἰδεῖν ἀγαθὰς;†	← 1 →	10 ὁ γὰρ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπᾶν
		← 2 →	καὶ ἰδεῖν ἡμέρας ἀγαθὰς
14	παῦσον τὴν γλῶσσαν σου ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ χεῖλη σου τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι δόλον.†	← 3 →	παυσάτω τὴν γλῶσσαν ἀπὸ κακοῦ
		← 4 →	καὶ χεῖλη τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι δόλον,
15	ἐκκλινον ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποιήσον ἀγαθόν, ζήτησον εἰρήνην καὶ δίωξον αὐτήν.†	← 5 →	11 ἐκκλινάτω δὲ ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποιησάτω ἀγαθόν,
		← 6 →	ζητησάτω εἰρήνην καὶ διωξάτω αὐτήν·
16	ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους, καὶ ὤτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν.†	← 7 →	12 ὅτι ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους
		← 8 →	καὶ ὤτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν,
17	πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιούντας κακά τοῦ ἐξολεθρεῦσαι ἐκ γῆς τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῶν.†	← 9 →	πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιούντας κακά.
		10	
Psalm 33:13-17 (LXX)		1 Peter 3:10-12	
13	<i>Who is the man</i> who is wishing to love life in order to see good days?	← 1 →	10 For the one wishing to love life
		← 2 →	<i>and</i> to see good days,
14	Stop <i>your</i> tongue from evil, and <i>your</i> lips so that they do not speak deceit.	← 3 →	let him stop his tongue from evil,
		← 4 →	and his lips so that he does not speak deceit,
15	Turn away from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.	← 5 →	11 and let him turn away from evil and let him do good,
		← 6 →	let him seek peace and let him pursue it,
16	The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are for their petitions.	← 7 →	12 <i>because</i> the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous
		← 8 →	and His ears are for their petitions,
17	But the face of the Lord is against evildoers, <i>in order to banish every remembrance of them.</i>	← 9 →	but the face of the Lord is against evildoers.
		10	

From this comparison, one can more easily note the similarities and differences between the two texts. Although Peter doesn't change the meaning, he does change spellings of words and some words even so that the text flows with the grammar of his writing. What Peter does here is fairly typical for most writers in the ancient world. Modern patterns of citation of sources differs considerably from the ancient world.

The Psalm raises the rhetorical question in verse 13: “Who is the man desiring to love life and to see good days?” (#s 1-2). Then verses 14-17 (#s 3-10) answer this question with a series of affirmations touching on words, actions, and relationships (vv. 14-15; #s 3-6). The affirmation of these admonitions is found in verses 16-17 (#s 7-10) stating that God both watches over and hears the cries of the righteous, but sets his face against the one doing evil so that remembrance of him may be eliminated from the earth.

Peter adjusts the Psalm by inserting the heart of the rhetorical question as the subject of the sequence of the next four verbs in verses 10b-11 (#s 3-6). He interprets the reference to God's actions (v. 12, #s 7-9) as causal and introduces them with ὅτι (because). Also he eliminates the purpose infinitive of the psalm (# 10) from his quote.

³⁹“The citation of Ps 33:13–17 [34:12–16] LXX is woven into the argument without formal introduction, linked to what precedes only by γὰρ, ‘for.’ The quote, however, is adapted to its new context (contrast 1 Clem 22.2, where the quote is more formally introduced, and agrees almost verbatim with the LXX).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 179.]

The point of the quote is to show that divine principle revealed to ancient Israel in the psalm supports his admonitions to the Christians of Anatolia to incorporate certain virtues and a stance of non-retaliation into their lives. God promised to every Israelite wanting to love life in order to see good days that he would, if certain behavior were incorporated into his living. The Lord promised to look after such persons to make certain they realized their wish. And He warned that those doing evil would be eliminated from even the memory of others. Peter saw in these promises of God confirmation that what he was encouraging believers to do was completely in line with the divine promises God had already made to His people. And thus they were relevant to believers in Christ, and not just to the Israelites.

The language of both the psalm and Peter's use of it stress the following:

1 = a person wants to cherish life

2 = a person wants to experience good days

3 = to achieve these he must keep his tongue from speaking evil

4 = also he must keep his lips from speaking deceit (synonymous parallelism 3 // 4)

5 = he must stop doing evil and start doing good

6 = he must seek peace seriously in hard pursuit of it

7 = God's eyes watch over in protection the righteous

8 = God's ears hear the cries of the righteous for help

9 = But God sets Himself against those doing evil

Thus Peter correctly uses the psalm to make his point to his readers. When a believer lives in harmony with God's ways, he will enjoy the watch care and protection of God. This means life is attractive and his days are filled with good things. Such will indeed prepare the believer to inherit God's full blessing at the coming of Jesus back to the earth. And we must not forget the warning that refusal to follow God's ways brings down God's wrath that is overwhelming.