

1 Peter 2:21-23

Level 1 – The Satanic, or sinful (returning evil for good)

When you've done something good for someone and they respond unkindly, with rudeness, or sinful selfishness.

Level 2 – Returning evil for evil

The nonbelieving world will applaud and agree with that approach because it is consistent with the unregenerated nature. There is no way to glorify God if Christians return evil with evil. It has been said if we spend our time getting even, we will never get ahead.

Level 3 - Returning good for evil

This is truly a supernatural response to living. It is a response enabled and empowered by the Holy Spirit which bears with our spirit to do what is right. Returning good for evil is the opposite response of the nonbelieving world.

Returning evil for evil was the attitude of the believers in Corinth who were taking each other to court and suing each other. In *1 Corinthians 6:1-7* Paul wrote that they were responding sinfully and acting like the unregenerated person. He condemned them saying, verse 5, *"I say this to your shame."* In verse 7 Paul adds, *"Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another."*

First Peter chapter 2 has focused on:

- Submitting to institutions like government and governors – **vs. 1-16**
- Honoring all people – **vs. 17**
- Honoring the king – **vs. 17**
- Submitting to earthly masters / employers (even unreasonable ones) – **vs. 18-20**

During those infrequent times when we're mistreated, falsely accused, or purposefully abused we see those events as occasional and times we are to endure. However, verse 21 informs us, *"to this you were called."* We're informed in *James 1:2* and *1 Peter 4:1* that we are not to be surprised when trials happened to us. It will more than likely be God *alone* who knows all the purposes He has in mind for your suffering.

Peter actually informs us that God called us to suffer using the Greek word *"kaleō"* which means *"summons"* or *"election."* The Latin Vulgate translation uses the root *"voco"* for *"calling"* which gives us our English word vocation. Our election, our summons, and our spiritual vocation just happen to be suffering. Verse 21 could literally be translated, *"... it is to this kind of living that you were called."* That's the reason some leave the Christian faith.

The pattern in verse 21:

"... since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example." He's leaving us a pattern for how to suffer and how to live on nothing less than a genuinely supernatural level. The Greek word *"hypogrammous"* means, *under-writing, or craving, engraving, or a piece of calligraphy, or copy, for a student to imitate / trace.*

Peter is saying, Do you remember how you learned to write? Well, Jesus is going to show you how to react! Copy Him . . . trace the alphabet of His disposition and demeanor. [John Phillips]

Vs. 21b – Literally translated, you are tracing Christ's *"footprints."* This has the idea of taking note of His direction, the line of footprints which Jesus left behind.

Vs. 22 – The Apostle is now reminding us of the how high the standard is we are to follow, *"Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth."* In other words, He didn't deserve the treatment he received, it was all unfair and unjust treatment.

Vs. 23 – This was true not only at the event of His crucifixion, but throughout Jesus' ministry. The Pharisees and Sadducees were constantly insulting Him, mocking Him, and accusing Him (the present tense means ongoing).

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The ridicule of the Pharisees and Sadducees:

- An illegitimate child, born out of wedlock (*John 8:41*)
- A glutton (*Matthew 11:19*)
- A drunkard (*Luke 7:34*)
- Possessed by demons (*John 8:48*)
- In secret alliance with Satan (*Mark 3:22*)
- A deceiver, a tax evader and false teacher (*Luke 23:2*)

Jesus is the epitome of being treated unfairly and unjustly. Jesus Christ, our High priest, has been touched by everything we feel; remember He felt it too . . . deeply (*Hebrews 4:15*).

“Watch Jesus . . . follow that!” Have you been cursed at and spit upon – follow His footsteps;

- Have you been unjustly treated or ignored?
- Have you been insulted and verbally abused?
- Have you been slandered and unjustly treated?
- Have you been beaten and might you be killed? – you are following the line of footprints left behind by your Lord

This is living on a supernatural, Holy Spirit empowered level of life. Peter not only gives us our vocation and our pattern, he provides us with a key transaction in verse 23b.

Vs. 23b – Jesus drew the strength He needed for this kind of amazing response throughout His life from His trust in His Father’s ultimate purpose. There are myriad purposes God allows us to suffer and almost exclusively only God knows the purpose.

In verse 23, the word “*entrust*” means “*to commit, to hand over*” and the tense signifies *repeated* past action. With each new wave of abuse; with each new wave of insults, condemnation, abuse, and injury, Jesus continually handed Himself over to His Father. In fact, this was actually among Jesus’ final words, the final transaction from the cross where Jesus says, “*Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit*” (*Luke 23:46*).

Application:

In your everyday life, what are some ways that following Jesus could lead to suffering and hardship?

When faced with the prospect that obedience will bring suffering, how are you tempted to respond?

What are some areas of your life where you have pursued ease over obedience?

Write a commitment statement that identifies specifically how you will commit (hand over) your life to follow Jesus footsteps.