SET APART

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS | WEEK 11

QUESTION 1

Take a moment to read our scripture for the week out loud and then discuss what stands out to you.

1 Peter 4:12-19 [12] Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. [13] But rejoice in as much as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. [14] If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. [15] If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. [16] However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. [17] For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? [18] And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" [19] So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

QUESTION 2

Question two will focus on verse 12:

[12] Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. This verse was very relevant to the first-century Christian who received Peter's letter and is also very relevant for us today. Does he receive Peter's letter, and are they undergoing hardship and persecution, what Peter calls a fiery ordeal? You are also no doubt enduring the fire of adversity and hardship, and if you're not right now, you probably have recently. Discuss openly with your group some of the adversity you are currently facing in life. What is your fiery ordeal?

Peter demonstrates in this classic verse that we should not be surprised when we face difficulty, hard times, and adversity, this is not strange or unexpected, we should be expecting things to be difficult. We have a spiritual enemy, and we live in a hostile world. Be honest, are you sometimes surprised when things get difficult **as if something strange were happening to you?** What might be the advantage of expecting adversity?

QUESTION 3

In verse 13, Peter teaches that not only should we not be surprised by the fiery adversity we face, but we should also rejoice in it. **[13] But rejoice in as much as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.** Peter is reiterating something that both James and Paul share, namely that we should be joyful even when things are difficult. **James 1:2-3 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, [3] because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Romans 5:3-5 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.** According to all of these verses, why should you rejoice when you face adversity? Again, please be honest. Do you rejoice when things get hard? How might that be to your advantage?

QUESTION 4

Question four will examine verse 14. **[14] If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.** Discuss with your group what you think this verse means.

Back in 1 Peter 3:14, Peter says something very similar: **"But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened."** In verse 14, Peter elaborates on the nature of the blessing, **explaining that you are blessed because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.** What does it mean to you to have the Spirit of God rest on you? Have you ever had this experience of the Spirit resting on you? If so, tell that story.

QUESTION 5

Question five focuses on verses 15 and 16. **[15] If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. [16] However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.** In verse 15, Peter expresses a familiar sentiment. We should suffer for doing good, not for breaking the law, but he also lists something interesting, **even as a meddler.** Alongside criminal and thief, Peter lists a meddler, a gossip, someone who gets into other people's business. Take a moment to discuss verse 15. Do you ever feel tempted to gossip or meddle in someone else's life?

In verse 16, Peter says that if we suffer in Jesus' name, we should praise God because we bear the name of Jesus. In Acts 5:41, we see Peter living out this verse. **Acts 5:41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.** What does it mean to you to bear the name of Jesus, to be called a Christian?