

1 Peter Part 3 – The Foundation of Suffering – Summary & Study Guide – March 8, 2026

Summary

This teaching is a study series on **First and Second Peter**, focusing on the **theological foundation of suffering** within the Christian experience. The speaker states that enduring trials is not a sign of divine abandonment but a **mandatory element of faith** intended to refine the believer's character and prove their devotion. By examining the **sovereignty of God**, the text challenges the modern "prosperity" view that suffering stems solely from evil, instead presenting it as a **divinely inspired path** toward spiritual maturity and future glory. The discussion outlines a structured approach to Peter's epistles through three specific lenses: the **purpose, place, and practice** of suffering. Ultimately, the source asserts that following Christ necessitates a **transformation of perspective**, where worldly pride is replaced by a humble commitment to righteous living despite inevitable hardship.

Study Guide

I. Definitions of Key Words

- **Apostle:** One specifically called and given divine authority by the Lord Jesus Christ to set the stage for the credibility of the living word of God. The message to be delivered verbatim.
 - **Approved:** A term derived from the Greek meaning **having been tested and proven genuine**, much like the faith of Abraham when he was willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac.
 - **Contextomy:** The act of quoting scripture or statements out of context to **manipulate meaning or misrepresent intent**, resulting in a skewed interpretation.
 - **Distressed:** In the context of trials, this refers to **deep grief, anguish, and sadness** rather than a light or trivial burden.
 - **Divinely Inspired:** The understanding that the original manuscripts of scripture were given by the **inspiration of God to holy men**, making them **the living word of God**.
 - **Principle of Retribution:** The flawed worldly and religious idea that doing good **always** results in good outcomes, while doing bad **always** results in bad outcomes.
 - **Sovereignty of God:** The fundamental biblical subject addressing **God's absolute authority and control**, which is essential for understanding the purpose of suffering.
 - **Suffering:** A broad term in these epistles that encompasses **trials, discipline, and tribulations** encountered in the walk of faith.
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II. Expansion of Key Points

1. The Divine Foundation of the Epistles

Before diving into the specific texts of 1 and 2 Peter, a believer must establish a "firm foundation" regarding the **authority and credibility of the author**. The writings must be approached with the confidence that they are **divinely inspired** and represent the **living word of God** rather than mere

human opinion. Without this foundation, the difficult subject of suffering cannot be correctly understood or accepted.

2. The Necessity and Expectation of Suffering

Suffering is not an elective but a **necessity in the Christian life**. Followers of Christ should have a "realistic expectation" that their journey will be **surrounded by suffering**. This contradicts many modern teachings that suggest faith should lead to the avoidance or minimization of suffering and trials.

- **Suffering as a Requirement:** It is required to die to sin and live righteously (**Philippians 3:8**).
- **Suffering as a Mark of Sonship:** It serves as a declaration that we are God's children (**Hebrews 12:7-8**).
- **Suffering is Granted:** It is described as something "granted" to the believer for Christ's sake, alongside belief (**Philippians 1:29**).

3. Debunking the Principle of Retribution

The "God mold" many people hold—where God is expected to reward every good deed with immediate prosperity—is often **shattered by the truth of scripture**.

- **The Prosperity of the Wicked:** Psalm 73 reveals that the arrogant and wicked often increase in wealth and remain at ease, while the righteous may feel "stricken all day long" (**Psalm 73:1-14**).
- **Historical Examples:** David, a king with God's favour, endured immense suffering, including the loss of four of his sons. Jesus, who did only good, was treated with extreme cruelty by the world.

4. The "Three Ps" in Peter's First Epistle

The structure of 1 Peter revolves around three main areas regarding suffering:

- **Purpose of Suffering:** Understanding it as **His will** (1 Peter 1:1–2:12).
- **Place of Suffering:** Where it occurs—in **society, the workplace, and marriage** (1 Peter 2:13–3:7).
- **Practice of Suffering:** How to respond by **living by Christ's example of love** (1 Peter 3:8–5:14).

5. The Ultimate Example: Jesus Christ

Jesus is the primary example of how suffering leads to **glorification and exaltation**. He was "perfected" through sufferings, and because of the "suffering of death," He was crowned with glory and honor (**Hebrews 2:9-10**). Believers are called to know the "fellowship of His sufferings" (**Philippians 3:10**).

III. Study and Review Questions

1. According to the teaching, why is it critical to understand the divine inspiration of the original manuscripts before studying the text in detail?
 2. Explain the "Three Ps" of Peter and how they help categorize the subject of suffering.
 3. How does the "Principle of Retribution" mislead believers, and what biblical example is used to refute it?
 4. Identify at least three of the "startling statements" from scripture that connect suffering to the believer's identity or salvation.
 5. What is "contextomy," and why is it considered dangerous in Biblical studies?
 6. According to 1 Peter 1:6-7, what is the specific purpose of being "distressed by various trials"?
 7. How does James 1:9-12 redefine the concepts of "humble circumstances" and a "rich man"?
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IV. Answer Key

1. **Understanding divine inspiration** ensures the student has the confidence that they are reading the living word of God, which provides the necessary credibility and authority to accept challenging doctrines like the necessity of suffering.
 2. The **Three Ps** are **Purpose** (it is God's will), **Place** (society, workplace, and marriage), and **Practice** (living by Christ's example of love). They provide a structured way to understand how suffering permeates all areas of life.
 3. The **Principle of Retribution** falsely claims that doing good always results in good outcomes. It is refuted by **Psalm 73**, which shows the wicked prospering while the righteous suffer, and by the life of **Jesus**, who was perfect yet suffered most.
 4. Possible answers: Suffering is a **clear declaration** we are God's children (Hebrews 12:7-8); it is **not optional** but mandatory (2 Corinthians 4:7-10); it is **directly correlated** to God's exaltation of us (Philippians 2:9).
 5. **Contextomy** is quoting scripture out of its surrounding information to manipulate or distort its original meaning. It results in a skewed interpretation and should be avoided at all costs..
 6. The purpose is the **proof of your faith**, which is more precious than gold. Proving faith results in **praise, glory, and honor** at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 7. James states that those in **humble circumstances** are actually in a **high position** in God's eyes, while the **rich man** is to glory in his **humiliation** because his pursuits will fade away.
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V. Complete Biblical References in this Teaching

- **1 Peter 1:1** (The starting point for the text study)
- **1 Peter 1:6-7** (Rejoicing in trials; proof of faith)
- **1 Peter 1:14-15** (Suffering as an outcome of a holy life)
- **1 Peter 2:13-3:7** (The place of suffering)
- **1 Peter 3:8-5:14** (The practice of suffering)
- **Philippians 1:29-30** (Granted to suffer for His sake)

- **Philippians 2:9** (Suffering correlated to exaltation)
 - **Philippians 3:8** (Suffering is central to required obedience of us dying to sin)
 - **Philippians 3:10** (Fellowship of His sufferings)
 - **Hebrews 2:9-11** (Jesus perfected through suffering)
 - **Hebrews 7:25** (Jesus making intercession for those who draw near to the throne of grace))
 - **Hebrews 12:7-8** (Suffering as evidence of being God's children)
 - **James 1:9-12** (Humble circumstances, the rich man, and the crown of life)
 - **Psalms 73:1-14** (The prosperity of the wicked vs. the trials of the righteous)
 - **Proverbs 11:2** (Humility vs. pride)
 - **Proverbs 29:23** (Humble spirit obtains honor)
 - **John 16:1-4** (Suffering as an outcome of serving others)
 - **2 Corinthians 4:7-10** (Suffering is mandatory)
 - **2 Thessalonians 1:4-5** (Suffering connected to salvation)
 - **2 Timothy 1:8-9** (Suffering and the walk of faith)
 - **John 3:16; 6:44; 12:32; 14:6** (References regarding calling and intercession)
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VI. Exhortations

- **Change Your Expectations:** Do not be surprised when suffering enters your life. Instead, **expect it** as a natural part of following Jesus Christ.
- **Shatter the "God Molds":** Be willing to abandon traditional or comfortable views of God that do not align with scripture, especially regarding wealth and ease.
- **Prioritize Faith Over Riches:** Proving your faith should be at the **top of your priorities**, as it is more precious than perishable gold.
- **Persevere for the Crown:** Remember that the **crown of life** is promised to those who persevere under trial and are found approved.
- **Look to the Future:** When distressed by deep grief or anguish, move your focus from the present pain to the **future praise, glory, and honor** awaiting you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Foundation of Suffering: A Guide to the Epistles of Peter

SHIFTING THE PERSPECTIVE ON SUFFERING

Worldly Success vs. Divine Honour



PRIDE & RICHES
(PERISHABLE)

World prizes pride and riches



HUMILITY & PERSEVERANCE
(ETERNAL)

God values humility and perseverance under trials.

Suffering is a Mandatory Calling



Scriptural evidence shows suffering is not optional; it is granted for Christ's sake.

The "Approved" Faith



Biblical "approval" means being tested and proven genuine, like gold refined by fire.

THE THREE Ps OF 1 PETER

Before studying 1 & 2 Peter, readers must establish a foundation of understanding. Suffering is a mandatory, purposeful experience that leads to eternal honour.

1 & 2 PETER:
THE FOUNDATION OF SUFFERING

THE PURPOSE



The necessity and will of God.

Suffering is designed to prove faith is more precious than perishable gold.

1 Peter 1:1 – 2:12

THE PLACE



Relationships in society and home.

Trials manifest within the structures of society, the workplace, and marriage.

1 Peter 2:13 – 3:7

THE PRACTICE



Living by Christ's example of love.

Believers are called to respond to evil with love and a clear conscience.

1 Peter 3:8 – 5:14