Introduction: What is an “impact” player?

Spiritual “Impact” Players: Believers who graciously endure unjust suffering are the most powerful testimony of the reality of Jesus Christ on this planet.

How do they do it? And why?

Biblical / Historical evidence: I Peter 3:13-22

1. Context:
   Suffering for doing good is both rare… I Peter 3:13
   …and blessed I Peter 3:14a

2. God’s Game Plan:
   Saints suffering unjustly or the “How To” of enduring I Peter 3:14b-17

   1.
   2.
   3.
   4.
   5.
3. The Rewards:

Suffering for doing well or the “Why” of enduring I Peter 3:18-22

18 “For (because indeed) Christ suffered (died) for (on behalf of, as a substitute for) sins, once for all (time), the righteous (one, singular) for the unrighteous (ones, plural) (for this purpose) to bring (grant access to the King’s presence) us to God, having been put to death (on the one hand) in the body (flesh), but made alive (on the other hand) in the spirit;

19 in which (being in the Spirit) He also went and preached (made proclamation, Eph. 4:8-9) to the spirits (fallen angels or human spirits) in prison (II Peter. 2:4, 5; Jude 6; Genesis 6:1-6),

20 who were once disobedient (rebellious), when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being built, in which a few, only eight persons (souls) were saved through the water.

21 Which also is a corresponding figure (picture – antitype) of baptism that now saves us – not the removal of dirt from one’s body (flesh), but the pledge (appeal) of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

22 Who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand (position of the King’s authority and power) with angels, authorities, and powers (3 terms used of good and evil angels, dependent on contest, clearly evil angels here) in submission to Him.

Conclusion:

The Lord suffered wrongfully and is now exalted and glorified.

Application:

God will exalt those who suffer unjustly and use them as His most powerful instruments to win others to Christ.
Discussion Questions:

1. Share a time, if it has ever occurred, when you have been treated poorly, rejected, or suffered for doing something honorable and good as a Christian.

2. Share a time when you failed to take a stand for Christ because of what others might say or think about you. Which of the 5 steps in responding to unjust suffering in verses 14b - 17 did you most identify with? Why?

3. What does it mean to you to “set apart Christ as Lord in your heart”? What does that look like in your everyday life? How does doing this counteract the fear of people?

4. Explain to the group your thoughts on maintaining a clear conscience. What does it mean, how is it done, why is it important? How does our experience of “peace” and “boldness” relate to a clear conscience? Is there any step you need to take with God or man to have a clean conscience?

5. Verses 18-22 are difficult. The general intent of this portion was to comfort and encourage the believers in Peter’s day to withstand suffering because Jesus had done this for them. When have you (if ever) suffered with joy knowing that it was helping another person? Share your experience. How does God exalt those who suffer unjustly in our day?

6. Why do you think this teaching on accepting and even embracing unjust suffering is so difficult for us to accept? Share a time of prayer for any who are suffering unjustly in your group, or that you may know about.

“Unjust suffering carried out with unwavering convictions and confidence in God produce unimaginable impact and blessing for you and others.”