



## INDUCTIVE LESSON SIX

### JOY IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING

You may recall back during the 2009 and 2010 NBA seasons, when the Los Angeles Lakers won back-to-back championships, that it was a pretty common sight to see cars adorned with Lakers flags and people everywhere wearing clothing bearing the Lakers team emblem. Currently the Lakers have nearly the worst record in basketball and the Lakers regalia is nowhere to be seen. A friend of mine, an ardent Lakers fan, tells me this is when you can tell the difference between true followers and those who just want to jump on the bandwagon.

The phrase “jumping on the bandwagon” means to join a growing movement in support of someone or something, often in an opportunist way, when that movement is seen to have become successful. By way of contrast to the fair-weather Lakers fans, those receiving Peter’s letter could never be accused of jumping on the bandwagon of Christianity. These first-century believers were receiving the first wave of persecution for their faith by Emperor Nero, thus necessitating Peter’s emphasis on suffering in this epistle.

Over the next two and a half centuries the church experienced ten waves of persecution from various Roman emperors, starting with Nero (the cruelest) and ending with Diocletian (the most widespread). However, in all of this, the persecuted church proved to be the pure church with only those truly devoted to Jesus willing to admit their faith. In a similar fashion, today it is difficult to imagine anyone but true believers professing Jesus as Lord in many areas of the world where such an admission could cost them their freedom, finances, or family. History tells us that all of this changed in AD 311 when Emperor Constantine became a Christian and made it the de facto religion of the entire Roman Empire. It became to one’s political, social, and economic advantage to be a follower of Jesus, and with that, the Purified Persecuted Church became the Compromised Comfortable Church.

Could that be the case in America today with a 2012 Gallup Poll reporting that 78% of Americans profess to be Christians?<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, as of 2010, 85% of those in the Senate and House of Representatives identified themselves as Christians. Apparently it is deemed advantageous to be identified as a Christian as long as you don’t actually adhere to His teachings. As the old saying goes, “Boat in the water—no problem. Water in the boat—big problem’. When the church is in the world it’s no problem, but when the world is in the church it creates a big problem.

In contrast to the prosperity doctrine preached in many churches today, Peter teaches us it is a privilege, not a penalty, to suffer for Christ. J. Vernon McGee once said that though we are called to a banquet, the Christian life is no picnic.<sup>2</sup> We are to rejoice in the Lord and not in the trial. Furthermore, in the midst of suffering, trials, and persecution, we are

to glorify God by obedience to His Word. Some have used the presence of suffering or persecution in their life as a litmus test for their impact on the world for Christ.

The story is told of John Wesley, English evangelist of the eighteenth century and founder of the Methodist Church, who despaired over his usefulness for Christ when he went a whole week without persecution while evangelizing throughout rural England. He was said to have been relieved when he encountered an angry mob emerging from a tavern at his next stop. His advice to preachers encountering such opposition reflected the teaching of Peter. “Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.”<sup>3</sup>

### Patterns in First Peter

Recurring Teaching or Theme	Found in This Week’s Text	Found Elsewhere in First Peter
Union with Christ	13a	1:6–9; 2:21–26; 3:18–22
Coming Revelation of Christ’s Glory	13b	1:7–8; 5:4
We’re Blessed to Suffer for Name of Christ	14a	3:9, 14
Suffering for Christ Glorifies God	14b	2:12
We Are Not to Suffer for Doing Wrong	15	2:12, 20; 3:17
We Shouldn’t Be Ashamed of Suffering for Christ	16	2:6
If We Suffer We’re to Commit Ourselves to Care of Our Faithful Lord While Continuing to Do Good	19	2:23, 25

### Prayer

Start by praying over the passage and asking the Holy Spirit to give you fresh insights and wisdom in understanding it. Then read through the entire passage two or three times.

### Memory Verse

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. —1 Peter 4:19

### Inductive Method Step 1: Observation

My Observations: In the left column, write down observations you make directly from the text. Things to look for:

What are the promises?

What are the commands?

What are the sources of conflict?

What are the cause/effect relationships?

What are the repeated words and ideas?

What do we know about who is speaking and who is receiving the message?

What comparisons and contrasts can you identify and what do they illustrate?

Do you have unanswered questions on part of the passage? (Share them with your group.)

Digging Deeper: In the right column, write down any additional observations you can add from other sources such as:

Other scriptures that apply (cross references)

Dictionaries for specific words (English or Greek dictionary)

Bible dictionaries for historical information

Commentaries (See the Tool Box at the end of the study for suggested sources.)

Parallel passages in other books. Accounts found in parallel passages, while very similar, often reveal small but critical details omitted by another author.

### **Inductive Method Step 2: Interpretation**

Webster tells us that *interpret* means “to explain the meaning or make understandable.” What is the spiritual truth or lesson that God is trying to teach in this passage? Don’t isolate the passage but read into it and read out of it. Look for commands, imperatives, promises, or warnings. What is God saying to those people at that time? (You will share what God is saying to you in the next section.) State the spiritual truth or lesson in a single sentence.

### **Inductive Method Step 3: Application**

This is where you purpose to do what God has taught you in your time with Him. It is through applying the Word that God changes lives. Application does not happen by osmosis but by intent. God enlightens us with His Word, we apply what we’ve learned with our wills, and the Holy Spirit empowers us to carry out these choices. The goal of all application is to glorify God by becoming more like Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for . . .”

Teaching: What did I learn?

Reproof: Where do I fall short? Why do I fall short?

Correction: What will I do about it?

Training in righteousness: How can I make this principle a consistent part of my life?

### **Study Text / Worksheet**

Write down your observations, comments, or questions directly on the text as you go over it.

Suffering for God’s Glory

1 Peter 4:12–19

12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a

busybody in other people’s matters. 16 Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. 17 For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 Now “If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?” 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

My Observations

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Digging Deeper

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Interpretation:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Application:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Parallel Passage**

James, half-brother of Jesus and (like Peter and Paul) an eventual martyr for the church, was well acquainted with trials. What additional insights can you glean from James’ teachings on trials, found in this passage?

Count It All Joy  
James 1:2–6

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

My Observations

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Digging Deeper

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Interpretation:

---

---

---

---

---

Application:

---

---

---

---

---

**Take Away / Summary**

If one of your friends at work or a neighbor were to ask you what you did on Tuesday, you would tell them you went to a Bible study. The next question would likely be, "What did you learn?" We often summarize an entire athletic contest or a movie in a few brief sentences and easily convey the essence of the event. Now apply these same skills to give a summary of the passage in a sentence or two. Then, in an additional sentence or

two, describe what impact this passage will have on how you live.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Memory Verse

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. —1 Peter 4:19

### Key Words/Phrases

Write out the definition of these key words. You can use a regular dictionary or go to one of the Greek sources listed in the Tool Box at the end of the study. You may also use a concordance to see where else and how the word is used in the Bible.

Partake of Christ's Sufferings (1 Peter 4:13)

---

---

---

---

---

Scarcely Saved (1 Peter 4:18)

---

---

---

---

---

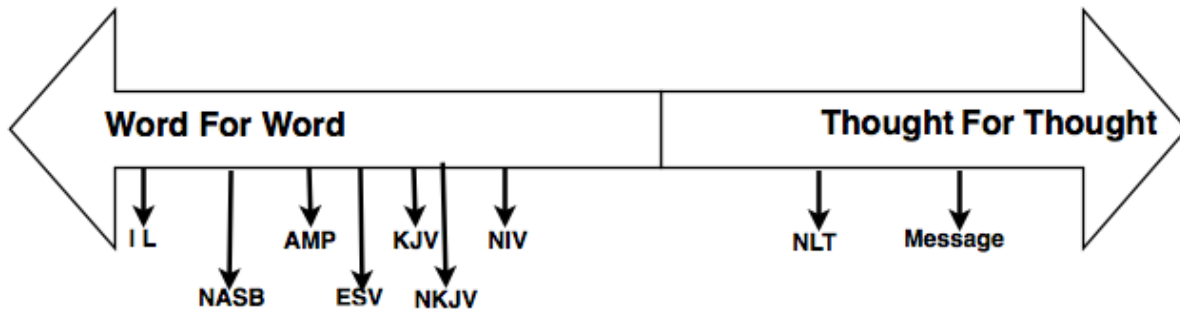
### Tool Box

**Step 1: The Bible.** Read the passage in a couple of different versions. If you are having trouble understanding a passage, choose a more dynamic version such as *New Living Translation* or *The Message*). To focus in on the exact meaning of a verse, choose a more literal translation such as *New American Standard Bible* or *New King James Version*.

**Step 2: Study Tools.** Use these to help you dig deeper. Background Information: 1) Unger's Bible Dictionary 2) Bible Dictionaries online at [biblestudytools.com](http://biblestudytools.com) and [blueletterbible.com](http://blueletterbible.com). Word Studies: 1) Zodhiates' *The Complete Word Study New*

Testament 2) Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary 3) Strong's Dictionary of Bible Words 4) The two websites listed above

**Step 3: Commentaries.** Commentaries should not be used in place of studying God's Word directly, but they can give you additional insights. Some good commentaries include: John MacArthur, J. Vernon McGee, *The Expositors Commentary*, NIV Application Commentary, William Barclay (great for background and culture but be careful of his spiritual applications).



Word for Word Translations

NASB – New American Standard Version <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-American-Bible-NASB/>

AMP-Amplified Bible <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Amplified-Bible-MP/>

ESV- English Standard Version <http://www.esvstudybible.org/>

KJV – King James Version <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/King-James-Version-KJV-Bible/>

NKJV – New King James Version <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-King-James-Version-NKJV-Bible/>

NIV – New International Version <http://www.biblica.com/niv/>

Thought for Thought Translations

NLT – New Living Translation <http://newlivingtranslation.com/>

The Message – <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Message-MSG-Bible/>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2012-01/nearly-80-percent-americans-are-christian>

<sup>2</sup> J. Vernon McGee Thru The Bible Commentary Series Thomas Nelson Publishers Nashville 1991 Page 91

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/151350.John\\_Wesley](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/151350.John_Wesley)

© 2013 Mark Newton. All rights reserved.

Express permission granted for use and reproduction by Harvest Christian Fellowship, Riverside, CA.

[www.harvest.org](http://www.harvest.org)

**Prayer Requests**

---



---



---





