

DO NOT BE SURPRISED

1 Peter 4.12-19

Society seems to suggest that we should always be happy, comfortable and successful. But it isn't necessarily so. This idea is related more to fantasy than reality, and we show our maturity not by indulging in fantasy but by handling reality. This is basically Peter's theme.

Do Not Be Surprised At The Painful Trial

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. 1 Peter 4.12

It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 1 Peter 3.17

The Sufferings of Christ And Our Suffering are Connected

But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 1 Peter 4.13

We Should Not Be Surprised About Being Insulted

If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 1 Peter 4.14

There is Nothing Spiritual About Suffering for Wrongdoing

If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 1 Peter 4.15

There is Nothing Shameful About Being a Christian

However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. 1 Peter 4.16

The Family of God is Not Exempt From All Difficulty

For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And,

'If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?' 1 Peter 4.17-18; Hebrews 12.4-13

There is Nothing Soft About God's Will

So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. 1 Peter 4.18; Romans 12.1-2

It's one thing to know all this but another to know how to handle the situation. Peter gives us instructive insight into some attitudes that might help.

- **The first instruction is *to rejoice and praise God*** (1 Peter 4.13, 16)
- **The second instruction is *be content*** (1 Peter 4.14)
- **The third instruction is *be aware of those around us*** (1 Peter 4.19)
- **The fourth instruction is *be committed*** (1 Peter 4.19)

D. Stuart Briscoe. *When the Going Gets Tough*. Regal Books, Ventura, CA, 1982.

Norman Hillyer. *New International Biblical Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*. Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 2002.

I. Howard Marshall. *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series: 1 Peter*. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 1991.