

## “Discomfort Avoidance”

### 1 Peter 4.1-6

- Most of us want to live a vibrant life of faith BUT there is something that gets in the way ... **Discomfort Avoidance**.
- Walking with Jesus is intended to be a joy but it also involves difficulty. If we are **devoted to avoiding difficulty/discomfort we will find it hard to consistently follow Jesus**

**Big Idea: Adopting Jesus’ attitude toward suffering frees you to live a vibrant Christian life.**

- Q: What was Jesus’ attitude toward discomfort avoidance? A: [**Hebrews 12.2**]
- He **Endured** the cross - “remained in spite of” & **Despised** the shame - “thought little of”
- Jesus’ attitude: **disregarded ‘discomfort avoidance’ as a driving factor in life.**
- **1 Peter 4.1-6** [1016] addresses 2 ways adopting Jesus’ attitude toward suffering will free you to live a vibrant Christian life.

### **1. Adopting Jesus’ attitude toward suffering frees you from slavery to personal impulses.[1-3]**

- [ESV] ***arm yourselves with the same way of thinking..*** (as Jesus)  
[HCSB] ***“equip yourselves also with the same resolve.”***  
(Intentionally prepare yourself by adopting Jesus’ attitude toward suffering)
- [v1]....***whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin*** -  
converse: “If you live to avoid discomfort > you will find it impossible to avoid sin”
- [v2] When you eliminate ‘discomfort avoidance’ as driving force, you find freedom.
- [v3] List of activities that enslave. (Ex: lust, drinking, idolatry)
- EX: **lust** - Our attitude about *difficulty* shapes our response to *struggle* with lust/passion:
- IF “discomfort avoidance” is king, we seek to escape the struggle it at all costs
- **1) Worldly Response:** If you battle a passion > means you were meant for it > SO: run with it
- **2) Judgy Response:** If you battle a passion > means something is wrong > SO: just stop it
- BUT IF we de-throne “discomfort avoidance”...
- **3) Biblical Response:** If you battle a passion > means you are human > prepare to endure
- Maybe YOU don’t feel a daily struggle with being mastered by impulses BUT there are other ways to be enslaved...

### **2. Adopting Jesus’ attitude toward suffering frees you from slavery to public image.[4-6]**

- [v4] when people notice your devotion to a godly life they may 1) be **surprised** (misunderstand you) or 2) **malign you**. (Speak bad about you)
- Can be extremely difficult to be **misunderstood** and **maligned**.

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- Maybe it's not difficult for you to maintain a moral life BUT being labeled a prude, bigot, judgmental is difficult to bear
- The battle with "what people think" actually *increases* when we are 'On Mission'
- !IF you think "I don't have a problem with what people think", don't be too quick to pat yourself on the back! You may not find it difficult because you are not engaged in Mission.
- Approaches to engage with the world
  - **Battle** - if the world is the enemy > you won't care what the enemy thinks
  - **Blend** - if you adopt the world's practices > you won't be misunderstood & maligned
  - **Bunker** - if you isolate from the world > no reason to take personally
- BUT if you are compelled by the love of Christ to actively be a **restorative blessing** - genuine relationships, personal investment, etc, you will be more likely to sharply feel the pain of being misunderstood & maligned.
- The difficulty of being misunderstood/maligned leads some to 1) become enslaved to what others think, and others to 2) abandon the mission
- **[v5]** helpful perspective on the struggle: ***They will give an account*** - Think of the big picture. 1) their eternity is at stake, 2) God will sort it all out
- See Jesus' Words in Sermon on the Mount [Matt 5.11-12]
- Don't be alarmed by what the world thinks of you and says about you. This is not a new problem. They cannot steal your joy....even if it gets downright ugly (persecution, martyrdom)
- IF your whole life is just this mortal life [between birth/death dates] THEN: it would be reasonable to think 1) indulge now 2) death is the bitter end. BUT it's not the end
- **[v6]**: "concerning people who heard and responded to the gospel but have since died: they are now fully alive by the Spirit!" 1) Didn't miss out on any good thing! 2) They did not lose
- The Big picture (eternity) helps us endure being misunderstood/maligned
- Don't misunderstand: Peter not saying "embrace difficulty" BUT "disregard it"
- Q: What is making it difficult for you to live a vibrant life of faith? (Derailed/held back by personal struggle?, ...public opinion?)

**CHALLENGE: Disregard a discomfort.**