

# Bible Study Resource

November 17, 2019

## A Sojourner's Guide

1 Peter 2:18-23

*"For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you."  
1 Peter 2:21, NLT*

As a sojourner, God calls us to do good. We are to do good regardless of our circumstances. We are to do good regardless of the consequences. We are to do good in the example of Jesus Christ, and anticipate that suffering may follow. Jesus put it this way, *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it."* (Mark 8:34-35, NASB).

How do we respond to this disconcerting command? Repeatedly God 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

Our instruction in this passage is the opposite of what human nature demands. In fact, there are many commands here that will not come naturally as a result of suffering. Make a list of these commands and consider which ones you actually put into practice in your life. Each of these are acts of faith that rely on God's perfect work in the outcome. And each act of faith produces a profound result in you. You WILL overcome! Think about it. What happens when you rely on your own ability as you suffer? And what happens when you rely on your faith in God's ability? How does suffering affect the strength of your faith?

### **Suffering Refines Your Character**

Romans 5:1-5

Suffering has a purpose. It is the catalyst that launches a believer on a journey of discovery that progressively produces maturity and growth in your walk with the Lord. What is suffering producing in you? 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 that only comes from the work of your enemy. How do you respond to suffering? How is suffering changing your character over time? How is God refining your character as you suffer?

### **Suffering Equips You to Understand and Comfort Others Who are Suffering**

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

Even in the midst of tribulation and suffering, God is at work revealing His plan and preparing you to take your next step in it. As God comforts you, He is equipping you to minister to others who are suffering. 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. In the same way, God might have chosen to rescue you; but He didn't. He chose, instead, to equip you for the purpose of His Kingdom. How do you feel when you realized God has a greater purpose for the suffering you experience? How does this realization make you feel about present suffering that may seem pointless? How might your suffering equip you to minister to others?