

1 Peter 2:18-21

¹⁸ Servants, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but even to those who are unreasonable. ¹⁹ For if anyone endures the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God, this is to be commended. ²⁰ How is it to your credit if you are beaten for doing wrong and you endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His footsteps:

Berean Study Bible

¹⁸ Subordinates, be in submission, with all fear, to rulers;
not only to the good and fair,
but also to the perverse.

¹⁹ Because this is an act of grace, being conscious of God,
to endure any grief, suffering unjustly.

²⁰ How is it to your credit if you are beaten for doing wrong and you endure it?
But if you suffer for doing good, and you endure it,
this is an act of grace before God.

²¹ You have been called to this,
because, namely, Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example,
that you should follow in His footsteps.

My own translation

1

When life is not fair. 1 Peter 2:18-21

There is an order from which we cannot escape. 2:18
Submission is not slavery. 18a "be in submission"
Fear is not failure. 18a "with all fear"

There is a responsibility which we cannot evade. 2:19
Freely give the gift of grace. 19a "this is an act of grace"
Freely choose the presence of God. 19a "conscious of God"

There is an accountability which we must endure. 3:20
Wrong must always be recompensed. 20a "beaten for doing wrong"
Right will always be rewarded. 20b "doing good... before God"

There is our Master who is also our example. 3:21

The suffering of Jesus brought greater good. 21a "Christ also suffered for you"
The followers of Jesus serve a greater good. 21b "follow in His footsteps"

2

The good, the bad, and the ugly. 1 Peter 2:18-21

1966 Italian-style epic Western film starring Clint Eastwood as "the Good", Lee Van Cleef as "the Bad", and Eli Wallach as "the Ugly", with classic theme music.

Good actions in bad circumstances. 2:18-19

What to do. 18 "be in submission"

How to do it. 19 "being conscious of God"

Bad actions result in bad consequences. 2:20a

What not to do. 20a "doing wrong"

What to do next. 20b "beaten... and endure it"

Christ's actions are my consecration. 2:20b-21

Giving what I have received. 20b "act of grace"

Going where Christ goes. 21 "example... follow"

3

Pitching for perfection. 1 Peter 2:18-21

Principle. 2:18a "be in submission"

Perversion. 2:18b-19 "those who are perverse"

Punishment. 2:20a "beaten for doing wrong"

Persecution. 2:20b "suffer for doing good"

Patience. 2:21 "Christ also suffered for you"

4

Can you walk the path that leads you to Calvary? 1 Peter 2:18-21

Your path to Calvary begins with your decision. 2:18

Calvary requires a commitment decision. 18 "be in submission"

Calvary requires a comprehensive decision. 18 "not only to... also to..."

Your path to Calvary only progresses by grace. 2:18b-20

Grace enables me to endure grief. 19 "this is an act of grace... to endure any grief"

Grace enables me to endure suffering. 20 “if you suffer... this is an act of grace...”

Your path to Calvary leads to your death. 2:21

Jesus is my model. 21 “leaving you an example”

Jesus is my Master. 21 “you should follow in His footsteps”

5

Christianity is not for wimps but for champions. 1 Peter 2:18-21

Champions display a powerful attitude: humility. 2:18

Humility is strength with perseverance. 18a “be in submission”

Humility is strength when things are unfair. 18b “but also to the perverse”

Champions display a powerful virtue: grace. 2:19-20

Grace is action with others. 19 “be in submission”

Grace is action with events. 20 “suffer for doing good”

Champions display a powerful direction: Christlikeness. 2:21

I celebrate what I received from Christ. 21 “Christ suffered for you”

I consecrate my walk towards Christ. 21b “example... follow in His footsteps”

6

What ‘Prosperity Preachers’ won’t tell you. 1 Peter 2:18-21

Real Christianity is based on submission, not success. 2:18

Submission has no guarantee of wealth. 18a “with all fear”

Submission has no guarantee of favour. 18b “not only to... but also to...”

Real Christianity is grace for suffering, not for success. 2:19-20

God’s grace is for our endurance. 19 “to endure any grief”

God’s grace is for our resilience. 20 “suffer for doing good”

Real Christianity is means surrender, not success. 2:20

Following Jesus leads to suffering. 21a “suffered, leaving you an example”

Following Jesus leads to Calvary. 21b “you follow in His footsteps”

7

Footprints in the sand. 1 Peter 2:18-21, Psalm 23:1-6

Follow Jesus' footprints through the world. 2:18-19

Walk with Jesus when the way is easy. 18a "good and fair"

Walk with Jesus when the way is hard. 18b "perverse"

Walk with Jesus because the way is grace. 19a "Because this is an act of grace"

Follow Jesus' footprints to the cross. 2:20

Walk with Jesus when life is fair. 20a "beaten for doing wrong"

Walk with Jesus when life is unfair. 20b "suffer for doing good"

Walk with Jesus because the way is grace. 20c "this is an act of grace"

Follow Jesus' footprints where He leads. 2:21

Walk with Jesus when only others benefit. 21 "Christ suffered for you"

Walk with Jesus when there are no instructions. 21 "an example"

Walk with Jesus when there is no explanation. (no 'act of grace' spelled out)

8

Can you see my footprints? 1 Peter 2:18-21

Christ's footprints show me the path He walked. 21a "leaving you an example"

Following Christ takes me the right direction.

Following Christ takes me the best (but not easiest) path.

My footprints are evidence of my walk.

Walking in the light gives me fellowship. 1 John 1:7

Walking in the Spirit frees me from sin. Galatians 5:16

My footprints model Christ-likeness for others. 1 Cor.11:1 "follow me as I follow Christ"

Other possible titles

Don't just get even, get better.

What should I give to people who are a #*%!?

The subtle art of regifting.

WWJD – What would Jesus do?

Give the boss 'what for'!

Why your boss is such a jerk, and what to do about it.

When my 'upline' is a 'drag down'.

Bad bosses with good staff.

When to say, 'I quit'.

How to look up to those you look down on.

Your lower calling is a higher calling.

How to turn your poor job into a rich mission.

Walking in His footsteps.
What the world needs now is... grace.

Quotes and illustrations

They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and released them. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Every day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. Acts 5:40b-42, BSB

The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered that they be stripped and beaten with rods. And after striking them with many blows, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to guard them securely. On receiving this order, he placed them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Acts 16:22-25

but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 1 Corinthians 1:23, BSB

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross. Philippians 2:8, BSB

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. Hebrews 2:9, BSB

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2, BSB

Therefore let us go to Him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace He bore. Hebrews 13:13

If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 1 Peter 4:14, BSB

But if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but glorify God that you bear that name. 1 Peter 4:16, BSB

Men of authority and influence may promote good morals. Let them in their several stations encourage virtue. Let them favour and take part in any plans which may be formed for the advancement of morality. William Wilberforce

Government is not mere advice; it is authority, with power to enforce its laws. George Washington

Authority exercised with humility, and obedience accepted with delight are the very lines along which our spirits live. C.S. Lewis

The authority by which the Christian leader leads is not power but love, not force but example, not coercion but reasoned persuasion. Leaders have power, but power is safe only in the hands of those who humble themselves to serve. John Stott

God has work to do in this world; and to desert it because of its difficulties and entanglements, is to cast off His authority. It is not enough that we be just, that we be righteous, and walk with God in holiness; but we must also serve our generation, as David did before he fell asleep. God has a work to do; and not to help Him is to oppose Him. John Owen

Command thy servant advisably with few plain words, fully, freely, and positively, with a grave countenance, and settled carriage: These will procure obedience, gain respect, and maintain authority. Thomas Fuller

Prayer is the risen Jesus coming in with His resurrection power, given free rein in our lives, and then using His authority to enter any situation and change things. Ole Hallesby

All things are difficult before they are easy. Thomas Fuller

Show respect even to people that don't deserve it; not as a reflection of their character, but as a reflection of yours. Dave Willis

Sharks don't eat fish because of anything the fish do. They don't eat fish because those fish aren't good enough fish, or because those fish aren't nice enough to the sharks. Sharks eat fish because they are sharks. Drenda Keesee

There are some people who always seem angry and continuously look for conflict. Walk away from these people. The battle they're are fighting isn't with you, it's with themselves. Rashida Rowe

The more we run from conflict, the more it masters us; the more we try to avoid it, the more it controls us; the less we fear conflict, the less it confuses us; the less we deny our differences, the less they divide us. David Augsburger

You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself, any direction you choose. Dr. Suess

Life is not meant to be easy, my child; but take courage: it can be delightful. George Bernard Shaw

My mom always said life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get. Forrest Gump, 1994

I decry the injustice of my wounds, only to look down and see that I am holding a smoking gun in one hand and a fistful of ammunition in the other. Craig Lounsborough

Deserving ones don't always get the acclaim. Some people are beautiful but unfortunate, struggling but failing, intelligent but poor, loving but despised. Those who deserve it don't

get it but those who get it don't deserve it. Such is life. Vincent Okay Nwachukwu, Weighty 'n' Worthy African Proverbs, Volume 1

The problem isn't that life is unfair — it's our broken idea of fairness. Meaning, our idea of fairness is self-centred. Tony Warrick

The only thing that makes life unfair is the delusion that it should be fair. Steve Maraboli

The happiest people don't bother about whether life is unfair. They just concentrate on what they have. Andrew Matthews

Life is unfair but remember sometimes it is unfair in your favour. Peter Ustinov

All of life is peaks and valleys. Don't let the peaks get too high and the valleys too low. John Wooden

Life is short, and it is up to you to make it sweet. Sarah Louise Delany

Life doesn't require that we be the best, only that we try our best. H Jackson Brown Jr.

I am thankful for all those difficult people in my life. They have shown me exactly who I do not want to be. Anonymous

Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.

If you have nothing to be grateful for, check your pulse.

Always remember that your present situation is not your final destination. The best is yet to come.

When life is sweet, say thank you and celebrate. When life is bitter, say thank you and grow.

If we keep telling ourselves that life is unfair, but do nothing serious about it, then life will forever continue to remain unfair.

Look for something positive in every day, even if some days you have to look a little harder.

Be the bigger person.

You have to live through the worst parts of life so you never take the best parts for granted.

Keep going...Difficult roads can lead to beautiful destinations.

Life does not have to be perfect to be wonderful.

Every day is another chance to change your life.

Be Kind, even on your bad days. Be Kind, even on their bad days.

Just give me coffee and watch me make it happen.

I don't have to attend every argument I'm invited to.

You have more power over the situation than you think.

What you allow is what will continue.

One night I dreamed a dream.

As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.

Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.
When you saw only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you."

and in the wilderness, where the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, all
the way by which you travelled until you reached this place. Deuteronomy 1:31 BSB

Music and songs

Songs about faithfulness in difficult circumstances
Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.
Forever God is faithful.
Truehearted, wholehearted, faithful and loyal.

Songs about Christ suffering for us
Love incarnate
Love was when God became a man

Songs about following in Christ's footsteps
I am resolved
I will follow You
I'm gonna follow You
My heart is filled with thankfulness

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. What do foot prints reveal, and not reveal, and the one who made them?
 2. Do you think it is easier to be a follower of Jesus when life is easy, or when life is difficult?
 3. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. How does this help to explain why bad things happen to good people?
 4. What is 'grace'; how do we receive it; how do we give it; and what benefit is it?
 5. Read 2 Corinthians 12:8-9. What difference did grace make?
 6. The words, "an act of grace" appear in v19a, and v20b. How can unjust suffering be an act of grace?
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