

Own Up #10

The Responsibility to Suffer for Christ's Sake

Word

Scripture Reference

1 Peter 4:12-19

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever suffered for something good? Share with the group how you handled it.
2. No one wants to suffer, and yet it is the Christian's responsibility to endure suffering for the sake of Jesus Christ. How you deal with suffering will determine whether what you do is right according to the Scriptures and whether you are maintaining your Christian witness to the world. When your heart is unprepared to suffer for Jesus, the response is often anger and bitterness. How then do you take on the responsibility to suffer for Christ? Read 1 Peter 4:12-19. Why did Peter say that you as a believer should not think it strange to suffer for the sake of Christ (v. 12)? What did he tell the Christians to do instead (v. 13)? What do you emulate when you are ready and willing to suffer for Christ? How does suffering give glory to God?
3. The apostle Peter advocates a change in one's attitude in order to take the responsibility of suffering for Christ. Firstly, as a believer you must have a mindset to rejoice when you have the opportunity to suffer (v. 13-15). This suffering does not refer to the consequences of doing wrong, which a person deserves as a result of his or her own doing. Discuss the sufferings that Christians may endure because of his/her identification with Christ. How could these sufferings be turned into rejoicing? How do difficulties help you be more intimate with Christ and grow in your spiritual character?
4. Secondly, Peter advocates that Christians should recognize that there is no shame in suffering for the sake of Christ (v. 16). Every believer should not be ashamed of making a stand for Christ, whether in the midst of

rejection, being laughed at, or being an outcast. In what situation did Peter find himself being ashamed to stand for Christ? How did he feel afterwards? Share with the group about a situation where you had to make a stand for Christ. How did it go? Did you fail or win?

5. Verses 17-18 contrast the suffering of Christians today to the future sufferings of those who reject Christ. Describe the intensity of the judgment that a non-Christian will experience in the future. As a Christian whose suffering is but for a moment, how should you feel and react to those who persecute you?

Walk

Peter concluded this passage by exhorting those who suffer for Christ to commit themselves to God and to continue to do good (v. 19). In other words, you as a follower of Jesus Christ need to put your hands in the hand of God. He'll take care of those who suffer for His sake. Think of ways in which you can rely on Him when you face suffering. Do you have faith that God is there to strengthen you even in the worst situation with promise and hope? How can you entrust your life to Him for safekeeping?

Worship & Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, one of the most difficult things to do is to be thankful for the hard times I go through. But today, I want to thank You for every trial, every pain, every insult and jeers I received and will receive as a believer, because those are opportunities to trust You, Lord. Those are opportunities to say, "My God is my strength and my guide. I trust in His wisdom and take refuge in His arms." You never promised me an easy life when I chose to follow You, but You did promise that You will never leave me. I claim that promise Lord. Continue to strengthen me and allow me to show others that You are an amazing, all-powerful God who is also loving, gracious, and full of mercy. Enable me as well to be an encourager to other believers who are also suffering for Your sake. May we as a church find encouragement and comfort together as we look to Your Word. In Christ name I pray. Amen.