

REVIEW:

- **Challenge/invitation:** take some time this week to read chapter 1, chapter 2, and chapter 3 again. After reading each chapter, maybe even a couple of times—fill in the blank: Living AS IF _____. How would you summarize what Peter is teaching; how would you fill in the blank? While you're at it—why not do chapter 4 and 5 as well!?

Living AS IF suffering has a purpose!
1 Peter 4:12-19

1 Peter 4:12 (NIV) Dear 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

E_____ it!

- Suffering exists because _____ is abused.
 - ◊ Suffering has a _____.
- Check out **2 Corinthians 7:8-10** and **Romans 8:28**...
- Suffering doesn't have the final say; _____ does!

1 Peter 1:6-7 (NIV) ⁶In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1 Peter 4:13-14 (NIV) 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.

E_____ it! (Rejoice in it!)

Matthew 5:10-12 (NIV) ¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

E _____ it! (ask yourself: why?)

1 Peter 4:15-18 (NIV) 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?”

- *allotrioepiskopos* – someone who looks over, who intrudes into things, a political agitator...

The story about the boy and the caterpillar...

- **For your reflection:** who can you relate to in the story and why?

1 Peter 4:19 (NIV) So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

E _____ yourself to God!

Romans 5:1-5 (ESV) ¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Questions for reflection and discussion at home and in your life group:

1. What portion of 1 Peter 4:12-19 stood out to you? How will you continue to study and meditate on it this week?
2. If you were to define/describe your “theology of suffering,” what would it look like? (God’s part, My part, Their part)
3. Talk about a time when you experienced persecution/suffering for being a Christian or for your faith in Jesus?
4. In the story of the boy and the caterpillar—who do you relate to and why?
5. What was *for you* in this message? What, from this message, is God pressing upon you to *share* with someone else?