

5 Day Devotional

Day 1: Opening Our Eyes to Global Suffering

Devotional

In our comfortable American bubble, it's easy to forget that faith comes with a cost for millions of believers worldwide. While we debate church service times or music styles, our brothers and sisters in other nations face imprisonment, torture, and death simply for owning a Bible or gathering to worship.

The numbers are staggering: 70 million Christians have been martyred since Christ's death, and today over 380 million believers—one in seven Christians globally—face persecution. In North Korea, owning a Bible can land you in a labor camp. In Nigeria, 18,000 churches have been burned since 2009, and 50,000 Christians have been killed.

Yet here's what's remarkable: we often complain about trivial inconveniences while our global family endures unimaginable suffering for the same faith we claim. This isn't meant to shame us, but to awaken us to a reality beyond our comfortable existence.

God calls us to see beyond our immediate circumstances and connect with the broader body of Christ. When we truly grasp what others endure for following Jesus, it transforms our perspective on our own challenges and deepens our appreciation for the freedom we enjoy.

Today, let's ask God to open our eyes to the global reality of Christian persecution and to burden our hearts for those who suffer for His name.

Bible Verse

"Remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." - Hebrews 13:3

Reflection Question

How might your daily complaints and frustrations change if you regularly remembered the severe persecution your Christian brothers and sisters face around the world?

Quote

One of the problems that we face, I believe in America, is what I would call a spiritual myopia. Myopia means to shut the eye. We don't see what's going on outside of our little bubble.

Prayer

Lord, forgive me for my spiritual myopia. Open my eyes to see beyond my comfortable bubble and help me truly understand what my brothers and sisters endure for the faith we share. Give me a heart that breaks for their suffering and moves me to action.

Day 2: Connected in Suffering, United in Prayer

Devotional

Yesterday we opened our eyes to global persecution. Today, we discover our profound connection to those who suffer. The body of Christ isn't just a nice metaphor—it's a spiritual reality that transcends borders, cultures, and circumstances.

When a believer in Pakistan is beaten for their faith, we should feel that pain. When a Christian in China is imprisoned for preaching, we should sense that loss of freedom. This isn't emotional manipulation; it's biblical truth. We are genuinely connected to every believer worldwide through Christ's Spirit.

The early church understood this connection deeply. When Peter was imprisoned, the entire church didn't just feel bad for him—they prayed constantly and fervently for his release. Their prayers weren't casual mentions during Sunday service; they were desperate, persistent cries to God on behalf of their suffering brother.

This same urgency should characterize our prayers for persecuted believers today. We're not praying for strangers; we're interceding for family members who share our spiritual DNA. Their suffering should move us to our knees, not just stir momentary sympathy.

When we truly grasp this connection, prayer becomes less of a religious duty and more of a family obligation. We pray because we love, and we love because we belong to the same body.

Bible Verse

"If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." - 1 Corinthians 12:26

Reflection Question

In what practical ways can you cultivate a deeper sense of connection with persecuted Christians, moving beyond sympathy to genuine spiritual solidarity?

Quote

When you pray, God moves. His Word tells us that it's not a. If you got the right words and the right tone. No, when you pray, God moves.

Prayer

Father, help me feel the reality of our spiritual connection. When my brothers and sisters suffer, let me truly suffer with them. Move me from casual concern to passionate intercession for those who face persecution for Your name.

Day 3: The Power of Persistent Prayer

Devotional

We've seen the reality of persecution and felt our connection to those who suffer. Now we discover the incredible power we possess to make a difference: prayer that moves the heart of God.

Prayer isn't a last resort when we can't physically help—it's our most powerful weapon. When the early church prayed for imprisoned Peter, God sent an angel to break him out of prison. When we pray for persecuted believers today, we're not offering empty comfort; we're invoking divine intervention.

Our prayers should be comprehensive and specific. We can pray for their protection and deliverance, for open doors to share the gospel despite opposition, for supernatural boldness to speak truth regardless of consequences. We can intercede for their physical health, comfort in suffering, and provision for their families.

But here's what's truly remarkable: we can also pray for the salvation of their persecutors. Just as Stephen prayed for those stoning him, we can ask God to transform the hearts of those who oppose His people. This kind of prayer requires supernatural love—the same love that flows from Christ's heart.

Every time we pray, we're partnering with God in His global work. We're not helpless observers of distant suffering; we're active participants in God's kingdom advancing through prayer.

Bible Verse

"But the church was earnestly praying to God for him." - Acts 12:5

Reflection Question

What specific aspects of persecution (protection, boldness, salvation of persecutors, provision) do you feel most compelled to pray for, and how will you make this prayer a regular part of your life?

Quote

Pray as though everything depended upon God, but work as though everything depended upon you.

Prayer

Lord, teach me to pray with the same earnestness and persistence as the early church. Show me how to intercede specifically and powerfully for my persecuted brothers and sisters. Let my prayers be a force for Your kingdom's advancement.

Day 4: Learning from Those Who Suffer

Devotional

Today we discover something that might surprise you: the persecuted church prays for us. While we pray for their protection and deliverance, they intercede for our spiritual health and faithfulness.

They pray that American Christians won't become like the church of Laodicea—self-sufficient, lukewarm, and spiritually blind to our own poverty. They've learned through suffering what we often miss in comfort: complete dependence on Christ is not just preferable, it's essential.

Listening to testimonies from persecuted believers reveals an extraordinary perspective. One pastor, imprisoned for years, said he was glad his rescue attempts failed because it allowed a church to be planted in that prison. Another, whose son was killed by persecutors, declared he still loves them with God's love and doesn't see them as enemies.

These believers have discovered what many of us are still learning: Jesus Christ is sufficient for the rest of life, no matter what happens. Their suffering has refined their faith to pure gold, while our comfort sometimes leaves our faith untested and weak.

Their example challenges us to examine our own commitment. Are we living with the same eternal perspective? Do we love our enemies with the same supernatural love? Their prayers for us reveal their concern that we might miss the very lessons their suffering has taught them.

Bible Verse

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." - Romans 8:18

Reflection Question

What lessons about faith, dependence on God, and eternal perspective can you learn from the testimonies of persecuted believers that might strengthen your own spiritual walk?

Quote

The persecuted church actually prays for America. You know that they pray for America? What for? That we would not become like the church of Laodicea in Revelation chapter three that was self sufficient.

Prayer

Father, thank You for the example of persecuted believers who pray for us even in their suffering. Help me learn from their refined faith and eternal perspective. Keep me from spiritual complacency and self-sufficiency.

Day 5: Living with Heaven in View

Devotional

As we conclude this journey of understanding persecution, we arrive at the ultimate perspective that sustains believers through the darkest trials: keeping heaven in view.

Persecuted Christians possess something that often eludes comfortable believers—an unshakeable focus on eternity. When earthly life becomes uncertain, heavenly hope becomes crystal clear. They understand that this life is not their own and they are overcomers waiting to receive their victory reward.

One believer declared, "I want to live for Jesus and use the opportunities because time is short. Jesus is coming back and the church cries Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." This isn't escapism; it's biblical realism. Heaven isn't just our destination—it's our motivation for enduring present difficulties.

The question that challenges us all is this: Is heaven still in your view when facing today's struggles? Are you so focused on immediate problems that you've lost sight of eternal promises? Persecuted believers teach us that keeping heaven in view doesn't minimize present pain—it provides the strength to endure it.

Whether facing minor inconveniences or major trials, we need the same eternal perspective. God looks to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are turned toward Him. When we see God over our sufferings, we discover opportunities for His glory even in our pain.

Time is short. Jesus is coming. Let's live with heaven in view.

Bible Verse

"But you joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions." - Hebrews 10:34-35

Reflection Question

In your current circumstances and challenges, how can you practically maintain an eternal perspective that keeps heaven in view and motivates faithful endurance?

Quote

Friends, is heaven in your view? And what you're facing today, is heaven still in your view? Are you so focused on the issue? I pray that you keep heaven in view.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, help me live with heaven constantly in view. When trials come, let me see You over my sufferings and find opportunities for Your glory. Keep my heart focused on eternal rewards rather than temporary troubles. Come quickly, Lord Jesus.