

Suffering, Service, and Subjection Response Guide

1 Peter 4:12-5:5a

Bethany Assembly of God

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- Have you ever had the wind knocked out of you? Share how it happened.
- Tell about a time when you suffered or were insulted because you are a Christian. Did it surprise you? Why or why not?

Big Idea: You can suffer successfully by remembering that God uses suffering to refine you.

I. You should rejoice in suffering.

- Read 1 Peter 4:12-19
- Why does Peter say you shouldn't be surprised when you suffer for Jesus?
- How is it possible to rejoice when you suffer and why would anyone do that?

You can rejoice when you suffer for Christ, not only because suffering may be an indicator that you're following Jesus, but because you know you're following the trajectory of Jesus' life. Jesus suffered; He was crucified, but He also rose and was glorified and Peter reminds us that the Christian life is not only belief that Jesus did something, but that you are found in Christ. If the story of your life is tied up with Jesus' story, then the plot will share some similar elements.

Namely, you will suffer as He did, but you will also be glorified with Him.

- Read Isaiah 11:2. Peter says that, like Jesus, the Spirit of glory and of God rest on Christians. How have you experienced the Spirit's presence at moments when you've suffered for Christ?
- Does the presence of suffering in your life automatically mean that you are blessed and are following Jesus? What are some ways you can suffer that obviously aren't because of Jesus?
- Why do you think we are sometimes tempted to turn our suffering because of sin into some kind of badge of honor?

- Have you ever been too afraid or ashamed to admit that you're a Christian or remained silent when you should have spoken up? How can Peter's story of denial and redemption encourage you in the future? (John 18:15-17, 25-27; Acts 4:13).

*Today, I realized a horror.
It was the worst that can be; 'twas within.
I speak when I should keep the silence,
And maintain it when I should break in.
This fear overwhelmed me in secret,
The fragrance of Christ I should be.
When I speak, do people hear Jesus,
Or do they only hear me?*

- How has God used suffering, especially suffering for Jesus, to refine you? Does the fact that your suffering isn't meaningless encourage you?

II. You should lead and follow well. 5:1-5

- Read 1 Peter 5:1-5.
- What do you think are the most important components for leading in a church? What does Peter indicate they are?
- How do the topics of suffering and church leadership fit together?
- Peter says that church leaders (elders) should lead willingly, eagerly, and by example. Talk about how leaders display these three qualities and what the alternatives are.

“The proper attitude of an elder is an eagerness to give, not a desire to get.” - Karen Jobes

- Have you ever had a desire to lead in the church in some capacity? Is that kind of “ambition” opposed to humility?
- What should you do if you have a desire to lead or sense God calling you to ministry?
- On the flip side of leadership is followership. What does it mean to be a good follower? Is that demeaning?

- Why might it be even more important to exercise humility when you don't like something a pastor or church leader has done?

Conclusion

- You can suffer successfully when you remember that God uses it to refine you and when that suffering happens in a community that exists to help you follow Jesus.