



September 29, 2019

Connection Resource

A Sojourner's Guide

1 Peter 2:18-23

Connection Leader: The passages of Scripture below are provided to expand on the concepts presented in the Pastor's message on Sunday. I encourage you to read them and familiarize yourself with the content prior to class. There are many ways to use these passages during your group time. Here's a suggestion:



The Blue Letter Bible is an online resource that provides powerful tools for an in-depth study of the Bible. It can be accessed online at blueletterbible.org, or through a convenient App that is free on the App Store. With Blue Letter Bible, you can dig deep into the Word using the Lexicon (to examine words in the original language), Concordance (to examine other related verses), encyclopedias, commentaries, maps, and much more. (See the BLB handout for specific instructions).

There are four topics to discover and discuss with your group. It will be difficult to cover all of them thoroughly, so I encourage you to focus on the areas that appeal or apply to your group in particular. Take a cursory look at some passages while going deeper into other's. Allow the Holy Spirit to be your guide in this matter and follow where He leads. Encourage your group to use the *Bible Study Resource* located at <https://trinitybible.com/resources/sermon-resources/> to continue pursuing God during the week.

You Have Been Called For This Purpose

1 Peter 2:18-23

Read the passages in the NASB translation, and again in the NLT translation. Discuss the passage together, to answer the following questions:

1. Who is the audience?
2. What, exactly is God calling them to do?
3. How does the instruction to this audience apply to us today?

Using the Blue Letter Bible discover the difference between a call and a command. Using the Concordance in BLB, consider different examples of God calling a person, and God commanding a person. Then consider together:

1. Think of an example of God commanding you to obey. How did you respond and what was the result?
2. Think of an example of God calling you to do something. How did you respond, and what was the result?

In this life, we will have suffering, and God repeatedly tells us, "Do not fear or be dismayed." As a child of God, you are called according to His good purpose. When you are faithful to that good purpose, God causes all things to work together for your good (Romans 8:28). As a result of this promise, suffering will have a positive result for those who are obedient to His call. Let's examine a few of the positive results of suffering.

Suffering Teaches You to Overcome through Faith rather than Self-Reliance

Romans 12:14-21

Make a list of the instructions in this passage and divide into two groups.

1. Group One - Examine the instructions from a worldly perspective. If you follow the urgings of your human nature, what will be the result?
2. Group Two - Examine the instructions from God's perspective. If you follow each instruction, completely and without question, what will be the result?

Come back together, and discuss your findings.

1. What happens when you rely on your own ability as you suffer?
2. What happens when you rely on God as you suffer?
3. How does your current suffering affect the strength of your faith?
4. What have you learned from this activity that you plan to put into practice this week?

Suffering Refines Your Character

Romans 5:1-5

Consider the following words in verses 3-5, and use the BLB to discover the meaning in the original language: "**tribulation** brings about perseverance; and **perseverance**, proven character; and **proven character**, hope; and **hope** does not disappoint, because the **love of God**..."

Suffering can refine your character if you allow God to work in you for this purpose. However, suffering may also produce anger, bitterness, and hard-heartedness if you refuse God's perfect work. Consider the following questions together:

1. How have you responded to suffering in the past? What was the result?
2. How is God refining your character through suffering?
3. Read **Romans 8:28**, and consider: How does the knowledge of God's sovereign plan encourage you as you suffer today?

Suffering Equips You to Understand and Comfort Others Who are Suffering

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

Read the passage together and discuss the following questions:

1. God has a purpose when He comforts us. What is His purpose?
2. How has God used suffering in your life to equip you to minister to others who are suffering?
3. What does verse 8 reveal about the popular belief that "God won't give you more than you can bear?"

God, in his sovereignty, can rescue us from suffering; but this isn't always His choice. Often, He uses our suffering for the purpose of His kingdom. Jesus poignantly demonstrates this truth in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-39). Jesus, who is our sovereign God, might have rescued Himself from the suffering of the cross, but He didn't. He chose, instead, to rescue us from our sin.

1. By Jesus' example, how should we respond to suffering?
2. How do you deal with suffering? What does it look like in your practical everyday life?