

▶ GLENSTONE CHAPEL ◀  
Community Group Bible Study Guide

**Passage: 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:18-25**

**For use July 1-7, 2007**

**FOR PERSONAL PREPARATION:**

1. The Apostle Peter tells Christians how to handle the traumatic tensions often faced in the workplace. When Christians are "up against the system," their identity (cf. 2:9) and their ethical standards (cf. 2:11-12) enable them to triumph over their circumstances.<sup>1</sup>
2. **For your reflection:** Which of the following titles for this paragraph (from several sources) would seem most fitting to you? Check (✓) or write one.
  - \_\_\_ Submission to Employers (masters)
  - \_\_\_ The Conduct of God's People as Slaves
  - \_\_\_ The Kind of Life Jesus Lived
  - \_\_\_ Persevering in the Face of Injustice
  - \_\_\_ Your title?: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. This passage defines how 1 Peter 2:12 plays out in one's **vocational calling(s)**. The humble responses of Jesus to undeserved suffering (vss. 21-25) are to be the believer's model.
4. **Slavery in the Roman empire.** Perhaps 50% of the adult population were slaves, possibly more. They had become slaves because they had been captured in war, or were destitute, or had been bred as slaves. Upper-class Romans and Greeks avoided all forms of physical labor as a sign of status. Hence, slaves performed most "work," including that of teachers and physicians. "At best . . . the slave's lot was one in which he was not a person but a thing."<sup>2</sup> As often happens, the poor and enslaved received Christianity in great numbers. Thus, the churches to which Peter wrote included many more slaves than masters. Many of these slaves worked 6-7 days a week for unbelieving masters. What Peter wrote here was very useful for these household servants and other laborers.

**5. How mean** were some of the masters (vs. 18)?

NIV	"harsh"
CEV	"cruel"
<i>Amplified N.T.</i>	"surly, overbearing, unjust, crooked"
KJV	"froward" [austere, tormenting, difficult, troublesome]
<i>Living Bible</i>	"tough and cruel"
Another version on your shelf	

**7. Submit to your masters"** (vs. 18). Slaves would find it easy to obey masters ". . . who were ▶▶

- ▶▶ gentle and kind. But Peter encouraged loyalty and perseverance even in the face of unjust treatment.<sup>3</sup>
6. **"Unjust suffering"** (vss. 19-20). "Some suffering is the direct result of our own sin; some happens because of our foolishness; and some is the result of living in a fallen world. Peter is writing about suffering that comes as a result of doing good."<sup>4</sup>
7. What does it mean be "conscious of God" (vs. 19)? Consider these interpretations:
  - \_\_\_ "for the sake of your conscience" (NLB)
  - \_\_\_ "for conscience toward God" (ASV)
  - \_\_\_ "If a man suffers wrong for conscience sake, God notes his suffering and approves of his conduct."<sup>5</sup>
  - \_\_\_ "Suffering is not a blessing in and of itself, but, if one's duty to God is involved, then one can meet it with gladness of heart."<sup>6</sup>
  - \_\_\_ "being loyal to Him" (CEV)
  - \_\_\_ "in the sight of God" (*Amplified*)
8. **Calling** (vs. 21). Peter is referring ". . . to the destiny of all followers of Jesus Christ in a hostile world."<sup>7</sup>
9. **Vs. 23.** Peter was an eye-witness. "Peter . . . knew that Jesus' suffering was part of God's plan and was intended to save us. He also knew that all who follow Jesus must be prepared to suffer."<sup>8</sup>

**10. Compare** the trials Jesus Christ endured with the responses he gave.

Christ's Trials	Christ's Responses
"insulted"	Vs. 23
"suffered"	Vs. 23
"bore our sins"	Vs. 23, "He had faith in God Who judges fairly."
Was wounded	

**11. "Wounds"** (vs. 24). The readers, as slaves or former slaves, would fully understand the huge welts ". . . raised on the back of the slave who is given the lash."<sup>9</sup>

**QUESTIONS TO USE IN GROUP** <sup>10</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Life Application Study Bible, page 2001.

<sup>4</sup>Life Application Study Bible, page 2001.

<sup>5</sup>People's New Testament Commentary.

<sup>6</sup>A.T. Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament.

<sup>7</sup>Word Biblical Themes, by J. Ramsey Michaels, page 49.

<sup>8</sup>Life Application Study Bible, page 2001.

<sup>9</sup>Triumphant in Trouble, by Paul Rees, page 68.

<sup>10</sup>Leader should duplicate for in-depth application by group members.

<sup>1</sup>Word in Life Bible, page 1955.

<sup>2</sup>Triumphant in Trouble, by Paul Rees, page 60.

## OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

### Passage: 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:18-25

**LAUNCHING** (Choose one or two to introduce passage.)

1. (A) What is your **"daily work"** (whether as employer, employee, self-employed professional, household manager or volunteer work)? (B) If you are employed or work under a contract, in a phrase or two, describe your present "boss."
2. What was the first **"real job"** you had (yes, *McDonald's*, etc. counts, like with a pay-check)? What your first boss was like?
3. If you ever willingly took an undeserved punishment to save a sibling from the penalty, why did you do that?

**UNDERSTANDING** 1 Peter 2:18-25

1. Read aloud 1 Peter 2:18-25, then discuss (1) God's part and (2) the role of God-followers in dealing with problematic work situations.
2. What seems to be the difference (vs. 18) among "submission, obedience and respect," if any?
3. How would you compare the circumstances and feelings of a slave rightfully punished for theft or insubordination to those wrongfully punished?
4. What positive outcomes are stated or implied in this passage to believers who stay true to God?
5. Why do you think Peter quoted so extensively from Isaiah at this point? Cf. Isa. 53:5, 6, 9.

**MUSING** on 1 Peter 2:18-25

1. When Christians are up against the system, ". . . **coping** may be the only alternative to 'caving in,' —  
\_\_\_ coping to the glory of God by never losing hope,  
\_\_\_ coping to the glory of God . . . by never trading away their dignity  
\_\_\_ coping to the glory of God . . . by never letting their spirit give in."<sup>11</sup>
- Which one of these approaches has helped you cope in a difficult job situation? Check (✓). ▶▶

2. What kind of abuse in the workplace is hardest for you to accept? Check (✓) one, then share with group as you may wish to do so.  
\_\_\_ A. The boss talking to other employees about me.  
\_\_\_ B. Discrimination (it seems to me) against my age, gender, race or appearance.  
\_\_\_ C. I get paid too little for the job I do.  
\_\_\_ D. The management sometimes lies to us employees.  
\_\_\_ E. I was unfairly passed over for promotion.  
\_\_\_ F. I've never had any problems out in the workplace.  
\_\_\_ G. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
3. **"WWJD"** (*what would Jesus do*) seems an appropriate question to ask about difficult employment circumstances? What approach would you recommend to someone in your situation, in light of these verses?
4. To what extent do you **agree or disagree** with the following statement: ". . . Christ's atonement . . . results in something deeply, transformingly subjective, namely, our actual release from sin's guilt and grip, and our actual rehabilitation for a life of righteousness."<sup>12</sup> Check (✓) one, then share with group, but only as you feel comfortable, and tell **WHY**.  
\_\_\_ A. Agree strongly  
\_\_\_ B. Agree mildly  
\_\_\_ C. Disagree somewhat.  
\_\_\_ D. Disagree strongly.  
\_\_\_ E. "I don't know and would rather pass on this one."  
\_\_\_ F. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**FURTHER MUSING** (on your own)

- "Submission is voluntarily cooperating with someone, first out of love and respect for God and then out of love and respect for that person. Submitting to unbelievers is difficult. . . . We are not called to submit to unbelievers to the point that we compromise our relationship with God, but we must look for every opportunity to humbly serve in the power of God's Spirit."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Word in Life Bible, page 1955.

<sup>12</sup>*Triumphant in Trouble*, by Paul Rees, page 66.

<sup>13</sup>*Life Application Bible*, page 2001.