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Sample Lesson

***Suffering and Grace***

**Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls**

***to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. 1Peter 4:19**

**LESSON # 6**

**THEME:**  The central part of the book of 1 Peter is set off by two “boundary markers” in 2:11 and 4:12 where we find the term, “Dearly beloved…” at the beginning of the section. It is clear from the doxology and “amen” in 4:11 that he is concluding a major thought. We will consider many of the verses in chapters 2-4 in detail in future lessons, but just a cursory glance over these chapters reveals a main theme and several “sub-themes.” The believer is supposed to bring glory to God! That is the pre-eminent theme throughout the book. But this section highlights several practical ways in which we are to do that:

* 1. By good works that the lost world can see 2:11-12, 4:2-4
	2. By submission (in every area of our lives) 2:13-3:8
	3. By responding correctly to suffering 2:19-21, 3:14-16, 4:12-19
	4. By holy living because of impending judgment 4:7,17

**1Pe 2:11-25 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; (12) Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. (13) Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; (14) Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. (15) For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: (16) As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. (17) Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. (18) Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. (19) For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. (20) For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God. (21) For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (25) For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.**

**INTRODUCTION:** We see immediately in verses 11-12 the importance of maintaining a good and honest testimony before the lost world. The rest of the chapter (and the first half of the next chapter) is all about bringing glory to God through our humble submission to one another in the various settings of life. Particular emphasis on this point is given by recounting the tremendous example of the Lord Jesus and his submission, even while He was suffering.

1. **WE ARE “STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS” IN THIS WORLD – THEREFORE OUR LIVES SHOULD SHOW FORTH THE CHARACTER OF GOD.** We learn from this passage that our fleshly lusts “war against our soul” in a very real way. Every Christian is in a spiritual battle.
	1. **1Pe 2:11-12 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; (12) Having your conversation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ among the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God in the day of visitation.**
		1. Again, just as in chapter 1and the early part of chapter 2, the burden to live right is placed squarely on the believer’s shoulders. “ABSTAIN from fleshly lusts” sounds a lot like “Put off the old man” and “be renewed in the spirit of your mind.”
		2. We must confront the fact that each of us has passions within us that would destroy us spiritually if we let them.
		3. “Honesty” and integrity have always had high priority in God’s economy.
		4. The “Gentiles” is used here in a generic sense to denote lost people, the unsaved.
		5. Despite the fact that a believer “does right,” it is likely that the devil will have some unbelievers speak evil of you.
		6. Ultimately, as we have mentioned throughout this series, the purpose for our lives is to bring glory to God.
			1. What does it mean at the end of verse 12 when it says that the “Gentiles” will glorify God in the “day of visitation?”
				1. That they will get saved because of your testimony and God will be glorified? (This is the most likely interpretation – see 1 Pet 3:1-2 as a parallel example.)

**1Pe 3:1-2 Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be \_\_\_\_\_\_ by the conversation of the wives; (2) While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear.**

* + - * 1. That they remain lost, but will have to give God glory in the day of judgment because He gave them a chance to be saved through the pure witness and unimpeachable testimony of your good works?
1. **BELIEVERS SHOULD LIVE SUBMISSIVELY WITHIN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS**. The theme of submission runs through the entire section of 1 Peter 2:13-3:12. The Christian is instructed to do what is right, being submissive and seeking to be a blessing to others. We see once again the idea that when a person is experiencing trials, focusing on others is a key to having victory!
	1. As citizens, we should do right as God’s servants.
		1. **1Pe 2:13-17 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; (14) Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. (15) For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: (16) As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. (17) Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.**
			1. Notice that the reason for our submission to human government is given at the end of verse 16: Because we are the servants of God. We voluntarily put ourselves under civil authority for the Lord’s sake.
			2. God’s purposes for government is given in verses 13-15.
				1. To put a curb on sinful man.
				2. To put a silence to the ignorance of foolish men by our well doing.
				3. It should be noted that as believers we have dual citizenship – heavenly and earthly! Because we are the Lord’s, we submit to the crowd, the church, the Creator, the crown.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Whenever there is an emphasis on the topic of submission in the Scriptures, it is helpful to remember that God is the ultimate authority and He deserves our humble obedience. He delegated some of His authority down to three institutions – the home, the government, and the church. Human authorities are supposed to reflect and uphold God’s authority, but unfortunately humans are flawed and sometimes human leaders fail miserably in their role! (i.e. the king who demanded idol worship, the magistrate who forbid Peter to preach, Diotrophes who abused his position at church, or a father who abuses his children.) The underlying truth is that we are to submit to authority as much as possible. Whenever we disobey God-given authority, even though they are flawed, we should be prepared to suffer consequences without complaint. Daniel was sent to the lion’s den, Peter was sent to prison, etc. The general rule is for us to submit to human authority as they uphold God’s authority. When we are forced to disobey, we must be certain that God is leading us to do so, and we must be willing to suffer the consequences. Peter said in Acts 5, “We ought to obey God rather than man.” And indeed that is true. But that should be the rare exception. Dad and mom should be obeyed in the home. Government should be obeyed in the land. And pastors – as a general rule – should be obeyed in the church. God deals very severely with those who claim His authority and then abuse it!

* 1. **As Servants**, we should respectfully submit to our masters, whether they are good or unreasonable, with our ultimate desire being to please God, following the example of Jesus Christ. We remember that this larger section of Scripture promotes submission in all of our relationships, including to government, in the home, and elsewhere.
		1. **1Pe 2:18-25 Servants, *be* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. (19) For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (20) For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with God. (21) For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (25) For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.**
			1. The disposition of the master is not the issue –our response should be right regardless! Notice the emphasis on ATTITUDE! (“…with all fear…,” “…for conscience toward God…,” “… take it patiently…”) We suffer without retaliation because we are following Jesus Christ.
			2. Obedience with a “single” (pure) heart is brought out in Eph. 6 and Colossians 3.
				1. **Eph 6:5-8 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; (6) Not with eyeservice, as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; (7) With good will doing service, as \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and not to men: (8) Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.**
				2. **Col 3:22-24 Servants, \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: (23) And whatsoever ye do, do *it* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, as to the Lord, and not unto men; (24) Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.**
			3. There is a promised reward in I Peter 2 for responding correctly to suffering! God says it is “thankworthy” and that it is “acceptable” to God. In Ephesians it says we shall receive “the good” that we have done. In Colossians it says servants will receive “the reward of the inheritance!” God is keeping the books!
			4. Notice especially in I Peter 2:21 that we are “called” to suffer and to follow the example of Jesus. Enduring suffering in this world (often in the workplace for the servant) is something that we should expect – it is inevitable! This perspective is very helpful when we are counseling someone who is going through trials! Suffering is universal for the believers.
				1. **1Pe 2:21 For even hereunto were ye \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps**:
			5. Jesus suffered, but He had not done anything wrong! He endured it patiently, leaving us a wonderful example of correct response to unjust suffering! Our human heart naturally seeks retaliation – we need God’s grace to endure.
				1. **1Pe 2:22-23 Who did \_\_\_\_ sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; when he suffered, he threatened \_\_\_\_\_\_; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:**
				2. **Rom 12:17 Recompense to \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_ evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.**
				3. **1Pe 3:9 Not rendering evil for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, that ye should inherit a blessing.**
			6. We note also that Jesus committed Himself to God (I Peter 2:23b) This is an act of our will, and it is necessary before we can have victory! Once again, when we are enduring trials, it really helps to be able to trust God implicitly!
				1. **Psa 56:1-3 Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me. (2) Mine enemies would daily \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *me* up: for *they be* many that fight against me, O thou most High. (3) What time I am afraid, I will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in thee.**
			7. Jesus also suffered purposely! (v 24-25) When Jesus came to earth and suffered and died for our sins, it was so we could be saved! The message to us is plain –there is a purpose for suffering. Indeed, there can be many purposes for our human suffering. In this context, if the servant is suffering unjustly, and he maintains good works, God will ultimately be glorified. (v 12) We are returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls – we find security in God’s purposes!
				1. **1Pe 2:12b … whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which \_\_\_\_\_ shall \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, glorify God in the day of visitation.**