"HOW TO HANDLE PERSONAL INJUSTICE"

I Peter 2:18-25

1-19-2022



INTRODUCTION: Verse 18

***Keep doing right when you are treated wrong!**

I. GOD IS MY MOTIVE
To keep doing right even when I'm treated wrong (v. 19-20)

A. A clean conscience toward God (v. 19)

B. A clear testimony for God (v. 20)

II. CHRIST IS MY EXAMPLE
To keep doing right even when I'm treated wrong (v. 21-25)

A. He suffered unjustly
though He was sinlessly perfect (v. 22)

B. He suffered unjustly
and did not retaliate (v. 23)

C. He suffered unjustly
to pay for our sins (v. 24a)

D. He suffered unjustly
so that we would live righteously (v. 24b-25)

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In this wicked, twisted world, people will not always be fair. Things are not always just. Sometimes you will do right and be treated wrong.

You will be misunderstood, maligned, taken out of context, wrongly interpreted, etc.

Examples of Unjust Treatment:

When someone cuts in front of you in line at the bank; Post office or Grocery store.

When your unsaved spouse cheats on you, when you have been faithful to him/her.

Job discrimination based on race, color, or religion (the real minority today is not black/hispanic, but Christian.)

When your employer extends a benefit (ex. overtime) or a raise in pay to everyone except you (when you need it and feel you deserve it (b/c of seniority, your work ethic etc.).

When your employer (ex. lower position) treats you spitefully because of your Christianity or Biblical standards etc.
" " teacher (ex. lower grade)" " " " "

When you are discriminated against because of your beliefs (ex. Failing a psychological test for a Police officer job just because you claim to believe in the miracles of the Bible.)

Peter now answers the question: "should we stop submitting to an authority when they no longer deserve it; when they treat you like dirt, abuse you etc.? (ex. Gov't.; Employment; Marriage - Husband)

V. 18

When we are treated unjustly,

it's natural to become rebellious; it's supernatural to remain submissive.

it's natural to become bitter; it's supernatural to remain joyful.

it's natural to complain; it's supernatural to keep it to yourself.

it's natural to cringe like a coward; it's supernatural to keep your chin up and hang in there.

it's natural to strike out; it's supernaturally to take it patiently.

What makes us any different from the rest of the world if we respond to injustice the same way they do? (Practice situation ethics)

"Servants" - <u>not</u> the word for "slave" (*doulos*), but refers to a household servant (*oiketes* - *oik* = house).

It refers to someone who voluntarily works in the home of a master and sells their service for a specific period of time (cp. Lev. 24:39-40).

"Sixty percent of all people at this time (in history) were servants" (Gibbons).

"Subject" - to voluntarily (middle voice) place yourself under the leadership and authority of someone else.

To take one's position in line and to fulfill your assigned task with obedience and a good attitude.

The general theme of 2:13 - 3:7 involves submission to authorities -
Christian citizens to government (2:13)
Christian servants to masters (2:18)
Christian wives to husbands (3:1)

"Masters" - one in authority (could apply to employee/employer relationship today).

"With all fear" - with total respect. Their position of authority is to be respected even if their personal character is not.

Not only to the good (kind) and gentle (calm, mild), but also to the froward (harsh, severe, crooked, or perverse).

It's easy to treat someone nice who is nice to you; real spirituality, however, is manifested when you retain a submissive attitude in the face of rudeness, thoughtlessness, unfairness, disrespect, etc.

V. 18

Though the context here in I Peter 2 concerns first century house servants (EX: like India) and their masters, the principles apply to today's employees, workers, or laborers.

Some *"masters"* (like some bosses today) determined to make life miserable for their Christian workers.

***Keep <u>doing right</u> when you are <u>treated wrong</u>!**

I. GOD IS MY MOTIVE
To keep doing right even when I'm treated wrong (v. 19-20)

A. A clean conscience toward God (v. 19)

"Thankworthy" - You are really worthy of commendation when you do right to one who does wrong to you.

You are to be admired, who do what you are told, when in fact your superior is personally unworthy of such obedience, conscientious, and fine workmanship.

"For conscience toward God" -
What motivates such humble submissiveness toward such unworthy people who hold positions of authority?

Answer: GOD. By yielding to a God-ordained principle of submission to authority, we are glorifying God and keeping a clean conscience.

--Joseph could not violate his conscience toward God and give in to the seductress - Gen. 49

--Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego could not violate their consciences toward God and bow to Nebuchadnezzar's golden statue (Dan. 2)

--Daniel could not violate his conscience toward God and cease praying when a decree demanded him to stop (Dan. 6)

--Micaiah could not violate his conscience toward God and preach a lie; he had to tell the truth (II Chron. 18:13 - *"And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what my God saith, that will I speak."*)

--Peter and John could not violate their consciences toward God and silence their witness of Christ (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29).

What motives us is what God wants, what pleases Him, what accomplishes His will.

Living for God in an anti-God society or place of employment will involve our putting up with grief (pain). There will eventually be unjust suffering in your life.

I can't stand injustice. It deeply grieves me to see others mistreated or taken advantage of.
What's even harder to bear is when it hits home, and you are the one being unjustly treated.

B. A clear <u>testimony</u> for God (v. 20)

"For what glory is it" - In other words: What sort of credit do you deserve for patiently enduring rough treatment for some wrong doing you did?

Example: You get caught <u>stealing</u> on the job and you quietly, humbly accept the rebuke and penalty. By today's society's standards, this may seem to be outstanding character (since even criminals who are caught red-handed either deny their crime or remain stone-faced and obstinate); however, by God's standards, we should never have to be reprimanded by the world for wrong-doing. He is not glorified the way He would be if our reprimand was unwarranted, yet we endured it patiently.

To be late for work, to disobey company policy, to help ourselves to company property, to speak bad about our employer -- this is a bad testimony.

"Anybody, including an unbeliever, can 'take it patiently' when he is in the wrong! It takes a dedicated Christian to 'take it' when he is in the right" (Wiersbe, p. 406).

"Each of us can recall occasions when our conduct has merited rebuke. Patience at times when we received the punishment we deserved has no special merit. But imagine being 'buffeted,' cuffed, or otherwise made to suffer when you have done what is right and are not at fault. God says that this is '*acceptable'* or commendable in His eyes" (Anderson, p. 43).

"Ye take it patiently" - means you endure it by literally 'remaining under' the pressure without blowing up or caving in.

"Acceptable" - thank-worthy (same word - v. 19); worthy of credit and praise.

As God sees it, those who are true heroes are <u>not</u> those criminals who receive unjust, extreme, cruel punishment for their crimes (EX: Rodney King and the California police beating), but those who, like Jesus said, are "*persecuted for righteousness sake"* (Mt. 5:10).

Matthew 5:11-12 - *"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you false, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."*

Those worthy of honor are:

--The faithful early Church Christians who endured incredibly horrible persecution and martyrdom during the Diocletian Roman Empire.

--The Biblical Anabaptist who were drowned by the R.C.C. (and Reformers) for their belief in believers' baptism

--Those who froze in Siberian Russian prison camps for preaching the Bible.

--Those who will be beheaded (Rev. 20:4, 6:9) for refusing to worship the Antichrist or take his mark (Rev. 13).

--The secular college or high school students who are ridiculed for taking a stand on creation (not evolution) and Biblical standards regarding sexual purity, etc.).

II. CHRIST IS MY <u>EXAMPLE</u>
To keep doing right even when I'm treated wrong (v. 21-25)

Being *"called"* to Christ in an unjust world is being called to a degree of suffering from the hands of those outside of Christ (Phil. 1:29 - *"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffering for his sake")*

"We are not saved by following Christ's example, because each of us would stumble over I Peter 2:22 - *"who did no sin."* Sinners need a Savior, not an Example." (Wiersbe, p. 406-7).

Christ's death was <u>not</u> primarily <u>exemplary</u> but <u>substitutionary</u> (v. 24; 3:18; Rom. 5:8, etc.).

He did not merely die as an example, but as a substitute who took our place (note: *"He suffered <u>for us</u>")*. But His suffering does indeed serve us as an example.

The word ***"example"*** was used for the model alphabet from which a child learns to form his letters.

Christ serves as an ***"example"*** (model, pattern, copy) of One who suffered unjustly.

(As the Bible says, He was taken away from judgment [justice] - Is. 53:8; Acts 8:33)

A. He suffered unjustly
though He was <u>sinlessly perfect</u> (v. 22)

Peter knew Christ intimately (for 3 1/2 years, they basically were in each other's company every day); yet Peter could boldly testify that Christ ***"did no sin."***

Christ was impeccable (not able to sin).

He ***"did no sin"*** - He never missed the mark of God's standard of perfection (this could be said of no other human being - Rom. 3:23).

"Guile" - no deceit or trickery ever flowed out of His lips. He spoke the truth always because He is the *"truth"* - John 14:;6.

His word would never lead astray, entrap, or pretend.

He was true, sincere, genuine, and unhypocritical every moment of His existence on earth.

B. He suffered unjustly
and did <u>not retaliate</u> (v. 23)

As Isaiah said, *"He openeth not His mouth"* (Is. 53:7).

"Reviled" - to be verbally abused, to use abusive language.

He was <u>mocked</u> (Lk. 22:63); <u>blasphemed</u> repeatedly (Lk. 22:65); <u>lied about</u> (Lk. 23:2, 5, 10); <u>ridiculed</u> (Lk. 23:36-37); <u>railed on</u> (23:39)**]**

If anyone had a right to verbally defend Himself, Christ did (but if you study the Gospels, you will see that He went out of His way in refusing to defend Himself - Lk. 23:9. His life spoke for itself. His works bore irrefutable testimony to His perfection (Jn. 10:38).

Jesus did not give insult for insult.

(The world fights fire with fire. Christians should not - Rom. 12:21 - *"Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good." "Bless those who curse you"* - Mt. 5:44).

"He threatened not" - Jesus did not threaten them to hell fire (although He had every right to). Rather, He said, *"Father, forgive them. . ."* (Lk. 23:34)
We are so unlike our Lord. We answer back quickly when we are unjustly criticized. We threaten our opponents when they oppress us." (Barbieri, p. 57).

"Committed" - delivered over; gave to; entrusted (Lk. 23:46).

We too need to entrust ourselves into the hands of God (SEE: 4:19).

Even David said: *"Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth."* (Ps. 31:5).

The Father judges righteously. You should leave that prerogative to Him. *"Say not, I will do sot o him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work."* (Prov. 24:29) (SEE: Rom. 12:19-20)

Should Christians use the legal means available to them to defend themselves? Yes (Paul did - Acts 25:11).

But if there is no legal recourse, what then? Do you take vengeance into your own hands? No. You leave it in God's.

C. He suffered unjustly
to pay for our sins (v. 24a)

"Our sins" - The sins that riveted Christ to the cross were not His own (for He had none), but it was our sins that nailed Him there.

Christ personally took our sins upon Himself on Calvary's cross and suffered an infinite equivalent of our eternity in Hell (Is. 53:4 - *"Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.")*

The Just One bore the penalty of the unjust (this was not fair; but it was gracious!).

"That" - in order that; giving a purpose for Christ's death.

Christ took our place and paid our penalty in order that after we became saved and died in reference to sin, we would live for righteousness.

Christ died a death that wasn't right, so that we could live a life that was right.

Note: When we became the recipients of eternal life, *"we became dead to sins"* (Rom. 6:7-13). This does not mean that we do not sin anymore. It does mean that we do not have to obey the demands of the flesh and of Satan any more" (Anderson, p. 44).

We don't have to behave like we once did. We don't have to allow gutter language to flow from our lips or vile actions come from our limbs any more!

His receiving undeserved lacerations (cuts and wounds) led to our undeserved healing.

Theodoret (393-458 A.D.) said: "The doctor suffered on the cross; and the sick received the healing."

(note: The healing referred to in this context is spiritual not physical. Although Jesus did bear men's sicknesses before He did (Mt. 8:17), earthly healing was not in the atonement.

D. He suffered unjustly
so that we would live righteously (v. 24b-25)

V. 24b

We are to be different than we once were. One area of distinct difference, is in how we respond to personal injustices targeted at us.

We can forgive because we have been forgiven (Eph. 4:32 - *"And be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.")*

All of us once wandered away as sheep do (Is. 53:6), but now have been turned back (by God) to the heavenly Paster and Overseer of your souls.

Jesus our loving Shepherd cares for us even when we are unjustly treated (Rom. 8:35-39) and our faithful Overseer looks out for us when the enemy seeks to destroy us.

He guards our souls! (4:19)

CONCLUSION: