

Self-Identify: "SUFFERING"

Suffering, for a Christ follower, takes on a whole different look from everybody else.

(1 Peter 3:12-17) The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their request. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. And who will harm you if you are passionate for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear or be disturbed, but set apart the Messiah as Lord in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. However, do this with gentleness and respect, keeping your conscience clear, so that when you are accused, those who denounce your Christian life will be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

1. We Will Be Blessed

- A. We WILL have suffering in this world.
- B. Nothing will HARM us in this world.

(12-13) The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their request. [Therefore] who will HARM you if you are passionate for what is good?

- C. If we suffer "because of Christ," God is going to bless us.

(Matthew 5:10-12) "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me. Be glad and rejoice because your reward is great in heaven."

- D. If we suffer HERE because of Christ, God is going to bless us THERE.

2. We Should Be Ready

(15) Be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

- A. Is your hope for life in Jesus?
- B. Can other people see that you hope in Jesus?
- C. Can you tell someone how to find hope in Jesus?

(15) Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

3. We Should Be Temperate

**It's never enough to do the right thing.
We must do the right thing the right way.
If we do the right thing the wrong way,
We have done the wrong thing.**

(16) Do this with gentleness and respect, keeping your conscience clear, so that when you are accused, those who denounce your Christian life will be put to shame.

- A. Temperance: Confident, controlled, measured, polite, self-disciplined.
- B. Character means everything.
- C. Character speaks louder than words.