

## Enduring Unjust Suffering

1 Peter 2:18-23

**Question:** Are there times when it is **not** God's will for us to escape from unjust suffering but rather to patiently endure it (at home, at work, etc.)?

**18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. 19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.**

Sometimes escape from suffering **is** within the will of God. Sometimes it **is** His will that we find a way out. We may be able to call the police, report the crime, appeal to a higher authority, exercise our rights as citizens, or escape from suffering unjustly at the hands of others in some other way. We **can** pray and look for an exit and ask for help. We **can** seek justice in this life.

In our free society where slavery is illegal and other safeguards are in place, there **are** many situations where escaping from unjust suffering is possible and is **not** stepping outside of God's will. We **can** cry for help and call for deliverance by faith. See Acts 22:22-29, 25:1-12, and Romans 12:17-13:4.

*Lord, is there a way that I can escape from this suffering and still honor You?*

But there **are** times when enduring unjust suffering **is** the will of God for us.

**Question:** If there **are** times when God calls us to patiently endure undeserved suffering instead of escape from it, **how** do we do that?

**21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.**

Jesus is the ultimate example of such endurance. "Jesus suffered, but not for any sins that He had committed." He did **not** respond to undeserved suffering by sinning. He patiently endured unjust suffering by trusting. He kept entrusting himself to the Father. See also Hebrews 2:10-13 and 12:1-2.

Jesus himself cried out in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane asking the Father if there was a way out, but for Jesus, there was no way out that was within the will of the Father. Jesus is God the Father's beloved Son, with whom the Father was and is well pleased, but the answer from the Father that night was essentially, "No, I will not remove this painful cup from You. That is not my will for You. This agony is something You must endure."

And so, to escape rather than to endure would have been disobedience for Jesus. It would have been a failure to trust the Father and a failure to obey Him. For, "although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him." (Isaiah 53:9b-10a)

And Jesus trusted the Father to the very end: Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23:46, echoing Psalm 31:5) Jesus never left that painful path by continuously committing himself to the Father.

**We can do what Jesus did. We can endure unjust suffering by entrusting.**

We can say by faith, "I know that one day God will make this and everything else right. I know that joy awaits me. Therefore, I can endure this."

**20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.**

**Question:** What does God specifically see as praiseworthy when one of His children patiently endures unjust suffering?

People who **reject** God's existence and **refuse to trust** His promises often **demand** justice **here and now** because they have no hope of justice later.

**What is praiseworthy in God's sight is our faith in Him:**

- ✓ We see Him as good and just and worthy of our trust, even in our pain.
- ✓ We reject the lie that says if justice isn't carried out now it never will be.
- ✓ We believe what He has promised about future joy and justice.