

HOPE IN ALL SEASONS

Suffering Makes You Bitter or Better 1 Peter 4:1-11 Message Reflection Guide

When eighteen-year-old Sammy received Jesus as Savior, his family rejected him because their tradition was of a different faith. But the Christian community welcomed him, offering encouragement and financial resources for his education. Later, when his testimony was published in a magazine, his persecution intensified.

But Sammy did not stop seeing his family. He visited whenever he could and talked with his father, even though his siblings cruelly prevented him from participating in family affairs. When his father fell ill, Sammy overlooked his family's slighting and attended to him, praying his father would get well. When God healed him, the family began to warm up toward Sammy. Over time, his loving witness softened their attitude toward him—and some of his family members became willing to hear about Jesus.

Our decision to follow Christ may cause us difficulties. When we undergo discomfort or suffering because of our faith, we do so because "Christ suffered for [us], leaving [us] an example, that [we] should follow in His steps" – **Lawrence Darmani**

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who has been an example of gracious suffering in your life? What was their story?

GETTING INTO THE SCRIPTURES READ 1 Peter 4:1-11

Pastor Jason said: **Suffering is an opportunity to grow in Christ.** Coming into a relationship with Jesus Christ inevitably leads to noticeable life change. In your own life, what kinds of things have changed since you began living "for the will of God" not "evil human desires?"

When you suffer, choosing wisdom makes you better. Why is humility essential when seeking wisdom? How have you benefited from another person's wisdom recently?

When you suffer, choosing prayer makes you better. Why is prayer powerful? When you pray, what scripture assures you that God is listening?

When you suffer, choosing love makes you better. In what way does "love cover over a multitude of sins" in your relationships with others? Is there a relationship in your life right now that would benefit from practicing this principle?

When you suffer, choosing to serve makes you better. In what ways do you think God has gifted you for service? How can you serve in such a way that God receives the glory and not you?

CHALLENGE

Suffering can lead to growth in Christ. The choices you make will determine whether you become bitter or better. Is there any past/current suffering or pain that you need to surrender to God? What do you need to do first? Seek wisdom, pray, love others or serve others?