

<sup>18</sup> Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. <sup>19</sup> For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. <sup>20</sup> But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. <sup>21</sup> To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

<sup>22</sup> “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>23</sup> When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” <sup>25</sup> For “you were like sheep going astray,”<sup>b</sup> but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

### Review the context.

- Peter reminds us that we are “God’s special possession” (2:9) and we are to “live as God’s slaves” (2:16). What is the effect a humble and submissive attitude can have on those in power over us?

### Understand it.

- Read Romans 6:16-18. Describe the relationship between enslavement to sin and freedom and Christ. How does this relationship reveal spiritual significance to those in “second-class” positions in the home or society?
- How might God have used household slaves to expand the Kingdom?
- What does it mean for God to “call” slaves to suffer like Christ (v.21)?
- How could this teaching also apply to all believers?
- Verses 21-25 refer to Christ’s example of suffering for and before us. Because he did not retaliate or make any threats, his humble death delivered a powerful message to the world. Read Philippians 2:5-11 and share/reflect on how God sees the power and glory of Christ – even through *his suffering*.

### Apply it.

- What are some parallels to modern relationships (inside/outside the home) that appropriately convey the same “call” to suffering under a master?
- How might God be inviting your attitude to be more Christlike in such relationships?

### Who are these “slaves”?

The **slaves** Peter refers to are the *oiketai*<sup>c</sup> (rarely used in NT Greek), who are the *household servants* (*house=oikos*) who live in and submit to the master of the house. While at times NT references to “slaves” and servanthood are metaphorical (ie. *slaves to sin*), this group of people was likely born into or sold/traded/indebted into slavery. Such slaves could range in their relationships from being unjustly mistreated to trusted confidants (i.e. Acts 10:17). Some were treated as family members while others were harshly excluded. The very fact that Peter’s letter addresses this group assumes that they were part of the worshipping community and privy to the same teaching within the church. They are second-class citizens in their culture, but a unique type of citizen-member under the rule and protection of the household master. (Other references: Luke 16:13, Matthew 24:45, Acts 10:17)

<sup>a</sup> 1 Peter 2:22 Isaiah 53:9

<sup>b</sup> 1 Peter 2:25 Isaiah 53:4,5,6 (see Septuagint)

<sup>c</sup> The majority of NT uses of “slaves/servants” uses the Greek “*doulos*” as a general term of servanthood.