

Exiles: Week 10

Discussion Guide



Read Together

We're walking through the letter of 1 Peter as part of a series called *Exiles: Why We Must Be Different to Make a Difference*. This week we're reading from 1 Peter 4:12-19 where Peter begins to talk about what it means to suffer: why being different sometimes leads to suffering and how we can suffer differently.

¹²Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. ¹⁶However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. ¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And,

"If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

¹⁹So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

Discuss Together

Always feel free to add in additional questions of your own, and don't feel like you need to get through every single question. Your goal is to foster a conversation that leads people a little bit closer to everyday life like Jesus—using this week's text as a basis.

- **What is something that struck you from an initial reading of this text?** (This is a good question to discuss in groups of 2-3 to get everyone talking before opening the floor for people to share with the whole group.)
- Surprise is what you feel the gap between expectations and reality. These believers weren't expecting to suffer. Which is why they were surprised when they experienced suffering. But

everyone responds to suffering differently. **What are some ways you've seen people (whether believers or unbelievers) respond to suffering?**

- One way Peter talks about suffering is as a *test* or *trial*. It reveals what we believe, which is why you don't really know what you believe until you suffer. **What are some reasons you think suffering clarifies what we believe?**
- Peter encourages these believers to "rejoice" when they suffer (3:13):
 - **Why is it so hard to rejoice when we're suffering?**
 - **What are some reasons he gives us to rejoice in the next few verses?**
- He uses the phrase "participating in the sufferings of Christ" (3:13) to talk about what happens when we suffer for what we believe. **What do you think he means by this?**
- Peter also says that we're headed for glory in the end (3:13). **How does knowing the end of the story make a difference when you're in the middle of suffering?**
- **Does anyone want to share an experience of suffering they're currently going through or have been through in the past, and how what Peter's saying here makes (or made) a difference?**
- **What are some things we can do to change our default response to suffering?**
- **Is there anything else from this passage that you'd like to discuss more?**

Pray Together

At the end of this section, Peter encourages us to commit ourselves to faithful creator while continuing to do good. We encourage you to spend some time in prayer (and if you want, worship) committing your experiences to God and rejoicing despite whatever you're going through.