


# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. *—Psalm 145:11*  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. *—Joshua 22:5*

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- 1 Peter 2:19-20 speaks of "suffering unjustly for doing what is right". When has that happened to you? How did you handle it and what resulted? If you could have a "do-over", what would you do differently?
- Contemporary culture values "fairness" and speaks much of "social justice"—  
**how** would it evaluate Jesus' responses to the unjust suffering he received (1 Peter 2:23)?

What assumptions and values undergird contemporary culture's view of justice and suffering?

What assumptions and values undergirded Jesus' responses to the suffering he experienced?

- On a scale of 1 to 10, rate yourself on each of the Christian's "social obligations" (1 Peter 2:17-18a):
  - [1] Respecting all people, as God's image-bearers.
  - [2] Loving your Christian family in practical ways.
  - [3] Fearing God.
  - [4] Honoring governmental leaders.
  - [5] Submitting to those in authority over you.

Based on this, decide to "**Take One Step**"...  
(see box below)



**Are you suffering for your faith?**  
A biblical counselor can help:  
[counseling@tcc.org](mailto:counseling@tcc.org)

## Application-Challenge

- Don't be surprised when you are the victim of unjust suffering.
- When you suffer unjustly, don't seek vengeance, don't throw a pity party, and don't pretend like it doesn't bother you.
- Always submit to those in authority over you, unless they ask you to disobey God. In such cases you must obey God rather than man.

**Take One Step:** What is one small, concrete step of obedience you will put into practice this week?



## Sermon Summary (Key Text: 1 Peter 2:13-25)

All of us have been swindled at some point. I once bought a computer at a price that seemed too good to be true. (It was!) Rip-offs like this happen all the time, and they're frustrating, but they're easily recovered from. But when the suffering is more personal, when you are wrongly accused or when someone slanders your reputation or mistreats you without cause or threatens your livelihood, it's much more difficult to process. When we are treated unfairly we tend to have one of three common reactions: Some people get angry, others throw a pity party, sometimes we just passively refuse to feel anything. First Peter 2:13 tells us to submit for the Lord's sake to every human institution—what in their context was the wicked Nero! Nero used Christians as human torches to light the streets.

God didn't place us here to overthrow human government. He placed us here to establish in our hearts a kingdom not of this world. And as long as the government doesn't require us to sin against God, the Bible instructs us to submit to the governing authorities, whether we like it or not. By submitting to them we honor God by obeying his Word. The Bible teaches that we are to submit to the governing authorities unless we are commanded to do something the Bible forbids, or forbidden to do something that the Bible commands. The broad purpose for which God ordains human government is to promote societal good and to thwart societal evil (v. 14). But even when government fails to live up to God's purpose for it, still we are to obey it, unless it commands us to violate God's will. Why? Because Christians have been set free from Satan's tyranny (v. 15-16). Peter says, "Don't use your freedom to sin, but to refrain from sinning!"

Peter summarizes four social obligations in verse 17: [1] honor all people, [2] love the brotherhood, [3] fear God, and [4] honor the king. We honor (show respect to) all people because they too are God's image bearers. We love the Christian family by anticipating their needs and seeking to meet them if we possibly can. Our primary responsibility to God is to fear him, to revere him. I suspect that Peter added this fourth obligation because he knew that his readers were finding it very difficult to honor someone as evil as King Nero. So Peter says, "Yes, you are to honor him too, by treating him with respect." This is immensely practical: whether we like Trump or loathe him, God's Word is clear—we are to honor our "king" (which is the equivalent of our President.) We don't have to respect the President, but as a Christian we have an obligation to treat him with respect. Respecting someone, and treating them with respect, are two different things. Honoring others is our responsibility; earning our respect is their responsibility.

Peter is talking about our obligations towards those who are in authority over us, and v 18-20 specify how we are to relate to them. Slavery in the Roman empire was somewhat different from American slavery. It wasn't just menial, loathsome tasks which were performed by slaves; all the work of Rome was done by slaves. Doctors, teachers, musicians, and secretaries (to name a few) were slaves. Since Rome conquered the known world, their attitude was that there was no point in being rulers of the world and doing one's own work! Let the slaves do that, and let the citizens live in pampered idleness. Yes, many slaves were treated cruelly, but some were loved and trusted members of the family. But one great inescapable fact dominated the whole situation: in Roman law, a slave was not a person but a thing, and had absolutely no legal rights whatsoever. For that reason, there could be no such thing as justice where a slave was concerned. It would have been easy for slaves who became Christians to think that their faith in Christ gave them the freedom to break from their masters. But that wasn't the case. As Christianity gradually gained a foothold it overcame slavery, but it took longer than just the first century to accomplish this. The Scriptures didn't call for the immediate overthrow of Roman social order. They were concerned with a more important priority—changing the human heart. When you change the hearts of enough people, you will change society!

Some of Peter's readers were also being persecuted for their faith, and the natural tendency of the human heart is to fight back, but God has not given us the right to seek revenge. (And we certainly don't get any credit for bearing up under deserved discipline! See v. 18-20). But suffering unjustly is part of our calling as "resident aliens". Because of our identification with Jesus, we should expect to be treated unjustly (John 15:20; 1 Peter 2:21-24). Jesus is our example of how to respond to unjustified suffering (v. 22 quotes Isaiah 53:9). In the midst of Jesus' intense suffering, Jesus, the innocent one, remained calm, refused revenge, and entrusted himself to God. Jesus shows us how to suffer, without sinning. We wonder: "Why should this innocent man endure such unjust suffering? Why should we? Why shouldn't we resist the false accusations, the snide remarks about our faith? Why should we submit to the cross of unjust suffering?" Why? Because it causes us to return to the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls for strength and protection (v. 25). Are you feeling the shock of unjust suffering? If so, don't fight back; find your way back to the Good Shepherd who endured the cross and laid down his life... for you! Pour out your heart to Him. He knows how it feels to suffer unjustly, and he has modeled for us, how we are to respond.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

**"Five Question Bible Study"** (see page below) is a simple way to study any passage.  
Let's use it learn about suffering in a God-honoring fashion...

**Monday**— John 15:18-25 and 16:33

**Tuesday**— 1 Peter 3:14; 4:1 and 5:10

**Wednesday**— 2 Timothy 1:8-12 and 3:10-12

**Thursday**— 2 Corinthians 4:16—5:10

**Friday**— 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

**Saturday**— ***In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord tomorrow with your church family,*** study 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Need blank copies for doing more  
"Five Question Bible Study"?  
e-mail: Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com

Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) is it found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text?