

May 4, 2008 by Steve Brandon



# The Good Life - A Call to Purity

## 1 Peter 3:10-12

- 1. Watch Your Speech (verse 10b).**
- 2. Watch Your Actions (verse 11a).**
- 3. Watch Your Relationships (verse 11b).**
- 4. He Watches (verse 12).**

In our exposition of 1 Peter, we find ourselves midway through chapter 3 at verses 10-12. Let's begin by considering the passage.

1 Peter 3:10-12

For, "The one who desires life, to love and see good days,  
must keep his tongue from evil and his lips 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 upon the righteous,  
and His ears attend to their prayer,  
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

With these words, Peter introduces our subject this morning, which is, "The Good Life." You can see it right there in verse 10, "For, 'The one who desires life, to love and see good days.'"

As we have seen from our previous months in 1 Peter, he is writing to a people who are facing very difficult times. They are experiencing "various trials" (1:6). They are facing slander from those outside the church (2:12). Some are facing difficulties in the work environment (2:18-20). Some are facing hardships from within their own families (3:1). They were "suffering in the flesh" (4:1). They were being "reviled for the name of Christ." They were suffering as a Christian (4:16).

And yet, through it all, Peter promises "the good life" to those who would seek it. Here in America, we can think that "the good life" only exists when we have financial security, or when we have the toys of the world to occupy our time in pleasure, or when we have the stable job that provides for an opportunity to spend our weekends at the lake. In other words, we tend to look toward a life of ease.

But, that's not the good life that Peter is talking about here in verse 10. "The Good Life" isn't found in getting away from your trials. Rather, (as we shall see), the good life exists when you have the favor of God upon your life, so that you are saved through your trials. Consider well the words of verse 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 those who do evil." That's Peter's conclusion. "The good life comes when you so live in such a way that God's favor is upon you." The good life doesn't merely come when you receive blessings in this world. Rather, the good life comes when God sustains you through the troubles of the world.

I heard a man say this week, something to this effect, "The trials that I have faced in the past few years, I would wish on nobody. But, the lessons that I have learned from the Lord, I would not exchange for the world." That's Peter's message. That's my message this morning. The good life is found, not when you can enjoy the pleasures of life, but when you experiences the sustaining hand of God through the difficulties of life. And when you do, you will desire nothing other than the sustaining hand of God upon your life.

Now, Peter's message happened to be the exact message that David recorded for us in Psalm 34. As you can probably see in your Bible, these three verses that I read are a direct quotation from the Old Testament. Every single word comes from Psalm 34, with the exception of the first word, the word, "for." Everything else is from the Old Testament. As such, it calls us back to spend some time in Psalm 34 before coming to 1 Peter.

So let's consider Psalm 34 as an extended introduction to our text this morning. If you look at your Bible, you can see that Psalm 34 begins with a superscription, which describes the historical context to the Psalm, that is, the circumstances surrounding David's writing of this Psalm. The superscription reads, "A Psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed." These words are a reference to a circumstance that took place in David's life shortly before he wrote the words of Psalm 34. They are recorded for us in 1 Samuel 21.

So, let's consider 1 Samuel 21. These words will serve as a good introduction to Psalm 34, which will serve as a good introduction to our text. (Eventually, we will get back to Psalm 34).

1 Samuel 21 starts off with David on the run. He is fleeing from Saul, who wanted to kill him (1 Sam. 20:33). He's fleeing alone, without his best friend, Jonathan, without any protection (he has no armor or bodyguards to protect him), and without food. In his flight, he came to Nob

(verse 1), where he encountered a friend of his: a priest named Ahimelech. As David was hungry, he asked the priest for some food. Ahimelech gave them some of the sacred bread. Let's pick up the story in verse 8, ...

1 Samuel 21:8-10

David said to Ahimelech, "Now is there not a spear or a sword on hand? For I brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's matter was urgent." Then the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you would take it for yourself, take [it.] For there is no other except it here." And David said, "There is none like it; give it to me." Then David arose and fled that day from Saul, and went to Achish king of Gath.

At this point, you need to realize what David has done. He has fled the danger of Saul, only to arrive in a greater danger. He has jumped out of the frying pan and into the fire. Think about his new danger. First of all, he is alone. He has no one to defend him. He has no one to come to his aid. Second, he flees to Gath, as coastal town of the Philistines. During the days of David, the Philistines were great enemies of the Israelites. There were constant wars between them, fighting for the Shephelah, the hilly region between the Mediterranean Sea and the mountains of Jerusalem. Gath was a Philistine stronghold. He has come into the heart of enemy territory. Thirdly, he is carrying the sword of Goliath! Goliath was from the city of Gath. The sword that David was carrying was the very sword that he used to chop off the head of Goliath. And they recognized David. Look at verse 11, ...

1 Samuel 21:11-12

But the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of this one as they danced, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands?'" And David took these words to heart, and greatly feared Achish king of Gath.

David knew that his life was in great danger. David was public enemy number 1, walking into town, alone and without defense! Can you imagine Osama Bin Ladin, fleeing a skirmish in Afghanistan, only to find himself at ground zero in New York. People start talking, "Is this not Osama Bin Ladin, who orchestrated the acts of terror that resulted in the death of thousands of innocent Americans?" David was in trouble, and he knew it. His escape was ingenious, which is described in verse 13, ...

1 Samuel 21:13

So he disguised his sanity before them, and acted insanely in their hands, and scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down into his beard.

Children, I don't suggest this course of action the next time that you are in trouble and want to avoid being spanked. David's circumstances were unique, and not recommended for your application.

Back to David, you can only imagine this scene. His beard is soaking wet with the saliva that he refused to swallow. He was defacing the property of the Philistine city. You can probably assume that strange sounds were coming out of his mouth. His eyes were probably glazed over. But, his performance was so good that it would have earned him an Oscar award, which is what verse 14 indicates, ...

1 Samuel 21:14

Then Achish (who was also called "Abimelech") said to his servants, "Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why do you bring him to me? Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this one to act the madman in my presence? Shall this one come into my house?"

For some reason, the LORD turned the heart of the king of that place like channels of water to send David away (Prov. 21:1). He had escaped his danger. As chapter 22, verse 1 informs us, he escaped to "the cave of Adullam," where he was soon thereafter joined by some of his companions. It was in the cave, in relative security, that David wrote the words of Psalm 34.

And so, let's consider the words that David wrote in Psalm 34. This Psalm begins with David's determination to worship and praise the Lord. He says, ...

Psalm 34:1-2a

I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;

David's pledge here is to lift high the LORD! And his worship is not without its effect upon others. Verse 2 continues, ...

Psalm 34:2b

The humble shall hear it and rejoice.

Finally, David calls others to join him in worship.

Psalm 34:3

O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together.

What's so encouraging about this Psalm is the circumstances that surrounded it! David had been delivered from great danger. And His deliverance turned to worship. This is what the next four verses explain....

Psalm 34:4-7

I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears.  
They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces shall never be ashamed.  
This poor man cried and the LORD heard him, And saved him out of all his troubles.  
The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them.

David worshiped the LORD because he was delivered out of all his troubles. This is why we worship the LORD as well. We worship Him, because He saved us at the cross of Christ! Do you want to be stimulated in your worship? Reflect upon the cross on which the prince of glory died! Realize what God has saved you from. And then, you will be able to say with David, "I will bless the LORD at all times; and His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (verse 1).

Perhaps as you reflect upon your own desire to worship the LORD, it may seem as if you don't have much of a desire. Perhaps it is because you haven't been rescued from your sin. If this is you, I exhort you to call upon the Lord, in a day in which he can be found. Perhaps you are here this morning, and are trusting Christ, but are walking through some particular difficulties of life, and thus, are finding it difficult to worship the Lord. Well, take heart, because David turns from a worshiper (in verses 1-3) to a teacher in verses 8 and following. He will teach us how to rejoice through trials.

Psalm 34:8-10

O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!  
O fear the LORD, you His saints; For to those who fear Him, there is no want.  
The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing.

What a great picture of the goodness of God to those who trust in Him. Tribulation and distress and trials and persecutions all await the child of God. David will later say this in verse 19, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous." But, the goodness of God will see to it that he will be delivered out of them all (verse 19b). So, take refuge in the Lord (verse 8). So, fear the Lord (verse 9). Because, ... He is good.

The illustration of verse 10 is great.

Psalm 34:10

The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing.

We know that lion as "the king of the forest." He is the strongest and the mightiest of all animals. Among the lions, the young lions are the strongest, able to capture their prey with relative ease. But, even the strongest, of lions face times of hunger, when their prey gets away. But, in contrast to that, the one who seeks the Lord will not lack any good things (verse 10). In verse 11, David then explains how the fear of the LORD expresses itself.

Psalm 34:11

Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

Do you want to know the fear of the LORD? Do you want to know the goodness of God upon your life? Do you want to experience "the good life"? Look at verse 12, ...

Psalm 34:12-16a

Who is the man who desires life, And loves [length of] days that he may see good?  
Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit.  
Depart from evil, and do good; Seek peace, and pursue it.  
The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous, And His ears are [open] to their cry.  
The face of the LORD is against evildoers,

Peter quotes these words in our eventual text this morning. Suffice it to say here that David exhorts his listeners to a righteous life as the key to the good life! That's why the title of my message this morning is, "The Good Life - A Call to Purity." Each of David's exhortations are a call to righteousness. Now, at this point, I need to be clear, neither David nor Peter are saying that these actions merit salvation. Each of them would contend that you are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. However, the blessing of God comes upon those who live righteously.

Be righteous in what you say. Be righteous in what you do. Be righteous in your relationships. Why? Because the Lord is watching us. And His favor comes upon the righteous. But, His fury comes upon the unrighteous. Verse 16 ends with these chilling words, ...

Psalm 34:16b

... To cut off the memory of them from the earth.

When difficulties come, the righteous will live to see another day. The righteous will live to see the good days. But, with the wicked it isn't so. They may escape today. They may escape tomorrow. But, eventually, they will be cut off from all remembrance of the earth. The promise of deliverance comes in verses 17 and 18.

Psalm 34:17-18

[The righteous] cry and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles.  
The LORD is near to the brokenhearted, And saves those who are crushed in spirit.

One of the things that you really need to catch this morning is that righteous aren't protected from the trouble and hardship and difficulties of life. Rather, the righteous are protected **through** the trouble and hardship and difficulties of life. When the troubles come, those of faith cry out to the LORD, and He delivers them. When heartache comes, the LORD knows and will sustain us through those times. David concludes with a fine summary of how we ought to face the trials that come our way,

Psalm 34:19-22

Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But the LORD delivers him out of them all.  
He keeps all his bones; Not one of them is broken.  
Evil shall slay the wicked; And those who hate the righteous will be condemned.  
The LORD redeems the soul of His servants; And none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.

What has amazed me in studying this Psalm this week is that it's the message of 1 Peter! D. A. Carson points out that Peter alludes to this Psalm on up to eight occasions, saying that Peter refers to "Psalm 34 as a foundation passage for Christian ethics." [\[1\]](#) What is Psalm 34 teaching? It's not that the Christian life is free from trials. Rather, it's that the Christian will be brought through the trials. Or, to expand it a little bit, "**Suffer now**, and God will preserve you through your suffering, so that you will experience **glory later**."

This takes us back now to 1 Peter. After that long introduction (and background), we are now ready to understand Peter's point in chapter 3. The good life isn't obtained through possessions and pleasure. Rather, the good life is obtained through a life of faith that God will preserve **THROUGH** the difficulties of life. Do you want to live the good life? Live a life of purity.

Peter (and David) give us four application points. Number 1, ...

## 1. Watch Your Speech (verse 10b).

"The one who desires life, to love and see good days, must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit." (verse 10).

The point here is simply that you need watch what you say. Watch what comes out of your mouth. Peter tells us not to allow evil to come out of our mouths. Peter tells us not to allow deceitful things to come out of our mouths.

The Proverbs are packed with illustrations of the damage that our tongues can do. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21). You can say things that will absolutely destroy others. Parents, you can wound your children for a lifetime with the words that you say. Church family, you can wound people deeply with your words.

I know, because I have done it. I have wounded people with my words. I know because it has been done to me. There have been times that I have received an email, and have instantly broken down in tears, because of the crushing power of words. I remember a time when my wife was on the phone with someone. The words and the wrath and the anger came so strongly from the other side of the conversation that after hanging up the phone, my wife was physically shaking from shock at the depths of the anger that came from the one on the other side of the phone. I merely say with Peter, if you want to know the good life, keep such words far from your mouth.

"A fool's lips bring strife, and his mouth calls for blows" (Proverbs 18:6). It is your tongue that can bring contention and strife among people. It is your tongue that initiates the fights we have. Think in your mind about a time when you remember seeing people fighting with each other. Perhaps it was back in middle school, where I remember fights breaking out every week. Something happened which caused a hostility between two people. And then, the offending party lets the other party know how much they didn't appreciate what was done. And then, another sharp comment comes back. Pretty soon, they are yelling at each other. And then the punches come.

It's not that punches come first and the words follow. No, it's the words that provoke the fight. The punches follow the words. You can destroy people with your words. Your words start fights. Your words will ensnare you.

Consider another Proverb: "A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will not escape" (Proverbs 19:5). When you speak falsely against another person, your sin will find you out. You aren't going to escape from the lies that you tell. God has made this world in such a way that the falsehood that you speak is like a boomerang. It proceeds out of your mouth and floats around. Eventually, it will come back and harm you.

For your own good, let your mouth speak forth only what is good and right and honorable and edifying. "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear" (Eph. 4:29). Let your mouth speak forth what is good and edifying, that it might give grace to others.

Is this easy? No! It's incredibly difficult. Oh, how easy it is for our tongues to speak evil. It's easy because our tongues are wild and reckless and dangerous. James tells us that "every species of beasts and birds, or reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by

the human race. But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison" (James 3:7-8).

You can go to the zoo and see all sorts of wild and ferocious animals. You can see tigers. You can see grizzly bears. You can see elephants. You can see gorillas. You can see alligators. You can see piranhas. You can see wild boars. You can see all sorts of dangerous snakes: cobras and pythons and rattle snakes. But, one animal that you will never see caged up in a zoo is the human tongue. Nobody has learned how to tame the tongue.

The reason is really quite simple. Nobody has learned how to tame the human heart. See, the tongue isn't merely a muscle that rests in our mouth. Rather, our tongues are muscles that reach deep into our hearts. What is in our hearts comes out when we speak. And so, in order to tame the tongue, you need to tame the heart.

There is only one way to tame the heart. You need to give it to God! You need to confess your failures. You need to repent of your sins. You need to cry out to God for help. You need to tell God, "My heart is sinful and wicked and in need of much help. Change my heart, O God! Conform it to the image of your Son. Help me to stay away from gossip. Help me to refrain from speaking poorly of anyone. Help me to avoid complaining. Help me to insult no one." Only then will you be able to (1) Watch Your Speech (verse 10b).

In order to live the good life, not only do you need to watch Your speech (verse 10b). But, you also need to ...

## **2. Watch Your Actions (verse 11a).**

That is, the things that you do. Peter said in verse 11 (quoting from David), "He must turn away from evil and do good."

It doesn't take much to explain this! The words are simple and straightforward. Peter's words describe the act of repentance. They describe the act of turning from sin and seeking righteousness, turning from that which is bad, and turning to that which is good.

You might easily think of this like a kickoff returner, who avoids the opposing would-be tacklers.<sup>[2]</sup> Just imagine yourself being Devin Hester. The kickoff comes your way. It hangs in the air. You catch it. And now, you begin to head for paydirt on the other side, but there are many hindrances to you getting there. You have eleven guys running toward you, trying to tackle you. So, you start off to the right. As you head that way, you see that there are five guys coming your way, with only three blockers. And so, you turn to your left. And as you do, you notice a guy who tried to take the long way around the block and so you step up and follow into his gap toward the left. And just about that time, you see someone who beat his block, looking right at you. And so, you fake left and turn back to the right. A guy gets close to you and reaches out his hand to grab your jersey, so you dip your shoulder, and he misses high. Then, you come upon a guy on the ground, who's trying to grab at your heels, and so you give a little hop to get over him. And then, a guy comes from the right, shooting at your hips, and so, you stiff-arm him and turn up field. Just when you think that you are in the clear, someone grabs you around the waist, but they don't quite have their arms all of the way around you. And so, as you keep your legs moving, you are able to shed the tackle. And then, with nothing between you and the goal-line, you put forth all of your effort to run just as fast as you can to the goal line, so that you can earn six point for your team.

That's a great picture of what it means on a practical level to "turn away from evil and do good." Evil is all around us, beckoning to grab us and tackle us, and pull us down. It may come in many forms. It may come by way of your television. It may come by way of the things that you read. It may come by way of the internet. It may come in the form of another person, who agitates you and provokes a fight. It may come in the form of temptations that arise when facing difficulties of life, like losing a customer at work, like dealing with your declining health, like facing a wayward daughter, or like living with an unloving husband. And when these evil would-be tacklers come along, you are to avoid them like the plague. Stay away from them. Shun them. Stiff arm them.

In the midst of all of the evil, we need to keep our goal in mind. We need to head up-field. It does no good for Devin Hester to avoid the tacklers by heading backwards toward his own goal-line. Nor does it do him any good to merely go from side to side. Can you imagine him coming off the field after running back and forth across the field, only to be tackled without gaining any yards. When Lovie said, "What were you doing?" Devin says, "Coach, they didn't tackle me for 20 seconds. Wasn't that great?" See, it's not enough merely to avoid the evil. We also need to do the good.

God doesn't merely say, "You shall not have any gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). He also says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength" (Mark 12:30). God doesn't merely say, "Make no covenant with [the Hittites and the Gergashites and the Ammonites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites] and show no favor to them" (Deut. 6:1-2). He also says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18). This is the spirit of Paul's constant exhortations to put off the old man and put on the new man. It's not good enough merely to refrain from speaking lies, you must "speak truth ... with your neighbor" (Eph. 4:25). It's not good enough merely to refrain from stealing, you must turn around and give (Eph. 4:28). It's not good enough to steer clear of conflicts with other people, you need to reach out and be kind and loving toward others (Eph. 4:31-32). Or, as Paul wrote succinctly in Romans 12:9, "Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good."

Do you want to live the good life? (1) Watch Your Speech (verse 10b); (2) Watch Your Actions (verse 11a); and thirdly, ...

## **3. Watch Your Relationships (verse 11b).**

We find this in the last half of verse 11, "He must seek peace and pursue it."

At this point, Peter isn't talking about being at peace with God. He is talking about being at peace with others. The good life is a life of peace with other people. But, it's more than merely a life of peace. It's a life that "seeks" for peace. It's a life that "pursues" peace.

There is a very active flavor about Peter's words. He is calling for you to be active in your relationships, seeking peace and pursuing peace.

The idea here isn't that peace in your relationships simply "happens." Rather, the idea is that you are to go forward, making efforts in your relationships to establish peace. The idea is the same as Romans 14:19, "pursue the things that make for peace and the building up of one another."

I know from experience that, it's hard to pursue peace, once there has been a breach in a relationship. I know that it's hard. I've experienced it first hand. Nothing stresses my life more than when relationships are damaged and broken.

When there are issues that come up between my wife and I, it tears me up. It draws me to approach Yvonne and talk with her, put my arm around her, cry with her, pray with her, and establish peace.

When I've known conflict with people, it has torn me up inside. It's hard. It's hard to come and pursue peace. That's why Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matt. 5:9). It's hard work! Those people who make the effort to maintain and restore peace in a fractured relationship are blessed of the Lord. This is Peter's teaching as well. The good life is a life of experiencing peace with others.

You say, "Steve, how do I do this?" How can I be active in my relationships with other people? The key to it is found in verses 8 and 9, which we looked at last week. In those verses, Peter was calling his readers to a life of harmony. Peter gives us a list of seven how-to's. Be ...

1. Harmonious,
2. Sympathetic,
3. Brotherly,
4. Kindhearted,
5. Humble in spirit,
6. Not returning evil for evil,
7. Not returning insult for insult.

This is the way to "seek peace and pursue it."

Another good list is given in 1 Corinthians 13. We need to be loving. Be patient. Be kind. Don't seek your own. Don't be provoked. Don't take into account a wrong suffered. Bear all things. Believe all things. Hope all things. Endure all things.

At this point, I'll have you to note that when you are not at peace with others, don't consider it their problem. Rather, consider it your problem. You are called to sympathize with them. You are called to be brotherly toward them. You are called to have a kind heart as you interact with them. You are called to be humble in all of your dealings with them. You are called not to retaliate toward all of those who are against you.

There may be times where you seek to do all of these things, and there still is no peace in your relationship. In that case, Romans 12:18 applies, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."

In that case, give it to God. But, this doesn't mean that you give up. There are still some things that you can do. Even if you have a severed relationship, with no contact, you can still seek peace, by seeking the Lord's help. You can pray for those with whom you are having conflict. You can fast over the situation and plead for the Lord to change things. You can speak kindly to others of those in conflict with you.

Do you want to live the good life? (1) Watch Your Speech (verse 10b); (2) Watch Your Actions (verse 11a); (3) Watch Your Relationships (verse 11b); and finally, know that ...

#### **4. He Watches (verse 12).**

Verse 12 reads, "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."

This verse is the foundation of the good life. The only reason why we ever experience the good life is because the favor of the Lord is upon us. That's the point of the first two phrases, "the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears attend to their prayer."

God looks down from heaven and looks upon the children of men. And those who are living a life of faith, trusting God with their words, serving God with their lives, and seeking peace among others, God looks down upon them with favor. When they pray, He hears them. On the contrary, when the wicked pray, God ignores their prayer. And when His eyes fall upon them, His hand is against them.

Church family, here's my final application to you this morning. Live your life with a heavenly gaze. As you live your life, see the choices set before you for what they really are. They are often a choice between the blessing of God and the curse of God. However, they don't often have those labels. Sin is attractive to us! It calls. It beckons. It lures. It entices. But, in the end, it brings the curse of God.

Perhaps an illustration might help. Evil is like a cinnamon-sugar roll that is wrapped around a mud-ball. On the outside, it looks delicious. We want it badly. We think that it will bring us happiness. But, after we have taken a bite, pretty soon we have mud in our mouths and it is awful. If you had realized what was inside, you probably wouldn't have made the effort to eat it.

On the other hand, righteousness is like whole-wheat bread. It tastes pretty good. It is easily tolerated. But, it's not our first choice, like a cinnamon-sugar roll. But, think about what takes place after you eat your whole wheat bread. It doesn't wear off as quickly as the cinnamon-sugar roll. Rather, it's actually pretty good for you. And, you don't mind it so much.

This is just like good and evil. In the end, good really isn't too hard to do. Oh, it may not be the things that we want to do at the moment. But,

it's not intolerable. And, once done, we often feel good about what was done. How many of you have done the good and right thing, only later to regret it? That's not the case. We always look with fondness upon what we have done that is good.

Often, when the good choice is presented to you, it's not so much that you are dead-set against doing it. Rather, it merely appears to be difficult. For instance, it's Sunday afternoon and you are exhausted. You think about attending a home Bible study. But, you say, "I'm too tired. I can't come." But, then, you get up and go. And how many times have you come home and said, "That was good. I'm glad I went. My soul has been strengthened."

That's how God's economy works. The way of righteousness may seem to be hard at the time, but in the end, it is good. Sin is attractive and fun, but in the end, it is bitterness. It's all because God is watching us and blessing the righteous and cursing the unrighteous.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on May 4, 2008 by Steve Brandon.  
For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] D. A. Carson, Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, p. 1037.

[2] The seed for this illustration was taken from Matt Waymeyer's excellent message on this passage preached on September 10, 2006, entitled, "A Life of Blessing in the Body of Christ." You can chase it down here: <http://www.cbconc.org>.