

TALK IT OVER

Not a Stranger...Hope in a World of Suffering

Week 2: *How to Respond*

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Icebreaker: Share a time when you've experienced suffering from another person.

Why is there suffering in the world?

Why am I suffering?

HOW do we respond to suffering caused by other people?

1 Peter 2:15 (NLT) Your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you.

Big Idea: **Honorable lives silence ignorant people**

1 Peter 3:8-10 (NIV) Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

Jesus' Response to Suffering

✓ **Extend sympathy**

Luke 23:42-43 (NIV) Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

✓ **Love them**

John 13:4-5 (NLT) So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

✓ **Be compassionate**

Luke 23:34 (NLT) Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."

✓ **Be humble**

1 Peter 5:6 (NLT) So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.

✓ **Don't retaliate**

Isaiah 53:7 (NIV) He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

✓ **Repay them with a blessing**

Luke 6:28 (NLT) Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you.

Benefits of Responding Well

1. God rewards us

1 Peter 3:13-15a (NLT) Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life.

2. May create opportunities to share

1 Peter 3:15b (NLT) And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way.

3. Keeps our conscience clear

1 Peter 15b-17 (NLT) Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!

Who is a person that is/has caused suffering in my life?

What is one action I can take this week to respond more like Jesus?

Discussion Questions

- ✓ How are you most likely to respond when someone close to you causes you suffering? (outward vs inward)
- ✓ What are some negative consequences of responding poorly?
- ✓ What are some positive consequences of responding like Jesus?
- ✓ Of the six things Peter shared, which comes easiest to you? Hardest?
- ✓ What's one action you could take this week to implement this lesson?