



Witnessing By Our Work
1 Peter 2:18-20
Study Guide

1. The letters of the New Testament were written to congregations scattered throughout the Roman Empire. They were made up of men, women, children, slaves, freedmen, and full citizens. Peter addresses those who were slaves in 1 Peter 2:18-25. He gives two reasons why they should patiently bear up under personal injustice. What are these two reasons (2:18-20 and 2:21-25)?
2. The following is a summary of slavery in the Roman Empire. “The lowest rank in Roman society was that of slave. Slaves had no legal rights; they were owned by Romans who put them to work in their homes and fields. People became slaves when the Romans conquered their lands and took them prisoner. Any children they had were then born into slavery. Many slaves were treated badly, but others were granted their freedom. Educated Greek slaves were highly prized and often worked as doctors and tutors.” Try to imagine yourself as a slave in the congregation to which Peter is writing this letter. What would be your responsibility toward your master according to Peter? What should you do if you had a hard and overbearing master? What is the significance of the word “submit?” How is this word used in 2:13 and 3:1?
3. What is to be the Christian’s motive when working in a harsh and difficult situation (v. 19)? What working conditions can you think of that could be described as “suffering unjustly?” Have you ever been in such a situation? How did you handle it? Peter is writing to slaves who could not look in the want ads for another job. In our day Christians in the work force are not slaves. So how would you apply this passage to an employee employer relationship today? What counsel would you give a believer who is struggling with resentment, bitterness, self-pity, and despair in the job they now have?
4. How might a Christian slave suffer for doing his or her job in the right way (2:20)? What are some ways in which a Christian employee can please God and bear a good testimony in the work place? Do you know of a Christian who has been an exceptionally good witness in their job situation? If you are a parent and one of your children gets their first job outside the home, what are some of the things you would tell them about being a good employee?
5. How could 1 Peter 2:18-20 help a Christian caught in a labor management dispute? Think of some of the problems that develop when a union calls for a strike. Before you close this study take some time to pray about your theology of work. Pray for your fellow employees and employer.