

DIFFERENT

“Perspective In Pain”

1 Peter 4 Small Group Plan

— From Jesus —

*“If the world hates you,
keep in mind that it hated me first”*

John 15:18

— From Paul —

*“I want to know Christ
yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings,
becoming like him in his death”*

Philippians 3:10

— From Paul —

*“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life
in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”*

2 Timothy 3:12

— From Luke —

*“The apostles left the Sanhedrin,
rejoicing because they had been counted worthy
of suffering disgrace for the Name.”*

Acts 5:41

— From Peter —

“Do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you”

1 Peter 4:12

— From James —

“Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial”

1 Peter 1:12

— From John —

“Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you”

1 John 3:13

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- What is the most difficult pain, suffering or difficulty you have ever experienced?

- Have you or someone you know ever suffered because of your faith? Explain.

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— EXPECT SUFFERING —

1 Peter 4:12

¹² *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.*

- Why should suffering **not** be a surprise to a follower of Jesus?
- Is Peter saying it **would be strange** if a Christian never suffered for their faith? Explain.
- Why does Peter call this suffering a “fiery ordeal”?
- How is suffering a “test”? What is being tested?

— REJOICE IN SUFFERING —

1 Peter 4:13-14

¹³ *But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.* ¹⁴ *If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

- Peter refers to joy twice — “rejoice” and “overjoyed.” How can suffering bring joy?
- What is “his glory [to be] revealed” (v. 13)? How can it give strength to a Christian who is going through difficult times?
- Why would someone be “insulted” (v. 14) for wearing the name of Jesus? Who would do it and why?

— EVALUATE SUFFERING —

1 Peter 4:15-18

¹⁵ *If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.* ¹⁶ *However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.* ¹⁷ *For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?* ¹⁸ *And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”*

- In verse 15 Peter points to the “reap what you sow” (Gal 6:7) sources of suffering. What lessons can we learn from “suffering” the consequences of our own foolish or sinful actions?
- Why would someone be “ashamed” or embarrassed to live for Jesus (v. 16)?
- How do you reconcile Peter’s words,
“hard for the righteous to be saved” (v. 18)

with Jesus' words,

"my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Mt 11:30)?

- Remember Peter has said that everyone will suffer — *"murderer ... thief ... criminal ... Christian"* (vs. 15-16). It will be *"hard"* (v. 18) for everyone.
 - ✓ Describe how much more difficult it will be for those who did *"not obey the gospel of God"* *"the ungodly and the sinner"* (vs. 17-18).
 - ✓ Even though suffering will be *"hard"* what advantage does the Christian have over the non-Christian?

— ENTRUST SUFFERING —

1 Peter 4:19

¹⁹ *So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.*

- What does suffering *"according to God's will"* look like?
- Think of Peter's descriptive words *"faithful Creator."* Take each word and describe how trustworthy God is.

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- Persecution is difficult and painful. How can the references to *"joy"* be misunderstood by a non-believer?
- When has the Spirit of God rested on you (v. 14) or someone you love during a time of suffering or testing?
- Contrast the right and wrong way to respond to the kind of *"insult"* Peter says will come to the Christian.
- Suffering and hardship never feels good. It is always difficult. But what can it teach, or reveal in us? How can God use it?
- How can truly entrusting ourselves to God enable us to keep doing *"good"* (v. 19) even while experiencing hardships?
- Close with prayer, asking God for the faithfulness to be both humble and confident in times of difficulty.