



Retaliation

Note: The Scripture references in this hand-out are taken from the New King James Version.

Warm-up Discussion: Why is submission to authority so difficult for some people?

- People have a natural tendency to put themselves ahead of others, thinking that they are always right if others disagree with them.
- People have a natural tendency to reject any authority in their lives but themselves.
- People who have a problem with God's authority in their life will have a problem with anyone God places in authority over them.

1 Peter 2:18-25

18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.

19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.

21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

22 "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth";

23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.

25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

How does this passage apply to us today?

Substitute the word "employees" for "servants and supervisors" for "masters." Servants were workers whether they were paid or not.

What does Peter say about how employees should treat their bosses?

Peter says we should submit to our supervisors with all fear... to do our business faithfully and honestly, to conduct ourselves, as inferiors ought, with reverence and affection, and to submit patiently to hardships and inconveniences.

Why should we submit to those in authority over us?

We should submit to those in authority over us because of the sovereignty of God. God is in control of all things and establishes who He will in authority over us for a reason:

Romans 13:1-2 - Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

Why does God allow evil authorities to come into power?

These serve His purpose... among the purposes Hitler served was to (1) convince the world they needed to work together to avoid future despots, and (2) convince the Jews that they needed their own homeland.

How far should we go in obeying an evil authority?

We should not use our commend to respect the authorities over us to disobey God who is the ultimate authority...

Acts 4:19 - Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.

When is it commendable to endure grief and suffering?

It is commendable to endure grief and suffering when we do not deserve grief and suffering.

When do we deserve grief and suffering?

We deserve grief and suffering when it is a consequence for something we have done wrong.

What is the distinction between grief and suffering?

Grief is the sorrow we feel emotionally, suffering is the physical hurt.

According to 1 Peter 2:19, why should we endure unjust suffering?

We should endure our unjust suffering because of our conscience toward God. The Holy Spirit within us recognizes the unjust suffering we experience and identifies with it as Christ experienced. And thus He prompts us through our conscience to respond as Jesus did.

Why are Christians expected to endure suffering?

Christ Himself suffered and we are His followers. Jesus told us we would suffer for Him – it is a fulfillment of prophecy. Note in 1 Peter 2:21 that it is part of our calling to suffer.

John 15:20 – “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”

Why is it that we are to endure suffering patiently?

We are to endure suffering patiently because it is temporary. In the context of eternity, our suffering in our mortal bodies will be so short that it will be insignificant...

Romans 8:18 - For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Jesus also said that there would be rewards in eternity for patiently enduring unjust persecution...

Matthew 5:10-12 - Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Why should we rejoice when we are persecuted for Christ?

We should know that our patient response to such suffering is laying up treasures in heaven for us. It is like another deposit in our eternal bank account and we'll be able to enjoy these rewards forever.

How did Jesus set the example of patiently enduring grief and suffering?

Jesus lived a sinless life yet He patiently endured His unjust suffering... when he was insulted and berated, Jesus did not counter with His own insults and censure. When Jesus was punished for things He did not do, He did not retaliate with threats.

Why didn't Jesus retaliate against those who persecuted Him?

1 Peter 2:23 says that Jesus “committed Himself to Him who judges righteously...” Jesus left retaliation up to God who will judge all things and see that justice is done. Quoting Deuteronomy 32:35...

Romans 12:19 - Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

What is the good that came from Jesus suffering what He did?

According to 1 Peter 2:24, Jesus bore our sins as He died... He paid our penalty for every sin we ever committed thus making it possible for us to have an eternal relationship with God.

What does 1 Peter 2:24 mean when it says, “by whose stripes you were healed?”

The suffering Jesus endured was the suffering we deserved so we need not experience the ultimate consequence for our sin.

How were we like sheep going astray?

Before we were saved, we wandered around without a Shepherd following what ever caught our fancy. Now that we have been born spiritually from above, we have a Shepherd and Overseer of our souls to follow and keep us on the right path so that we may fulfill our purpose in life.

Summary / Discussion Questions

Why do you think Peter elevated submission as the first and best response of employees to employers?

It models Christ and brings order to the workplace...

- Our modeling Christ helps us to stand out in a world system that expects pain to be returned in kind (two wrongs do not make a right).
- God has called us to “subdue the earth” (Genesis 1:28) which means that we should be working with Him to restore order to it. When we work within the authority structure God has established, we are helping Him restore order.

Why do you think God values our suffering for injustices over retaliation?

God recognizes our motivation in patiently enduring unjust suffering that it honors His Son who likewise suffered.

How was Jesus able to resist the urge to retaliate against His persecutors?

Jesus no-doubt resisted the human urge to retaliate by keeping an eternal perspective about why He was going through the suffering. Jesus was focused more on the outcome than on the immediate pain.

What do you suppose would have happened if Jesus had retaliated against His persecutors?

Jesus didn't have to go to the cross...

Matthew 26:53 - do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?

Jesus chose to go to the cross for our sake. If Jesus had retaliated against His persecutors, He would not have gone to the cross and thus there would be no payment for the penalty for our sins and no forgiveness.

Wrap-up Discussion: What are some examples of Christ-like responses to authority?

Accepting a rebuke graciously or not defending yourself when you are being dressed down in front of others.