# Cursed to Bless

# God’s People Live for the Glory of God

Episode: 11

Passage: 1 Peter 2:9-25

Characters: - Host - Sam - Pastor - Ben - Pete - Ruth - Kate

Authors: - Martin Olmos - Richard Utber

Language: en-AU

### Intro

**ATMOS**: Theme music 5 sec, Host background music below host’s volume

**HOST**: Hello, this is Mary, your host. Welcome to Cursed to Bless, the show that asks a big question: Why is life so hard, when God is so good? We hear God blesses us, but how? Money, health, happiness? The answers are found in *Jesus*, in who he is and what he’s done. We see this when we read the Bible as *one big story*, with Jesus as the hero from start to finish.

**HOST**: In this episode, we learn that we must live good lives and be prepared to suffer, just like Jesus did.

**HOST**: Remember to pause, read the passage, and answer the questions when you hear the sound. Our first question is: How would you encourage a friend who is running in a long race, and wants to give up? Pause and discuss now.

**FX**: Pause prompt, then 5 seconds silence

**HOST**: Thank you.

### Bible Study

**FX**: Flasback Outro

**ATMOS**: Host background

**HOST**: Listeners, let’s listen to the friends’ Bible study. They were all sitting at Pastor’s house…

**FX**: Flashback Intro.

**ATMOS**: House living room

**PASTOR**: Welcome everyone. Let’s pray first: “Dear Father, please help us listen carefully to your Word now, and learn together. In Jesus name…”

**ALL**: Amen.

**PASTOR**: Let’s review our memory verse from last time: Matthew chapter 28, verses 18 to 20. I will read it out loud. When I pause, say the word that comes next, without looking at your Bible:

**FX**: In each ‘…’ gap below, Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**PASTOR**: (Leave a 2 second pause where you see ‘…’ and say the answer word with emphasis.)
“Then Jesus came to them and said,”All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of … *all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the … *Father* and of the … *Son* and of the … *Holy Spirit*, and teaching them to … *obey* everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you … *always*, to the very end of the … *age*.””

**TRANSLATOR**: Replace this with text from the local Bible translation. Pick the same significant words for the gaps, as much as possible.

**PASTOR**: Thank you! Today, we’re reading 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 9-25. Let’s read it together.

**FX**: Pause prompt, then page flicking for 3 seconds.

**PASTOR**: Thank you. Ben, what are the main ideas in this passage.

**BEN**: This is a letter from the apostle Peter to a church. It sounds like they were suffering. He reminds them what God has done for them, and urges them to live good lives.

**RUTH**: Yes, he tells them to submit to human authority - for the Lord’s sake.

**SAM**: And bosses too.

**BEN**: He reminds them of the change they’ve gone through. They were once not a people, like lost sheep. But now, by God’s mercy, they’re His people with Jesus as their shepherd.

**PASTOR**: Notice all the things that Peter tells them they are?

**BEN**: A chosen people…

**SAM**: a royal priesthood…

**RUTH**: a holy nation…

**PETE**: God’s special possession…

**KATE**: the people of God…

**PASTOR**: Peter reminds them who they are in Christ. It’s important they remember this, to help them through a hard life.

**BEN**: Verse 11 says they’re foreigners and exiles…

**PASTOR**: Yes, they’re God’s *people* living under God’s *rule*, but they’re not in God’s *place* yet. Their lives are full of suffering and injustice.

**PETE**: So even after Jesus has risen, the disciples are still suffering?

**BEN**: Yes. They were killed or imprisoned.

**PETE**: How can God expect people to become Christians then?

**PASTOR**: I’m afraid suffering is normal for Christians, until Jesus returns.

**RUTH**: Look at verse 21. Jesus left us an example that we can follow. We’ve been *called* to this.

**PASTOR**: Yes, in this world we suffer like Him.

**KATE**: But if Jesus was God, then he wouldn’t have felt the suffering.

**PASTOR**: But Jesus was also fully man. And verses 22-24 tell us that he *did* suffer! The Old Testament prophesied that he would suffer. So when Jesus leads us through suffering, he knows what it’s like - better than us!

**PETE**: But why? What’s the point of all this suffering?

**KATE**: Yeah! Why doesn’t God just take us to heaven now?

**PASTOR**: Good question. What did we learn in our last study?

**LAITEI:** God keeps us here so we can keep declaring the great news about Jesus, and grow his disciples.

**PASTOR:** Right. In this letter, Peter tells us suffering grows our faith and blesses others. Look at verse 12.

**BEN**: Others will glorify God after seeing our good lives.

**SAM**: Actually pastor, you helped me see God’s goodness when I saw how you’ve persevered through your hard life. I thank God for you.

**PASTOR**: I’m glad to hear that.

**SAM**: You know, looking back at all the hard things in my life… I’m thankful for how God has used them, even though it sounds strange.

**RUTH**: Why is that?

**SAM**: I feel stronger now. Like God was refining me.

**PASTOR**: Yes, I can say the same about my own sufferings.

**SAM**: What I really hate is that so much of my suffering doesn’t come from others - it comes from *me*!

**PETE**: What? How?

**SAM**: Well, even though I love Jesus, I’m still greedy, I envy what others can do, I crave being popular. Things like that.

**RUTH**: I know what you mean!

**SAM**: It makes me sad that I’m still like that - and frustrated! It makes me wonder if I’ll ever be the person I’m meant to be.

**PASTOR**: I know what you mean too.

**SAM**: You? But pastor, you’re the godliest person I know. If *you* still struggle with sin, then I feel like giving up.

**PASTOR**: Ah, being godly means we keep fighting! Notice verse 11: our sinful desires are waging *war* against our souls. So we must keep fighting every day. Paul says in Colossians chapter three that we must put to death whatever belongs to our sinful natures. He means we must do it daily! This is part of our sufferings.

**BEN**: I’m glad that our suffering will end when Jesus returns.

**PASTOR**: Yes. Just as Jesus lived a perfectly good life yet suffered for us, we too must live good lives and be prepared to suffer to show others just how glorious God is.

**BEN**: Hearing that changes how I see my sufferings - thank you.

### Questions to Pastor and Application

**PASTOR**: OK, what questions would *you* like to ask?

**PETE**: I don’t like the idea of submitting to authority, because so often I’ve seen the “authorities” do awful things to people. My father was put in jail for four years by the police, and he did nothing wrong! How can God want us to submit to that?!

**PASTOR**: Oh Pete, I am so sad to hear that. How old were you?

**PETE**: Seven.

**PASTOR**: That must have been so hard for you.

**PETE**: Yes. We didn’t see him the whole time. We didn’t even know if he was still alive!

**PASTOR**: I’m so sorry for you. There is no excuse for that. It is evil. Is he OK now?

**PETE**: Yes, but he doesn’t talk about it much.

**PASTOR**: Could I talk to you more about this after our study?

**PETE**: Sure, OK.

**PASTOR:** Thanks. But let me answer your great question about authorities. Firstly, Peter is talking about our *attitude* towards authority. We must be humble. Too many people are proud and never want anyone to tell them what to do.

**RUTH**: That pride would keep them from accepting the ultimate authority, God!

**PASTOR**: Yes. Secondly, if it is a choice between obeying God or obeying the leader, we must always choose God. But thirdly, it is a great Christian witness to others if we submit to the authorities, even if they are harsh. Our example shows the world that we have a greater hope, a greater treasure, than what this world offers. We have Jesus! And we have an inheritance in heaven with him. So our suffering can point people to our Saviour, who suffered the greatest injustice for us.

**BEN**: Pastor, how would you summarise this passage?

**PASTOR:** The summary comes from the passage itself. It’s our memory verse: 1 Peter chapter two, verse 12. “Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.” That is the principle for our lives Peter wants us to understand. And he tells us to submit to authorities as an example of this principle. But he also reminds us that the reason and motivation we live such good lives is what God has done for us in Jesus, who suffered for us to make us a “people belonging to God”. Remember, that is what God promised to Abraham and then throughout the Old Testament.

**SAM**: Pastor, your summaries help me think clearly.

**PASTOR**: I’m glad. It’s important to summarise when reading the Bible. It helps us put a passage into the context of the whole Bible, because the Bible is one big story, with Jesus as the main character.

**SAM**: Thank you.

**PASTOR**: OK, let’s talk about our own lives now. What stops us from living our lives for the glory of God?

**KATE**: I hate seeing suffering - and I hate it when *I* suffer! It makes me wonder if God cares for me.

**PETE**: I don’t get why we have to wait so long for God to fix everything. I guess you’d call that impatience.

**RUTH**: I also feel impatient often, especially when I see all the pain in this world.

**PETE**: Really?

**RUTH**: Sure. I keep praying that God keeps my eyes fixed on Jesus. I’ll pray the same for you, Pete.

**PETE**: Thank you.

**SAM**: I often feel afraid, and I forget God’s glory.

**BEN**: I can keep obeying, but I can easily lose my joy. I think God is glorified when I obey him joyfully. So we need to keep fighting *for* joy, and *with* joy!

**PASTOR**: Thank you everyone. I struggle with these things too! So this passage is a great help to me. Let’s read our memory verse on the whiteboard: 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 12. Let’s read it together now.

**ALL**: “Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”

**PASTOR**: Let’s memorise that for our next lesson. It’s time to finish by praying. Pete, would you pray for us?

**PETE**: I… no, I don’t think I can. All this talk of suffering… I don’t want to talk to God, really.

**PASTOR**: You don’t have to - I respect that. Would someone else pray?

**RUTH**: I can.

**PASTOR**: Thank you, let’s pray.

**RUTH**: Good Father, Thank you for this study. It’s good to be able to talk about hard things openly. We’re not ashamed to do it, because we know you love us. Please help Pete’s dad to recover from his awful experience. Please fill Pete with hope and a sense of your glory. And please help all of us to submit to the highest authority, our Lord Jesus. Please help us keep our eyes fixed on him. Help us to show others your glory in how we deal with our hard life. In Jesus’ name…

**ALL**: Amen.

**PETE**: Thank you Ruth.

**PASTOR**: Thank you everyone, see you next time.

**ALL**: Goodbye pastor.

### Interactive Questions

**FX**: Flashback outro

**HOST**: Listeners, let’s answer some questions now. Say your answer aloud. **HOST**: I will say some sentences. For each sentence, say ‘True’ if you agree, or ‘False’ if you disagree.

**HOST**: True or False: Christians will be saved from suffering, because God has called us to a glorious life.

**FX**: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**HOST**: False. Suffering in this world is normal for the Christian and to be expected, because we live in an evil world and we are still sinful. The Lord Jesus has not yet returned.

**HOST**: True or False: When Christians persevere through suffering, they make God look good.

**FX**: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**HOST**: True. Our good lives show the world just how glorious our God is.

**HOST**: True or False: Even though our fallen world brings us suffering from the outside, we don’t suffer within us because we have the Holy Spirit.

**FX**: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**HOST**: False. The Christian life is a daily battle against our sinful natures, and this is real suffering too. The Holy Spirit moves and empowers us to fight against our sinful nature.

**HOST**: Here’s another question. When does God bless us? Is it *now* in this life, *after* we die, or *always*?

**FX**: Response prompt, then 5 seconds silence

**HOST**: Always. God is good *all the time*. Even in our suffering in this fallen world, he is blessing us by refining our faith and making us more like Jesus, our suffering saviour.

**HOST**: Discuss this question: What are the sufferings that people in your church find hardest?

**FX**: Pause prompt, then 5 seconds silence

### Outro

**FX**: Flashback outro

**HOST**: Listeners, now we’ve heard about Sam’s day, listen to what he prayed before going to sleep…

**ATMOS**: Soft prayer background effect (e.g. chimes) fade in

**SAM**: Dear God, I’ve felt a lot of excitement the last couple of weeks. But I know there’s a long way ahead for me. I know I will suffer. But when I think of Jesus suffering… I know he’ll get me through it. Please make me a patient, thankful, and joyful child. Fix my eyes on Jesus, so I don’t get distracted or discouraged. I hope Pete notices how you have been changing me. I want him to receive your blessing. Please move him to trust you. Amen. ::: {custom-style=“Instruction”} **ATMOS**: Prayer background fade out :::

**HOST**: Thank you for completing this lesson. We learnt that we must live good lives and be prepared to suffer, just like Jesus did. Will you join me for our next lesson? We will learn that the curse has been removed through Jesus, and God’s blessings will be restored and increased. Please read Revelation chapter 21, verses one to five before then. Now you can discuss how this lesson matters in your life: What stops us from living our lives for the glory of God? Goodbye.

**FX**: Theme music fade out.