

MAIN POINT

Christians are called to respond to suffering and persecution in a way that honors Christ and promotes the gospel.

INTRODUCTION

What are some ways our culture promotes comfort and pleasure and discourages pain and suffering?

Can you recall a story from a Christian in your life who suffered for their faith? Recount their experiences and explain how they encouraged you or impacted you?

It is human nature to steer away from what causes us pain. In Western culture, many of us are especially unfamiliar with discomfort and have little understanding of what it means to suffer for our faith. In this study, we will explore the importance of learning to suffer well and how we can promote the gospel in the midst of our pain and hardship.

DISCUSSION

> READ COLOSSIANS 1:24.

How did Paul's response to being falsely accused and arrested differ from how we might react? What was the source of Paul's joy in this moment?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19. Following Jesus means our lives are no longer our own. How does recognizing that you exist for the sole purpose of glorifying God change the way you approach suffering?

Read Philippians 1:12-14. How does understanding that suffering is meant to advance the gospel affect our attitude towards the persecution and hardships we face?

This week we were reminded that people are watching you in your suffering, and how you deal with suffering makes a powerful declaration about Jesus. What are you communicating to the world about Jesus in your suffering?

Although many of us have not had to face extreme religious persecution, why is it important to understand what it means to suffer for your faith? In what sense are all followers of Jesus called to this way of suffering?

Paul's motivation for suffering well was the benefit of other believers and the advance of the gospel. How can our suffering serve these same purposes today?

APPLICATION

What are some practical ways you can practice suffering well? How can you glorify God in the hardships you are currently facing?