

Painful Submission

1 Peter 2:18-23

Believers are called to display the character of Christ by submitting to those in authority even when it is painful to do so.

1. Servants and masters.

- a. Who were the slaves?
- b. Who were the masters?

2. The circumstances of submission.

- a. Submitting to kind and good masters.
- b. Submitting to unbelieving and cruel masters.

3. Motivation for submission.

- a. Submission is pleasing to God.
- b. Submission fulfills our calling to display the character of Christ.

*The Letter to
God's Elect*



I Peter





Painful Submission

1 Peter 2:13-17

1 Peter 2:18-20

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect,
not only to those who are good and gentle,
but also to those who are unreasonable.

For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward
God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.
For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated,
you endure it with patience?

But if, when you do what is right and suffer for it,
you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

1 Peter 2:21-23

For you have been called for this purpose,
since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example
for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin,
nor was any deceit found in His mouth;
and while being reviled, He did not revile in return;
while suffering, He uttered no threats,
but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.

1 Peter 2:18-20 revisited

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all *fear*,
not only to those who are good and gentle,
but also to those who are *crooked*.

For *this is commendable*, if *because of mindfulness of God*
a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly
treated, you endure it with patience? But if, when you do what
is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it,
this *is commendable before* God.

Believers are called to display the character of Christ by submitting to those in authority even when it is painful to do so.

Painful Submission

Servants and masters.

1 Peter 2:18-20

Servants, be submissive to your **masters** with all *fear*,
not only to those who are good and gentle,
but also to those who are *crooked*.

For *this is commendable*, if *because of mindfulness of God*
a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly
treated, you endure it with patience? But if, when you do what
is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it,
this is commendable before God.

Servants and Masters

Who were these servants?

1 Peter 2:18-20

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all *fear*,

not only to those who are good and gentle,
but also to those who are *crooked*.

For *this is commendable*, if *because of mindfulness of God*
a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly
treated, you endure it with patience? But if, when you do what
is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it,
this is commendable before God.

“Servant” = oiketai oikos = household

Peter was likely addressing the household slaves within this Christian community.

Who were they?

Ancient Roman Slave Culture

Source of slaves:

Warfare

Piracy

Debt or economic necessity

Birth

Duties of house slaves:

Barbers, cooks, nannies, gardeners, secretaries, accountants, physicians

Ancient Roman Slave Culture

Status of slaves:

Non persona = no person

No property, no rights, no ancestors, no name.

Prevalence of slavery:

In Italy ~1 in 3 (33%) were slaves.

Empire wide ~1-5 (20%) were slaves.

*Slavery **today** is estimated at between 45 to 70 million.*

The New Testament and Slavery

Slavery is never condoned.

Slavery is recognized as a real life-circumstance.

The goal of the gospel is not social revolution.

The gospel is radical and offensive to a culture obsessed with civil rights and personal autonomy.

The gospel has and does lead to emancipation.

To whom do we submit?

Who were these servants?

*Who were the masters
to whom Peter referred?*

1 Peter 2:18-20

Servants, be submissive **to your masters** with all *fear*,

not only to those who are good and gentle,
but also to those who are *crooked*.

For *this is commendable*, if *because of mindfulness of God*
a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly
treated, you endure it with patience? But if, when you do what
is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it,
this is commendable before God.

“Masters” = *despotes*

The term is not necessarily negative.
Christ is referred to as our *despotes* 3x.

Who were they?

Ancient Roman Slave Culture

Masters (*despotes*)

Royalty or government officials

Land or business owners

Merchants and artisans

Just about any Roman citizen and even some slaves

How does this apply to us?

Being voluntary and “at will”, the employee/employer relationship makes it different than slavery.

But employees **do** work under the authority of their managers and owners and ought to obey the principles taught in this passage and others like it.

If slaves could be commanded to submit, how much more should we submit to our authorities?

Painful Submission

Servants and Masters

The Circumstances of Submission

Circumstances of Submission

*Submission to good
and gentle masters.*

1 Peter 2:18-20

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all *fear*,
not only to those who are good and gentle,

but also to those who are *crooked*.

For *this is commendable*, if because of mindfulness of God
a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly
treated, you endure it with patience? But if, when you do what
is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it,
this is commendable before God.

“Good” is not a statement about the condition of their souls but about their attitudes toward their slaves.

“Gentle” refers to their treatment in general.

These were masters who possessed
“the milk of human kindness.”

Submission to authority is
contrary to our flesh even if the
authority is good and gentle.

**God is good and gentle,
and yet...**

Circumstances of Submission

Submission to good and gentle masters.

*Submission to unbelieving
and cruel masters.*

1 Peter 2:18-20

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all *fear*,
not only to those who are good and gentle,
but also **to those who are *crooked*.**

For this is commendable, if because of mindfulness of God
a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.
For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly
treated, you endure it with patience? But if, when you do what
is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it,
this is commendable before God.

“Crooked” = *skolios*

Acts 2:40

And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “**Be saved** from this **crooked** generation!”

Philippians 2:15

...that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a **crooked** and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world...

Peter likely used the term
“crooked” to identify these masters
as unbelieving **and** cruel.

They could be cruel!

1 Peter 2:18-20

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all *fear*,
not only to those who are good and gentle,
but also to those who are *crooked*.

For this is commendable, if because of mindfulness of God

a man bears up under sorrows **when suffering unjustly.**

For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly
treated, you endure it with patience? But if, when you do what
is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it,
this is commendable before God.

They could be cruel!

1 Peter 2:18-20

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all *fear*,
not only to those who are good and gentle,
but also to those who are *crooked*.

For *this is commendable*, if *because of mindfulness of God*
a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.
For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly

treated, you endure it with patience? But if, **when you do what
is right and suffer for it**, you patiently endure it,
this is commendable before God.

The good conduct of believing slaves could create tension with their masters.

Unbelieving masters could be cruel in their response.

Painful Submission

Servants and Masters

The circumstances of Submission

Motivation for Submission

Motivation for Submission

*Submission to masters
is pleasing to God.*

1 Peter 2:18-20

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all *fear*,
not only to those who are good and gentle,
but also to those who are *crooked*.

For *this is commendable*, if *because of mindfulness of God*
a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

For *this is commendable* if, when you sin and are harshly
treated, you endure it with patience? But if, when you do what
is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it,
this is commendable before God.

God does not commend abuse;
He commends the child who, out of love
for the Father, bears up under pain when
being unjustly treated.

1 Peter 2:18-20

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all *fear*,
not only to those who are good and gentle,
but also to those who are *crooked*.

For *this is commendable*, if *because of mindfulness of God*
a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly

treated, you endure it with patience? But **if, when you do what
is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it,**
this is commendable before God.

God is pleased by the patient
endurance of those who suffer for
doing what is right.

Implication:

In a world where it is easy, even expected, to walk away from difficulty, how much more commendable will be your choice to endure for the glory of Christ.

Motivation for Submission

Submission to masters is pleasing to God.

Submission fulfills our calling to display the character of Christ.

1 Peter 2:21-23

For you have been called for this purpose,
since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example
for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin,
nor was any deceit found in His mouth;
and while being reviled, He did not revile in return;
while suffering, He uttered no threats,
but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.

1 Peter 2:21-23

For you have been called for this purpose,
since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example
for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin,
nor was any deceit found in His mouth;
and while being reviled, He did not revile in return;
while suffering, He uttered no threats,
but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.

Our calling is to imitate Christ's
willingness to endure suffering in the
fulfillment of His mission.

**Our mission is to evangelize the
world with our lives.**

1 Peter 2:21-23

For you have been called for this purpose,
since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example
for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin,
nor was any deceit found in His mouth;
and while being reviled, He did not revile in return;
while suffering, He uttered no threats,
but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.

Our calling is to imitate Christ in His
endurance by faith.

He endured by handing Himself
over to the righteousness and
justice of His Father.

1 Peter 2:21-23

For you have been called for this purpose,
since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example
for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin,
nor was any deceit found in His mouth;
and while being reviled, He did not revile in return;
while suffering, He uttered no threats,

but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.

We will submit in pain and
endure with patience only if we
accept that we belong to God
and trust that He is good.

For your consideration:

What if God used your hopeful
endurance of mistreatment to
lead just one person to Christ?