

1 Peter 4:7-9

⁷ The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear-minded and sober, so that you can pray. ⁸ Above all, love one another deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Show hospitality to one another without complaining.

Berean Study Bible

⁷ The end of all things has now drawn near.
Therefore, be shrewd and sober going into prayers.
⁸ Prioritise fervent love among yourselves,
because love covers over a multitude of sins.
⁹ Hospitality to one another is to be without complaint.

My own translation

1

Living in the last days. 1 Peter 4:7-9

Successful living means being realistic. 4:7

Have a realistic inward look. "be sound-minded"
Have a realistic outward look. "sober"
Have a realistic upward look. "going into prayers"

Successful living means being relational. 4:8-9

My relationships are to be Godly. 8a "Prioritise, fervent love"
My relationships are to be gracious. 8b "covers over a multitude of sins"
My relationships are to be generous. 9 "Hospitality... without complaint"

2

Jesus is coming! So what? 1 Peter 4:7-9

So, prepare from the inside out. 4:7

I prepare my soul. 7 "be sound-minded"
I prepare my body. 7 "sober"
I prepare my spirit. 7 "going into prayers"

So, prepare from the outside further out. 4:8-9

I lift others up. 8a "Prioritise, fervent love"
I ease others down. 8b "covers over a multitude of sins"

I meet others equally. 9 “Hospitality... without complaint”

3

Healthy endings create healthy beginnings. 1 Peter 4:7-9

How victors prepare for healthy new starts. 4:7

Renew my mind. 7 “be sound-minded”

Reject distractions. 7 “sober”

Refresh my heart. 7 “going into prayers”

How victims prepare for healthy new starts. 4:7-8

Transition from victim to victor. v7

Love yourself as God loves you. v8a

Redefine yourself by your future, not your past. 8b “covers over a multitude of sins”

How villains prepare for healthy new starts. 4:7-9

Transition from villain to victor. v7

Love your victim; hate your sin. 8 “Prioritise, fervent love”

Sin is to be covered with love, which begins with repentance.

Practice generosity and grace. 9 “Hospitality... without complaint”

4

Would you look at this! 1 Peter 4:7-9

Look ahead. 4:7a

We are at the end of the beginning. 7a “The end of all things has now drawn near”

We are at the beginning of the end. “New Heavens and new earth”

Look beneath. 4:7b

Discover how deep you can reach. 7b “sound-minded and sober”

Discover how high you can reach. 7b “so that you can pray”

Look above. 4:8

Love is highest. 8a “above all. 1 Cor.13 “the greatest is love”

Love covers. 8b “covers over a multitude of sins”

Look among. 4:9

What we can do. 9a “Hospitality to one another”

How we can do it. 9b “without complaint”

Decluttering starts on the inside. 1 Peter 4:7-9

Unclutter your mind. 4:7

Choose your input. 7a "sound-minded and sober"

Choose your output. 7b "so that you can pray"

Undo your past. 4:8

Revise your future. 8a "Prioritise, fervent love"

Review your past. 8b "love covers over a multitude of sins"

Unchain your resources. 4:9

Open your hands. 9a "Show hospitality"

Open your hearts. 9b "without complaint"

Other possible titles

The end is near. Here is how to be ready.

End-time pray-ers.

Dealing with the sins of saints.

Sin: no 'cover up' but a 'cover over'.

What 'love one another' looks like.

Quotes and illustrations

8b "love covers over a multitude of sins"

A 'cover up' of sin is a bad thing because it protects the sinner, distancing them from the need of repentance and restitution. A 'cover over' of sin is a good thing because it protects the one who was sinned against, shielding them from blame, or ridicule. A 'cover over' also provides a blanket of comfort and healing for the victim. For example, "Because Joseph, Mary's betrothed, was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to quietly break off their engagement." Matthew 1:19

"Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins" Proverbs 10:12

"He who turns a sinner from the error of his ways will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins" James 5:20

Love's role is not to make sin sweeter. The role of love is to help sin to be put away.

If you find a bug in your coffee, do you put sugar in your coffee or do you get rid of the bug? Love is not sugar to be a 'cover up' the evil around us with sweetness. Rather, real love removes wrong.

9 "Hospitality to one another is to be without complaint."

"Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town." Luke 9:4

"Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house." Luke 10:7

Commentary

8 "love covers over a multitude of sins."

The Old Testament word "atonement" כָּפַר [Strong's H 3722, pronounced kaw-far] means "to cover over". This word occurs more than 100 times in the Old Testament. For example:

"⁶Then he must bring to the priest his guilt offering to the LORD: an unblemished ram of proper value from the flock. ⁷In this way the priest will make **atonement** for him before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for anything he may have done to incur guilt." Leviticus 6:7

When atonement is made, the blood of the innocent sacrifice covers the sin being confessed. When God looks, He sees the atoning covering of the blood, and that sacrificial blood atones for; or covers over, sin.

That is why the Psalmist can rightly rejoice in the atonement that covered his sin, saying: "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered." Psalm 32:1

By contrast, we cannot cover our own sins. "Whoever who covers their sins will not prosper. But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." Proverbs 28:13

When we come to the New Testament, we are introduced to a new concept, and we need to use a new word to describe it. That word is propitiation, and it describes what Jesus did when He was the innocent sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. For example:

"²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. ²⁵whom God put forward as a **propitiation** by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins." Romans 3:25

Another place where this word, ἱλαστήριον [Strong's G 2435] occurs is Hebrews 9:5 where it is used to describe the Mercy Seat, which was the top or lid of the Ark of the Covenant which resided in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and later in the temple. This shows the work of atonement, and the work of propitiation, are parallel. Both works bring about forgiveness of sin. The work of atonement foreshadows the completed work of propitiation.

In the Old Testament, the innocent sacrifice made atonement by covering sin. In the New Testament, the sacrifice of Jesus made propitiation by obliterating sin completely. Under the Old, the substitutionary animal could do no more than cover sin. Under the New, Jesus could take our sin because He is also human; and He could take everyone's sin because He is bigger than everyone; He is God.

Up until the year 30 AD all those who were righteous, did not go to Heaven when they died. They went to Paradise (Luke 16:19-31, and Luke 23:43). The reason why they could not go to Heaven is because Heaven is a place of sinless perfection, and even though their sin had been covered by the atoning blood and they had been forgiven, nevertheless, their sin still existed. It was only when Jesus came and took their sin away by His propitiation that they were then free to enter the sinlessness of Heaven. So, when Jesus ascended back to Heaven in triumph, He took with Him all the redeemed from Paradise (which is now empty). When a believer dies today, they are absent from the body but present with the Lord in Heaven.

Peter, as the Apostle to the Jews (Galatians 2:7), naturally used a term that was very familiar to the Jews. That term was "atonement", for they knew that in atonement, God's love covered their multitude of sins.

Other useful material

With thanks to Leslie Vernick. More helpful material is found at this site.

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/explore-the-bible/does-love-cover-a-multitude-of-sins.html>

Serious and repetitive sin is lethal to any relationship. We would not be loving the destructive person if we kept quiet and colluded with his self-deception or enabled his sin to flourish without any attempt to speak truth into his life (Ephesians 4:15). Yes, we are called to be imitators of Christ and live a life of love; however, let's be careful that as Christian counselors we do not put a heavy burden on someone to do something that God himself does not do. God is gracious to the saint and unrepentant sinner alike, but he does not have a close relationship with both. He says our sins separate us from him (Isaiah 59:2; Jeremiah 5:25).

When someone repeatedly and seriously sins against us and is not willing to look at what he's done and is not willing to change, it is not possible to have a warm or close relationship. We've, at times, misrepresented unconditional love to mean unconditional relationship. Jesus' conversations with the Pharisee's are examples of him challenging their self-deception and pride so they would repent and experience true fellowship with him (Matthew 23). He loved them, but they did not enjoy a loving or safe relationship. Jesus never pretended otherwise. Let's not encourage our counselees to pretend and placate. Jesus never did.

A marriage or relationship that has no boundaries or conditions is not psychologically healthy nor is it spiritually sound. It enables a repeatedly destructive spouse to continue to believe the lie that the rules of life don't apply to him, and if he does something hurtful or sinful, he or she shouldn't have to suffer the relational fallout. That kind of thinking is not biblical, or healthy, or true. It harms not only their marriage; it harms everyone involved.

For the welfare of the destructive person and his or her marriage, there are times we must take a strong stand. To act neutrally in the matter only enables the person's self-deception to grow unchallenged. Scripture warns, "He who conceals his sins does not prosper" (Proverbs 28:13).

The problem for the destructive person is that he or she has been unwilling to acknowledge his part of the destruction. She's been unwilling to confess or take responsibility or get the help she needs to change her destructive ways. Instead, she's minimized, denied, lied, excused, rationalized, or blamed others.

Confronting someone and/or implementing tough consequences should never be done to scold, shame, condemn or punish. As biblical counselors, we have one purpose—to jolt someone awake with the strong medicine of God's truth or the reality of tough consequences. We hope that by doing so, they will come to their senses, turn to God, and stop their destructive behaviors for the glory of God, their own welfare, and the restoration of their marriage.

Music and songs

Songs about "the end of all things is near" v7

Glory and power to the One... See Him coming. Ot 5

Jesus is coming again. CWH 91

Jesus is coming soon. CWH 71

The King is coming. Ot 40

Troublesome times are here [Jesus is coming soon]

Songs about "be sound-minded" v7

A new mind. Ot 104

May the mind of Christ my Saviour. H 491

Songs about "prayer" v7

Before You I kneel / a worker's prayer. Ot 98

I'm praying for you. Ot 33

Prayer (Petra)

Standing in the need of prayer. FE 18

What a friend we have in Jesus. H

Whisper a prayer. CWH 85

You've got to pray every day.

Songs about "love among yourselves" v8

A new commandment. 232 / SiS 12

Forgive me, my friend.

Friends (Michael W Smith)

Friends, all in the family of God (Petra)

Let there be love shared among us. SiS 322

Thank you Lord for my special friends, Ot 56

True Friend (Twila Paris)

Songs about "hospitality" v9

Brother, sister, let me serve you. SiS 256

With a prayer you fed the hungry... Love incarnate... Ot 38, v3

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. How do you feel about the return of Jesus? What are you most looking forward to; or dreading?
 2. Why should we be more concerned about 'what we do before'; rather than 'what we do after', the Second Coming?
 3. Verse 7 says, "be shrewd and sober going into prayers". Why are both of those characteristics necessary for effective praying?
 4. The institutional church has been in trouble for the "cover up" of sins. How is "cover over" (v8) different in its approach & outcome?
 5. Explain the difference between Old Testament atonement, and New Testament propitiation, without using religious jargon.
 6. Why would anyone complain about receiving hospitality (v9)? Under what circumstances could a giver of hospitality complain?
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