

Expanded Report: Suffering as a Christian (1 Peter 4:12-19)

Prologue: Rejoicing in Suffering for Christ

As the family gathered for their evening Bible study, Ryan opened to 1 Peter 4:12-19. In this passage, Peter encourages believers who are facing suffering for their faith, reminding them that such suffering is not something to fear, but something to rejoice in. He explains that suffering for Christ is a privilege, aligning believers with Christ's own sufferings. Peter also teaches that those who suffer for righteousness can trust God, who is faithful and will keep their souls. Suffering becomes an opportunity to deepen faith and grow closer to God.

"Tonight, we'll talk about suffering," Ryan said. "Peter tells us that when we suffer for doing good, especially for our faith, it's not something to be ashamed of. In fact, we are to rejoice because we are sharing in Christ's sufferings."

Ariel, ever thoughtful, asked, "Why would we rejoice in suffering? Doesn't it hurt?"

"That's a great question," Ryan said. "Suffering is hard, but Peter is saying that when we suffer for Christ, we are closer to Him. Our suffering is a way of identifying with Jesus and trusting God to strengthen us through it."

Alice, hugging Mr. Fluffernutter, asked, "So, when things go wrong, we should still be happy?"

"Not happy because of the pain, but happy because we know that Jesus understands our suffering and is with us," Yaya said. "When we suffer for doing what's right, we're showing the world that we belong to Him."

Key Teachings: Rejoicing in Suffering for Christ

1. Rejoicing in Sharing Christ's Sufferings

1 Peter 4:12-13

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

- **Suffering for Christ as a Shared Experience:**

Ryan explained, "Peter reminds believers not to be surprised when they suffer for their faith. Just as Christ suffered, we, too, may face suffering for following Him. But Peter says we should rejoice because we are sharing in Christ's sufferings, and it will lead to even greater joy when His glory is revealed."

Ariel asked, "How can we rejoice when we're suffering? Isn't that hard?"

"It is hard," Ryan said. "But when we remember that we're suffering for a purpose and that

Christ suffered for us, it gives us a deeper joy. We know that our suffering is temporary and that God will ultimately bring us into His glory.”

- **Enduring Suffering with Hope:**

Ryan continued, “Peter encourages us to keep our eyes on the future. While suffering is painful, it’s not the end. There is joy and glory waiting for us when Jesus returns.”

Yaya added, “When we endure suffering for Christ, it deepens our relationship with Him and helps us grow spiritually. It reminds us that we are not alone.”

2. Trusting God in Suffering

1 Peter 4:19

“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.”

- **Trusting God with Our Souls:**

Ryan explained, “Peter tells us that when we suffer for doing God’s will, we should commit our souls to God, trusting Him to take care of us. Just as a faithful Creator, God knows what we are going through, and we can trust that He will keep us and guide us through our suffering.”

Ariel asked, “Does that mean we can trust God to protect us, even when things are hard?”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “Even when we face difficult situations, God is always with us, and we can trust Him to help us grow through it. Our ultimate hope is in Him.”

- **Suffering as Part of God’s Plan:**

Ryan continued, “Peter teaches us that suffering is not random—it is part of God’s plan for us. God uses our suffering to refine our faith, make us more like Christ, and prepare us for the glory that awaits.”

Yaya added, “It’s hard to understand sometimes, but God uses even the most difficult moments to help us grow in our faith. When we trust Him through it, He will bring good out of it.”

3. The Purpose of Suffering for Righteousness

1 Peter 4:14-16

“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”

- **Suffering as a Christian for the Right Reasons:**

Ryan explained, “Peter makes it clear that we should not suffer for doing wrong—like stealing or gossiping. But if we suffer because we are following Christ and doing what is right, we should rejoice, for God is glorified in our suffering.”

Ariel asked, “So, if we’re suffering because we’re doing something good for God, that’s okay?” “Yes,” Ryan said. “When we suffer for being faithful to Christ, it shows the world that we are His followers. We don’t have to be ashamed of that; in fact, we should glorify God through it.”

- **God’s Glory in Our Suffering:**

Ryan continued, “When we suffer for the sake of Christ, it reflects His glory. People may speak evil of us, but we can stand firm in the truth, knowing that we are representing Christ in the world.”

Yaya added, “When we suffer for Christ, we are sharing in His suffering, and in doing so, we bring glory to God. It’s not about avoiding suffering, but trusting God in the midst of it.”

4. The Key Teaching: Suffering for Righteousness Strengthens Our Faith and Glorifies God

Key Teaching:

The key teaching of this passage is that suffering for righteousness is a natural part of the Christian life, and it’s something to rejoice in because it brings us closer to Christ. Just as Christ suffered for our sins, we are called to endure suffering for doing good, knowing that God uses it to refine our faith, build our character, and glorify Himself. As we trust God in our suffering, we reflect Christ’s love and grace to the world, showing that our hope is not in our circumstances but in the eternal glory that awaits us.

Ryan summarized, “Peter is teaching us that suffering for Christ is not something to fear or shy away from. It is a part of our journey with Christ, and it’s an opportunity to grow deeper in our faith and bring glory to God.”

Practical Applications: Enduring Suffering with Hope and Trust

The family discussed how they could apply these teachings in their own lives:

1. **Responding to Suffering with Joy:**

Ariel suggested, “When I face challenges, I can remember that Jesus suffered too, and I can choose to trust God through it, knowing He has a purpose for me.”

2. **Trusting God in Hard Times:**

Ryan encouraged them, “When things get tough, we can pray and trust God to help us endure, knowing He is using this time to grow our faith and make us more like Christ.”

3. **Glorifying God in Our Suffering:**

Yaya reminded them, “Even when we suffer for doing what’s right, we can glorify God by trusting Him and showing His love to others. Our suffering is never in vain when we surrender it to God.”

Takeaway: Suffering as a Testimony to Christ

As the family reflected, Yaya shared a personal story about how God helped her through a difficult time of loss, showing her His faithfulness. “When I lost my job, I felt discouraged, but I knew God was with me. It wasn’t easy, but I saw His hand in it, and I grew stronger in my faith.”

Ariel smiled, “So, even when we suffer, we can know that God is working through it for good?” “Yes,” Ryan said, “God uses our suffering to bring us closer to Him and to reflect His love to the world.”

Key Points Summary

1. Rejoicing in Suffering for Christ:

- Suffering for doing good and for the name of Christ is an opportunity to grow in faith and share in Christ’s glory.

2. Trusting God in Suffering:

- We are called to trust God with our suffering, knowing that He uses it to refine our character and strengthen our trust in Him.

3. Glorifying God in Our Trials:

- When we endure suffering with faith and hope in Christ, we glorify God and become a testimony of His love and grace to others.
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Key Verse:

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.” (1 Peter 3:15)

This passage teaches us that suffering for righteousness is part of our Christian walk. By trusting God and enduring with joy, we honor Christ and grow closer to Him.