

It's quite obvious that some sufferings and trials are not part of God's plan for us. Believers should never suffer because they've murdered, robbed, or done evil. But in today's verse Peter mentions a fourth category—"a troublesome meddler"—whose meaning is not as apparent and whose application might be more in dispute.

"A troublesome meddler" interferes with everyone else's business, and Paul says we should avoid such persons (1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:14; 1 Tim. 5:13). But I believe Peter also uses the term to refer to a political agitator, someone who actively tries to disrupt the normal function of the government. If this understanding is correct, then Peter is commanding Christians to be good citizens in their non-Christian cultures (cf. Rom. 13:1-7). We are to go to work, live peacefully, witness to others, and exalt Christ.

Believers are not to act like radicals who are intent on overthrowing existing authority or imposing Christian standards on society. Getting into trouble with your employer or being fired by him because of disruptive activities, even those done in the name of Christ, is not honorable but disgraceful.

Most believers would never even consider the possibility of being involved in militia groups that are engaged in separatist activities and are violently opposed to all legitimate governmental authority. Yet some Christians wrongly see validity in strategies of civil disobedience and violence as they oppose some government-sanctioned acts, specifically abortion. They are not satisfied with simply providing biblical counsel or material and educational assistance at a local pro-life agency, as many believers have done over the past twenty-five years.

Therefore, if we would seek to promote what is right and redress injustices, we must use scriptural discernment regarding which strategies to implement or support. Similarly, the Lord wants us to evaluate all our trials and sufferings and be sure they are placing us in the center of His will. Otherwise, we can claim to suffer righteously when we are not and merely be "a troublesome meddler," which is not pleasing to God.

Suggestions for Prayer

Pray that your church would always have biblical reasons for supporting any efforts at redressing social wrongs.

For Further Study

What areas does Peter include in 1 Peter 2:11-19 when he encourages obedience to authority?