

# ***Suffering though doing good***

(Suitable for use within a group over approximately one hour, or for an individual's personal Bible reading)

## ***Thinking about your life as a student in healthcare***

1. Have you ever witnessed a fellow student being mistreated by a superior?  
Have you ever been mistreated by a superior (during your clinical education)?
2. During these situations, how have you observed that the recipient of this treatment responds to the perpetrator?
3. What is the common opinion that exists around you within our society regarding how to respond to someone who mistreats you? Why do you think people feel the need to respond in this way?

## ***What does God have to say?***

Read 1 Peter 2:13-23.

Peter begins this passage with specific exhortations regarding how Christians are to behave and respond in the face of suffering created from someone in authority over them (verses 13-17 concern authorities of the state; verse 18 and following concern the authority of a specific master). For many of us it may be easy to adopt these exhortations with masters who are kind and gentle, but Peter enforces these commands even for those masters who are harsh (v18). A challenging word!

He continues on to encourage, more broadly, that Christians are to endure suffering (even when doing good) and to look to Christ as their example in that (v20-23).

It may be tempting to argue with Peter, 'Have you ever been in a situation where you were tortured and threatened with death for your faith? If you had you would realise how impossible these instructions are for us to obey...'. But Peter's context was just this situation. He lived during a time of severe persecution, a time where the Emperor of the day (Emperor Nero) used Christians as garden torches to provide light for his parties.

It is this very context that makes Peter's commands so striking – honour the king, submit to your masters (even the harsh ones), endure suffering because of your consciousness of God, do not retaliate when insulted and do not make threats when mistreated. He does not leave these instructions without impetus – the reason we Christians have been *instructed* to behave in this manner is because we have been *called* to behave in this manner (verse 21; see also 1:16, 2:9, 2:12, 4:1). This behaviour will testify to Christ (v12). Christ not only provides us with the prime *example* of this behaviour, but also graciously provides us with the *power* to behave in this manner (see verse 21 & 24).

Peter ends this passage by explaining that what liberated Christ (and what can allow us) to respond to mistreatment in this way, was knowing that by doing so justice would not be lost, because GOD IS JUDGE.

### ***Putting it into practice***

Imagine the following situation in which you are being mistreated by a superior during your clinical activities as a student. You have a superior (for example, a clinical tutor or a discipline consultant) that shows you no respect, is consistently critical (without warrant) of you personally, and is even untruthfully slandering you to your fellow class mates/colleagues which you fear is damaging your reputation. (You may, unfortunately, not need to imagine!). The fact they are superior over you highlights the injustice of the situation even more so.

1. Think practically about how you will apply the following instructions:
  - a. 'submit yourselves to your masters with all respect' (v 18)
  - b. 'suffer for doing good and...endure it' (v20)
  - c. not retaliating with your mouth (v23)
  - d. not retaliating with threats (v23)
2. List three truths from this passage that will help you to endure unjust suffering.
3. How does bearing up under unjust suffering reveal who God is (see 1 Peter 2:9, 12)?
4. What fruits of the spirit do you feel you will need to respond to unjust suffering in the manner Peter outlines (consider especially what will be needed to follow the instruction implied in verse 23)? (NB – for a list of the fruits of the spirit see Galatians 5:22-23).
5. You will not be able to endure unjust suffering in your own strength. List three practical things that will allow you to rely on Christ's enabling power to endure unjust suffering, rather than relying on yourself (or other things!).
6. Consider again your superior. Would you find it difficult to entrust the justice needed in this situation to God (v23)? What barriers come up in your mind that stop you from entrusting justice to God? Memorize Romans 12:19 to aid you to entrust yourself to God who judges justly.

# Bible Bites

(Suitable to be completed over approximately 20-25 minutes)

## Suffering though doing good

### Thinking about your life as a student in healthcare

1. Have you ever witnessed a fellow student being mistreated by a superior, or have you ever been mistreated by a superior (during your clinical education)?
2. What is the common opinion that exists around you within our society regarding how to respond to someone who mistreats you? Why do you think people feel the need to respond in this way?

### What does God have to say?

Read 1 Peter 2:13-23:

<sup>13</sup> Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, <sup>14</sup> or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. <sup>15</sup> For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. <sup>16</sup> Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. <sup>17</sup> Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

<sup>18</sup> Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. <sup>19</sup> For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. <sup>20</sup> But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. <sup>21</sup> To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

<sup>22</sup> "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

<sup>23</sup> When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.'

Peter begins this passage with specific exhortations regarding how Christians are to behave and respond in the face of suffering created from someone in authority over them (verses 13-17 concern authorities of the state; verse 18 and following concern the authority of a specific master). For many of us it may be easy to adopt these exhortations with masters who are kind and gentle, but Peter enforces these commands even for those masters who are harsh (v18). A challenging word!

He continues on to encourage, more broadly, that Christians are to endure suffering (even when doing good) and to look to Christ as their example in that (v20-23).

Peter could certainly comment on suffering – his context was one of severe persecution towards Christians, where the Emperor of the day (Emperor Nero) used Christians as garden torches to provide light for his parties.

It is this very context that makes Peter's commands so striking – honour the king, submit to your masters (even the harsh ones), endure suffering because of your consciousness of God, do not retaliate when insulted and do not make threats when mistreated. He does not leave these instructions without impetus – the reason we Christians have been *instructed* to behave in this manner is because we have been *called* to behave in this manner (verse 21; see also 1:16, 2:9, 2:12, 4:1). This behaviour will testify to Christ (v12). Christ not only provides us with the prime *example* of this behaviour, but also graciously provides us with the *power* to behave in this manner (see verse 21 & 24).

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