

Title: We're in a Band!
Date: October 21, 2018
Subject: how relationships factor into submission and suffering
Scripture: 1 Peter 3:8 - 14

Peyton Manning was a 14-time all-pro quarterback, 5-time MVP, and 2-time Super Bowl winner. Now he stars with in commercials for Nationwide Insurance. Some of the early ones featured him humming, muttering and singing “Nationwide is on your side” and speaking things in the same rhythm. Now he’s teamed with country music great Brad Paisley. Manning gets to show off his comedic chops as he tries to convince Paisley they’re in a band. For instance, when the duo steps off a tour bus. Paisley has his guitar and is ready to write a song about the kind of insurance the homeowners are needing. Manning says something about it being about two kinds. “What do you call it? A crossover.” “No. It’s a mashup.” “See. That’s what makes us a great band.” Paisley turns to leave, “We’re not a band.” The commercial ends as the former QB geekily gushes as he stares into the distance as he utters, “Yes, we are. I’m in a band.”

Manning may not be in a band but Christ followers are.

READ 1 Peter 3:8-12.

“Finally” doesn’t mean the end of the book is just around the next curve, but that we’ve come to the conclusion of the topic, a summary on submission.

A recap from the beginning of 1 Peter shows God has given us a living hope by identifying us with what Jesus Christ did on the cross when we could do nothing to save ourselves. We’ve experienced God’s forgiveness. Received his grace and mercy. He has made us His people. Because of our relationship with God, we are to live according to his plan and agenda of holiness for our lives. He turns us into living stones so that along with other believers we form God’s dwelling, his home. We are to live our lives in such a way that those who don’t have a relationship with God will recognize that we do through our positions as citizens, workers, wives and husbands.

I. Live in harmony.

The newest NIV says “be like minded.” Others translate it as “be of one mind, have unity of mind, like-minded.” The overall command is to be unified but not uniform.

A high school band has a variety of instruments ranging from the oompah of the tuba to the shrill twitter of the piccolo, from the pounding of the percussion to the blare of the brass. Imagine if the band were to hold a concert and each instrumentalist picked what song they were going to play for the first number. Some might pick a pop top 40, another Sprague Zarathustra, another The William Tell overture, another Sousa’s Stars and Stripes Forever and so on. Each would start playing when the conductor lowers his baton. They’d play their song at their tempo. It would be a mess. In order for it to have a chance to sound good, the whole band

has to play the same song in the same key with instruments tuned to each other at the same tempo. Even if playing the same song have to play at the same speed. Aren't competing to see who could get down first. I think that happened in my high school band where someone finished the song before the rest. Complementary roles with each having a part and no instrument being able to play all the parts.

The members of God's band have different instruments but are to be playing the same song – God's song. They have to be in tune with one another. This is achieved by tuning to the same source, the Master. In that way we can make beautiful music together. The rest of the passage explains how to live in harmony.

1. Be sympathetic. It means to suffer together. We are to walk in other peoples' shoes. Know what others are going through. Be responsive so can feel what others feel. Being sensitive to the troubles and difficulties and sorrows of others. When they hurt, we hurt. The good news is that when they rejoice, we can rejoice. That's not really sympathy but it's part of our connectedness.

In a "Peanuts" cartoon, Lucy says to Snoopy: "There are times when you really bug me, but I must admit there are also times when I feel like giving you a big hug." Snoopy replies: "That's the way I am . . . huggable and buggable." Even though we can be buggable (hard to believe, isn't it?) and others can be buggable (no doubt about it) we are to come alongside each other to bear their burdens.

The opposite is uncaring and self-focused.

2. Love. This comes as the result of being in God's family. We are to show to others in the family the love the Father has shown to us. We are to copy his example of reaching out to others. He wanted the best for others (forgiveness of sins, eternal life) so he gave the best (his only Son Jesus) he had. His love is sacrificial. We should want the best in other's lives. This means for them to come into relationship with the Lord and then grow. We should give our best and make sacrifices for others. The opposite would be rude, putting others down and being inconsiderate.

3. Compassionate. The original word references the place ancients viewed as the core of the being, the place where deep and intense feelings and emotions originate – the intestines. They sometimes called it the bowels of mercy. Sort of "I love you with every part of my liver." Sounds strange to us but it was normal to them. The expression was principally used for courage. A person had guts. We still use those body parts but in a different manner. "I had a gut feeling that wouldn't work out."

The current expression of the word comes across as feeling with the heart, being soft-hearted. The opposite would be hard-hearted, not open to other.

A couple was looking forward to date night as it was the time of year for their birthdays. The wife had planned for friends to meet them for a surprise party for her husband at a favorite Chinese restaurant. When they got in the car, the husband suggested, "Let's go out for Mexican food." His wife calmly said, "I'd really prefer Chinese food tonight." The husband came back, "No, I'd really like a big enchilada!" They went back and forth and it became obvious to the wife that he had chosen to be demanding, unreasonable, and interested only in his own food cravings. Finally, she screamed in frustration, "You dope! I have a surprise party planned

for you at the Chinese restaurant. We have to go there.” To her even greater frustration, he burst out laughing, which made her even angrier. He laughed so hard that it took him five minutes to tell her that he had planned a surprise party for her—at the Mexican restaurant (Marilyn Anderes, *Discipleship Journal* [date unknown]).

Both were being loving and compassionate.

4. Humble. It’s a recognition of our position that we’re on the same level as other believers. It puts a limitations on our tendency toward feeling superior to others. It acknowledges that we have weaknesses, needs, and failures. It admits fault. It extends to viewing others as better than ourselves (Phil 2:3). This whole sections sounds a lot like Philippians 2.

The opposite is pride.

5. Not repay evil with evil. There are people who mock followers of Christ. They engage in name-calling. They slander and are malicious. They lash out against Christ followers as being intolerant and feeling superior. They may even descend to physically attack.

The natural reaction when bad is done to us is to prepare to do battle. Prep for the fight, to retaliate in kind or ratchet up the response to the mistreatment we receive. Gossip. Give the cold shoulder. Spread lies. Bad mouth.

Instead we are to not repay evil for evil. At first I was going to limit this comment to those who don’t know Christ as Savior, to those who are unfriendly to Christ followers or even hostile. Unfortunately, we can’t do that as sometimes those in the family of God may do evil to us.

When we’re mistreated at work, in our families, at school, how are we to respond? God says we are to be witnesses of the life-changing power of Jesus in us. We’re to respond to those who treat us unfairly even as the Lord responded to we who treated him unfairly.

Don’t answer abuse with more abuse. Don’t top a put down of you with a better put down of him. Don’t counter her name-calling by calling her names. Don’t rebut his sarcasm with more sarcasm. Don’t react to her attack by attacking her. Don’t blast when blasted upon. Don’t throw rotten tomatoes, be critical, angry, or accusatory. No attempts to shred the other’s reputation. Don’t lower selves to engage in the tactics that have been used against us. Keep our mouths firmly clamped shut. Do active good.

It had been raining in Seattle, as it often did, and the ground was wet. Though the college campus had plenty of sidewalks, students also cut shortcuts across the lawn which had turned muddy in spots because of the precipitation. Bob and a buddy used one of the shortcuts on their way to their next class. As they approached a muddy spot, an obviously-hurried female student attempted to rush around them.

Unfortunately, her quick step caused her to slip. As she attempted to regain her balance, her books flew into the air. Fortunately, Bob’s friend was close enough that she could reach out to grab him and steady herself. He would be the hero. Unfortunately, he thought she was going to attack him. She fell face first into the mud. The trio froze then the guys watched as the woman retrieved her books and hurried away.

The guy thought she was going to attack him. The only thing he could think of was to get out of the way the expected evil and let her fall. He could have been there in her time of need and been a blessing to her. We are called to bless others by speaking blessing and acting in ways that give a blessing.

6. Bless. Before modern fire-fighting techniques fire fighters utilized bucket brigades. They would grab water from a well or pond and pass it down the line to the person closest to the fire who would throw the contents on the fire. Now imagine what it would be like if they passed buckets of gas and that was thrown on the fire. But that's sometimes what happens. Some people throw a bucket of gas on the other person who is fuming and flames are coming from his tongue and heart. That would be returning evil for evil. We're to throw buckets of water, and not to drown the other person but refresh them. Do we throw a bucket of water or a bucket of gas?

Giving a blessing is not merely cutting the person some slack. Sometimes it's to not say something. Keep our tongues from evil and our lips from deceitful speech. Respond with kind words and loving actions. We are to speak with kindness even when someone treats us with evil or insult. When Jesus was being crucified, he asked the Father to forgive those who were crucifying him. That prayer for forgiveness reverberates through the centuries down to us, for the Father to forgive us as sinners. We are to forgive as we've been forgiven.

7. Seek peace. Kind of a restatement of harmony.

A mother said to her son, "I won't take you and your friends to the zoo if you don't forgive Billy for stealing your candy bar." Her son complained "But Billy doesn't want to be forgiven. He won't even listen." "Then *make him*," his mother said angrily. Suddenly, her son chased Billy, knocked him to the ground, sat on him, and yelled, "I forgive you for stealing my candy bar, but I'd sure find it easier to forget if you'd wipe the chocolate off your mouth!" (Josephine Ligon, "Your Daffodils Are Pretty," *Christianity Today* [3/2/79], p. 18). Not exactly the way to get someone to listen to our request to be forgiven. And it's not the way to not repay evil for evil. And certainly not the way to seek peace with others. But it hopefully it will serve to remind us to pursue peace, in a good way.

We were called to this kind of lifestyle. It's part of who we are as Christ followers. We are to be people of grace because that's the character of God and we are his children who are to live out the family likeness.

The truth is we have a choice as to how we're going to act. Each situation – when an enemy defames us, when someone maligns us, when the boss picks on us because of Christ, when we're insulted – provides the opportunity to exercise our choice to turn from evil and to do the good. Turn from sins such as anger, violence, greed, living for self. Do good to others such as offer a blessing, turn the other cheek, help the enemy with a project, provide for their needs. Our mouths and actions are to be consistent with our calling.

Peter directs us to our desired destiny.

II. The goal is to inherit a blessing from God. Vv. 9, 10, 12

We often think of our inheritance as what we'll receive in heaven. Jesus challenges his followers to store up treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:20). Paul reminds us that the Holy Spirit who works in Christ followers

is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession (Ephesians 1:14). Peter, in the opening verses of his book, said that because of Jesus and our relationship with him, we have an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for us (1 Peter 1:4). Our future inheritance is an essential component of what the Lord has for us.

The quote from Psalms reveals another element of the inheritance. Perhaps it could be phrased as the abundant life that Jesus said he would provide (John 10:10). There is something for the here and now. This verse shouldn't be used as a launching pad for what the health and wealth purveyors push – that followers of Christ will be rich, healthy, etc. The context quickly argues against that sort of misreading as these verses come in the middle of a lengthy teaching about suffering that is part of the life of Christ followers.

This life won't be our best life now in prosperity teachers' understanding. It can be our best life now as God will be on our side and won't be opposing us. REREAD 12.

God is with his children now, even in the midst of suffering and difficulty. His eyes are on us. Jesus reminds us that the Lord takes care of the sparrows. Did you ever think about that? God knows how many sparrows there are and where they are and what kind of food they like and where the food needs to be and directs the sparrow to find the food. And he does that for all the birds, and the fish in the ocean, and other animals. Since he does that for animals, He'll take care of us, his special creation made in his image.

God is actively opposing those who are evil, who aren't his children even though they may have power and fame and money and health and it seems like nothing bad ever happens to them. And if the Lord has the evil in his crosshairs, we don't have to. We aren't to act as the enemy of those who do evil.

In addition, we aren't to get freaked out by their activity. V. 14, "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." Usually, people who do good don't have anything to be afraid of because generally people like having people around who do good. They like it when people feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, create peace and extend love. People who follow the Lord, put his commands and principles into practice, are in a good spot.

However, there are those rare times when doing good won't protect Christ followers. "But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed." God will reward us.

To play the piano properly a person puts his fingers on the white or black keys. If the finger were shifted a little one way or the other, the pianist's fingers would then be on the breaks between the keys. Two neighboring notes would sound at the same time. The piano would sound out of tune. A beginning piano student may be allowed to play that way, until it drives the teacher nuts. Playing between the keys definitely wouldn't be acceptable for a concert pianist. We are to play in harmony.