

A Christian's Best Defense

1 Peter 3:13-16

Introduction:

- A. Faithful Christians will be abused “for righteousness sake.” (v. 14; cf. Phil. 1:29).
 - 1. We have a mixed blessing in the American system.
 - a. We are protected from physical abuse by law - can be thankful.
 - (1) We are not likely to be jailed, killed or maimed.
 - (2) We are more likely misrepresented, ridiculed, unfairly treated – from without and within.
 - b. We are granted freedom of speech.
 - (1) This allows the enemies of Christians to verbally abuse us.
 - (2) But to restrict their speech would also restrict our right to preach and defend the truth.
 - 2. We often find ourselves asking, “What can we do to defend ourselves?”
- B. Faithful Christians have the best possible defenses available to them as outlined by Peter:

Discussion:

- I. A Good Life (v. 13).**
 - A. Will suffer, but no *permanent* harm. (cf. Matt. 10:28; Mk. 10:29,30)
 - B. Will be protected by the Lord. (vv. 10-12; cf. 1 Cor. 10:13)
- II. A God-Honoring Heart (“. . . sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” v. 15).**
 - A. Rather than being alarmed and troubled in your heart (v. 14)
 - B. Sanctify (set apart) “Christ as Lord” in your hearts (asv)
 - 1. Must love Him from the heart. (Matt. 22:37)
 - 2. Must serve Him from the heart. Eph. 6:6,7).
- III. A Ready Answer (“always be ready to give a answer [defense]. . .” v. 15).**
 - A. Knowing the answer will sustain us in time of trouble.
 - B. Giving the answer will influence others.
- IV. A Reasonable Hope (“ . . . a reason for the hope that is in you. . .” v. 15)**
 - A. Our sustaining hope is reasonable because it is based on facts – not a pipe dream.
 - 1. Verified historical events. (John 20:30,31; Acts 26:8-15; 1 Cor. 15:1-8).
 - 2. Credible evidence of what Jesus commanded and promised. (cf. 1 John 1:1-3)
 - B. Our reasonable hope is based on God’s promises and our obedience. (2 Tim. 4:7,8)
- V. A Meek And Reverent Attitude (“ . . . meekness and fear. . .” v. 15)**
 - A. Such will disarm those who would abuse us more than retaliation. (cf. Rom. 12:20).
 - B. A life of fear (reverence) often will melt hearts when words fail. (cf. 1 Pet. 3:2).
- VI. A Good Conscience. (v. 16).**
 - A. One can have a good conscience and be wrong. (Acts 23:1).
 - B. One can not be right without a good conscience.

Conclusion:

- A. Armed with these traits, one can survive abuse and put his abusers to shame. (v. 16).
- B. The traits can make us, with God’s help, stronger than a mighty army.