



A Textbook on Suffering

Suffering

- Some folks suffer because they do wrong—nothing really commendable about that (4:15; 2:20a).
- Others suffer because they do right; that **IS** commendable—in God’s eyes (2:19–20; 3:14a).
- Obvious conclusion: “it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil” (3:17).
- It may be better, but it’s not easy!

Not Easy to Suffer for Doing Good

- It's not easy to be thought of as strange or ignorant, to get ridiculed and insulted, to endure false accusations, to be excluded from the "in crowd," to perhaps even face the threat of death.
- The people to whom Peter wrote his first epistle—that's what they were facing, so he wrote this to help them (and us) endure.
- We'll divide the points up into a series of dos and don'ts, just to make the points as clear as possible.

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **Don't** be surprised by suffering, as if it was some “strange thing” (4:12).
 - “...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12).
 - Get used to it; it will happen.

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **Don't** be discouraged by it; don't let it wear you down, because it only lasts “a little while” (1:6)—especially when you contrast it with eternity.
 - “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **Don't** be ashamed of it, or embarrassed by it; instead glorify God for it (4:16; 2:6).
 - You know who really should be ashamed?
 - The folks saying and doing these things (3:15–16).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **Don't** be afraid of persecutors—it's not like they can do you any **lasting** harm (3:13–16).
 - Killed Jesus, but look at Him now (3:18, 22).
 - Noah and his family—they were the ones standing on dry ground when the flood was over (3:18–22).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **Don't** retaliate—do not return “evil for evil, or reviling for reviling” (3:9).
 - Follow the example of Christ (2:21–23).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **Don't** think you're the only one—brethren near and far are suffering the same things, perhaps even worse (5:9).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **Don't** try to fit in with the world to avoid suffering—that's the very thing the devil wants you to do (5:8).
 - This world is not your home, so don't behave like it is (2:11; 4:1–2).
 - Cast your lot with the world, and you'll be in real trouble, because “they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead” (4:5).
 - And it won't be pretty, because their suffering will last more than just “a little while.”



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Review

1. **Don't** be surprised by suffering, as if it was some “strange thing” (4:12).
2. **Don't** be discouraged by it; don't let it wear you down, because it only lasts “a little while” (1:6)—especially when you contrast it with eternity.
3. **Don't** be ashamed of it, or embarrassed by it; instead glorify God for it (4:16; 2:6).
4. **Don't** be afraid of those who persecute you—they can't do any **lasting** harm (3:13–16).

Review

5. **Don't** retaliate—do not return “evil for evil, or reviling for reviling” (3:9).
6. **Don't** think you're the only one—brethren near and far are suffering the same things, perhaps even worse (5:9).
7. **Don't** try to fit in with the world to avoid this suffering—that's the very thing the devil wants you to do (5:8).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **DO** study God's word—obedience to His word gave you life, and that same word will now help you grow. Crave it the same way a newborn baby craves milk (1:22–2:3).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **DO** “be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (3:15).
 - And don’t just say it; practice it. Back up your verbal defense with “good conduct” (3:15–16).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **DO** keep on doing good (2:12, 15, 20; 3:6, 11, 13, 16; 4:19), no matter how much pressure is put on you to do otherwise, no matter how much suffering you have to endure.

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **To keep doing good...**
 - **Remember** the purpose for which you were called out of darkness—to “proclaim the praises” of God, to be a light to those in darkness (2:9–10, 12; 3:1–2, 16).
 - **Remember** what it cost your Savior to bring you out of darkness, to redeem you from the slavery of sin—His own “precious blood” (1:18–19).
 - **Remember** that your heavenly Father will judge you according to your work, and that He will do so “without partiality” (1:17).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **DO** learn to rejoice in the “blessing” (3:14) of suffering, for the following reasons:
 - You are suffering for Christ, the very one who suffered for you (4:13–14).
 - Good purpose—to “try” or “prove” you; to make you stronger, help you develop a genuine faith (1:6–7; 4:12).
 - It presents a great opportunity—it’s when you’re suffering that your light shines the brightest (2:12, 15, 20).
 - It has a good end—partake of Christ’s sufferings, and you will also partake of His glory (4:13).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **DO** look out for your brethren, because they're suffering too (5:9).
 - Love them “fervently” (1:22; 4:8).
 - “Be hospitable” to them (4:9).
 - Use your gifts to minister to them (4:10).
 - Speak to them “the oracles of God” (4:11).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **DO** remember that even though you are “rejected indeed by men” (2:4), you are accepted by God.
 - “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people...” (2:9).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **DO** “be serious and watchful in your prayers” (4:7), because you do need God’s help.
 - Which is further incentive to keep living right (3:11–12).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **DO** remember that God is with you—
 - He will keep you by His power (1:5).
 - He will care for you (5:7).
 - He will “exalt you in due time” (5:6).
 - He will, “after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you” (5:10).

How to Endure Suffering...Patiently

- **DO** “rest your hope fully upon the grace...brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:13).
 - You finally get to go home, to the place God has reserved for you in heaven, an inheritance which is “incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away” (1:3–4).
 - You won’t be reproached and reviled any longer (3:9; 4:14); instead, you will receive praise, honor, and eternal glory (1:7; 5:4, 10).