



PETER

THE DISCIPLE MAKER

Daily Devotions and Small Group Discussion Questions | Week Four

This Week's Memory Verse

..to keep in your pocket, memorize, and hide in your heart:

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh,
arm yourselves with the same way of thinking,
for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,
so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh
no longer for human passions but for the will of God.

- 1 Peter 4:1-2 (ESV)

Week Four, Day Four

Scripture Reading

1 Peter 4:1-6

Devotional Reading

In today's passage, suffering is explained as a means of liberation from the tyranny of our own petty selves and empty desires.

Do we get that living for ourselves is not just sin, but a sort of oppression? When we attempt to protect our own interests and avoid the suffering that comes with obedience to a righteous God, we build our own empty prison walls of suffering, rather than living fully, unafraid in the freedom of God's will.

One of the most powerful characteristics of the Christian faith that sets it apart from all other faiths is that our Holy God took on flesh and blood and lived in human form everything he is asking of us. He faced all kinds of suffering and never sinned. The apostles rightly point us to him as our model and example. Look to Jesus Christ, and take on his same attitude, as we face the suffering dealt us in our lives.

Jesus did not avoid suffering. When he knew it was his Father's will, he faced it head-on, unafraid. Before submitting in full confidence to the cross of ultimate suffering, Jesus said, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). He endured this suffering, "for the joy set before him" (Hebrews 12:2)! The joy! Jesus models for us the necessity of suffering in and against this fallen world as a way through sin into freedom from sin and eternal blessing, liberation and joy!

Do we understand that living like Jesus is true liberation, true victory, true joy? Let us look to Jesus as a model and encouragement as we face our suffering. And let us not be afraid of suffering, because it purifies us and frees us from the emptiness of self-focus.

Faith In Action

Is anything you've felt the Lord calling you to do that you have been afraid to do? Can you claim obedience to his command and act in obedience to his leading, even though there may be consequences that disrupt your comfort level? Ask God to help you trust that there is freedom, joy and victory in following him.

Today's Prayer

Lord Jesus, help me to know you better, so that I can follow your example in every step of my life. Help me not avoid the suffering that comes with obedience, but to be obedient in faith for the joy set before me. Thank you for your perfect life, the example you've given us and the victory you've purchased for us through your suffering and triumph over sin!