

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for "the big question."*

Read I Peter 2:18-25 aloud.

1. What can you tell about a slave's life from this passage?
Required to submit to a master, subject to punishment.

How does Peter encourage Christian slaves to conduct themselves?

Why should a slave submit to a harsh master, according to I Peter?

If you were a slave with a harsh master, how would you be tempted to respond? What might be your natural response to a demanding person?

2. How does the life of Joseph illustrate this passage?
See Genesis 37-50, especially chapter 39.

3. What distinction does Peter make in verse 20? Restate it in your own words.

If you are punished for doing something foolish or wrong, you got what you deserved. But if you suffer for doing good, God sees your suffering and will commend you for it.

What some ways people suffer because they have done wrong?

What are some reasons people suffer today?

*Compromised creation – accidents, famine, germs, disease, decay, death
Selfish or foolish decisions (by self or others) – breaking the law, greed, mistreating others*

Doing the right thing & suffering for it

What is the spiritual value of each kind of suffering?

Compromised creation – teaches us to recognize that we are not God, to savor each day & to live within limits

Poor decisions – hopefully we learn to make wiser decisions

Suffering for doing good – Commendable before God

4. Verse 21 uses the word called. To what were these ancient slaves called? *To be like Jesus, even in suffering.*

What does it mean to be called? Who does the calling? How do we respond?

How are Christians called today?

How is our calling today like that of ancient Christian slaves? How is it different?

5. What are some things Peter points out about Jesus' suffering?

How does the life of Jesus give hope & guidance for people who are suffering?

How can you be joyful even if you are being treated unfairly?

6. What is the most difficult part about these instructions?

What is most encouraging in this passage?

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

We may be able to avoid situations where we are required to obey a master, but we all face challenges to our faith. What is a situation where your faith could cost you something?

III. Other resources

The point – Do the right thing and God will bless you for it.

Prayer ideas

Pray for believers who are persecuted.

Thank God for the freedoms we enjoy to practice our faith.

Pray for a friend who has not yet discovered the blessing of living with Jesus.

Ask God to guide our congregation through the process of discerning who he has prepared to preach at College Hills.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Play a game of Red light-Green light.

- *Everyone line up on one end of the game area, with the person who is the “light” at the other end.*
- *When the light turns around and says “green light,” everybody can move toward the light. When the light turns around and says “red light,” any player still moving must go back to the starting line.*
- *First person to reach the light becomes it.*

For the purpose of the lesson, an adult should be the light and be really strict. Make some unfair calls and send kids back to start for arguing. Be mean (but don't make them cry).

Read I Peter 2:18-21 aloud.

What were the instructions to slaves? What if they had a mean master?

If slaves were mistreated by their masters for doing good, how was that like what happened to Jesus?

When are some situations where you might be treated unfairly?

How should you respond when you are treated unfairly?



June 24, 2007

LIFE Group Guide

I Peter 2 – Joy in suffering

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: **Put God first in all things, and you will be blessed even when trials come.**

Jim's Sunday sermon deals with Matthew 5:12 – “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness.” Of all the blessings in Matthew 5, this is the one I understand least. Persecution hardly seems like a blessing. I don't seek to be persecuted, and I would question the sanity of someone who did.

So what to do with this blessing on the persecuted? All of us will face times of mistreatment and suffering, so Jesus assures us that God's blessing comes with the trial. Jesus' words and example give us hope and motivation to endure. We have confidence that all suffering, even unfair suffering, can shape us into the image of Christ.

This guide looks at a special case of enduring unfair suffering – ancient slaves and Peter's encouragement to them. They had few legal rights, yet Peter calls them to look to Jesus as a source of hope and guidance.

Leadership tip: Stay connected with me and your coach. Keep us informed about problems and plans for your group. That helps everyone stay encouraged and focused on the goal of more and better disciples.

I. Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ If you could be any animal, what would you like to be?
Remind everyone about Animal Tales VBS this week. Tuesday-Friday, 9:30-11:30, age 3-entering 6th grade.
- ❖ How many phone numbers do you have?
- ❖ On a scale of 1 to 10, how harsh or kind is your immediate supervisor?