

Woman's Bible Study

1 Peter 2:19

1 Peter 2:18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.

WHY?

1 Peter 2:19 For this [finds] favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

Look carefully at the words above, "if for the sake of conscience toward God". This means I am willing to seek righteousness, *according to Jesus' example of humility and love*, because I want to be obedient to God. My ultimate loyalty is to follow His commands and act in a manner worthy of His calling. This is not "I am going to stand *my* ground to defend *my* beliefs". It is, "I am determined to follow God's teaching no matter what".

As a people group, we are quick to take up a cause we believe in. We are free in this country to demonstrate that cause and give reason for our commitment. Sometimes these special interests are based on what we think is best and they have no moral right or wrong attached to them such as remaining on daylight savings time or where street signs should be placed. We have been given a conscience to help guide our thinking.

A believer has been given the Holy Spirit to guide them in understanding and truth based upon God's word. Conscience means with knowledge. In this case it is with the knowledge of God's truths upon which my speech, thoughts, and actions are based. My decisions, actions, and thoughts are not regulated by my conscience; rather, my conscience is regulated by God's truths. In other words, I cannot form my opinion and then find support in God's word. I am required to know God's word and let that knowledge form my beliefs. Relying upon the Holy Spirit will affect our message and representation of God.

John 14:16-17 "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; [that is] the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, [but] you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.

John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

John 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

Paul was careful to explain to the Corinthian church the importance of following truth given by the Spirit working in a believer's life, rather than wisdom based on the thinking of man.

1Corinthians 2:12-13 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual [thoughts] with spiritual [words.] →Continue reading through the end of the chapter.

Notice the words in verse 15, "he who is spiritual appraises all things". This means to scrutinize, and implies that we investigate, ask questions, discern, examine, and search in order to seek to understand God's ways. The only way this is possible is by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

in a believer's life. There is diligence expected on our part to study to be certain we are following God's truths and not our own desires.

We are not going to find a directive on what kind of flowers to plant or if we should raise chickens! However, we do need to be certain that in those things where our witness of God is affected and our obedience to Him is in question, we are careful to seek His guidance. This means we are not determined to find a way to follow our own thoughts but instead we are determined to understand God's direction. According to 1 Peter 2:18, we are to be willing to submit to others, even if it is difficult or I do not agree or I am treated poorly, because it is what Jesus did and it honors God. I may be right in thinking something is unfair or could be done more effectively but I am still to submit because it is God's command. This is a great example of 'I might want to act one way, but God directs me to act another way'. Now, instead of being a question of understanding or agreement, it is a question of obedience and honor to God.

Our perfect example is to follow is Jesus. The words he spoke to His Father describe the heart attitude we should embrace. "Not my will, but Thine, be done", (Luke 22:42). Let's break some of the words down in 1 Peter 2:19. I think it will give us a clearer understanding.

The first thing we read is "**For this [finds] favor**". Favor is translated from the Greek word *charis*, meaning graciousness, of manner or act. *Especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude.*

Read again 1 Peter 2:18, Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable – (19) **For this finds favor** ... This is grace. "This is graceful indeed" (*Doddridge*). Meaning it is acceptable to God. Because of God – and His work in our lives – because we have been given the Holy Spirit to help us understand God's truths, we can choose what is right.

Our sole/soul purpose is to glorify God out of gratitude for who He is and what He has done. *Think!* **Who or what do your thoughts and actions point towards?**

How can we know what glorifies God? The answer is simple, right? We seek truth from His word. God has graciously given us a manual for living, a testimony of His great love for us. Yet, however clear the answer may be to what glorifies God, putting His truths into practice, having them embedded in our soul, takes concerted desire and effort.

- We glorify God by acknowledging who He is, His greatness, His power, all He has done and will do.
1 Chronicles 16:23-36
- We glorify God by honoring Him with our life, in everything we do.
1 Corinthians 10:31-33; Psalm 37:31
- We glorify God through submitting to His commands in humility of heart.
John 14:15
- We glorify God with our thoughts.
Psalm 1; Psalm 119:11

What other ways can we glorify God?

We certainly should not look to be persecuted or cause our own mishaps, yet if honoring God means being submissive to those who treat us unfairly, then we can choose to endure grief.

Matthew 5:10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Romans 13:5 Wherefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

We hear the word conscience used frequently. Choosing to do or not to do something is often supported by the idea of following your moral conscience. In Romans 13:5 above, the word conscience, *suneidesis*, means co-perception or moral consciousness. It is a form of the word *suneido*, meaning to see completely, to understand or become aware, to be informed of, to know.

This bears repeating, we need to be careful that our moral conscience is regulated and supported by the truths in God's word. My conscience needs to be directed by the knowledge of God. I cannot and should not decide for someone else what their conscience or convictions should be. I do need to encourage and uplift others as they seek to determine what God would have them do in areas that may allow for different interpretation. However, this particular verse in 1 Peter 2:19 is clear –

I am to be in subjection to authority not only because there will be consequences from authority if I choose to disregard them, but most importantly because I have the freedom, and am expected as God's child, to act according to the knowledge God has given me in His word.

Choosing what is right because God says so always trumps feelings based on man's knowledge and keeps us from misguided interpretation. *My moral conscience is not the line I use to make decisions, it is what guides me in applying the knowledge of God's teaching and commands.* Understanding Biblical truth does not require formal scholastic education in Biblical studies. It does require a humble heart which seeks to know God, is filled with His Holy Spirit, and has a desire to apply His precepts.

You can immediately understand the need for each individual to seek guidance from the one true source – God – rather than follow what sounds right or what is thought or even what someone else may think. Even a highly respected person can be wrong in their personal conviction; God's principles and commands, however, are always right. God has given man a conscience to help us determine right from wrong. As a follower of Christ, the basis for my convictions should be the Bible.

1 Peter 3:14-16 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, [you are] blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always [being] ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

Instead of choosing to 'suffer' the loss of our 'rights', we can choose to focus on the opportunities to represent Christ and share the Gospel in every situation. We are to be careful not to bring our own suffering upon ourselves because of unrighteous behavior. Read the above scripture again. **Is it my responsibility to defend the church or to defend the Gospel? Defense means to give answers. Are you equipped to give answers for what you believe? Is it possible that we find ourselves in conflict with others because we are seeking to prove our thoughts more than God's teaching?**

The motivation for our action is to honor God. Self is never in the picture.

1 Peter 4:14-16 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or

evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if [anyone suffers] as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God.

Read *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on 1 Peter 2:19. "*For this is thankworthy.* If, in a conscientious discharge of your duty, you suffer evil, this is in the sight of God thankworthy, pleasing, and proper; ***it shows that you prefer his authority to your own ease, peace, and emolument;*** it shows also, as Dr. Macknight has well observed, that ***they considered their obligation to relative duties not to depend on the character of the person to whom they were to be performed, nor on their performing the duties they owed to their servants, but on the unalterable relations of things established by God.***"

"To suffer meekly, and without blame, ***and to do this out of a sense of the resignation due to the will of God,*** is a virtue which He kindly accepts, and will not fail to reward", *Dean Stanhope 1800's.*

If for the sake of conscience toward God. Meaning, "consciousness of God": from a conscientious regard to God, more than to men. (*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary*)

Our conscious toward God is led out of our respect for God and a sincere desire to please Him – it is based upon His commands and our knowledge of them. "***But the conscience is not an infallible guide and acts according to the light that it has.*** The conscience can be contaminated", *Robertson's NT Word Pictures.*

2 Corinthians 1:12 For our proud confidence is this, ***the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom*** but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.

Hebrews 10:22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, ***having our hearts sprinkled [clean] from an evil conscience*** and our bodies washed with pure water.

A man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

Read how David responds to unjust treatment.

Psalm 119:86-87 All Thy commandments are faithful; they have persecuted me with a lie; help me! They almost destroyed me on earth, ***but as for me, I did not forsake Thy precepts.***

Psalm 119:23 Even though princes sit and talk against me, ***Thy servant meditates on Thy statutes.***

Psalm 119:78 May the arrogant be ashamed, for they subvert me with a lie; ***[but] I shall meditate on Thy precepts.***

What is the example set before us when we feel we are treated unfairly?

2 Timothy 1:12 For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.