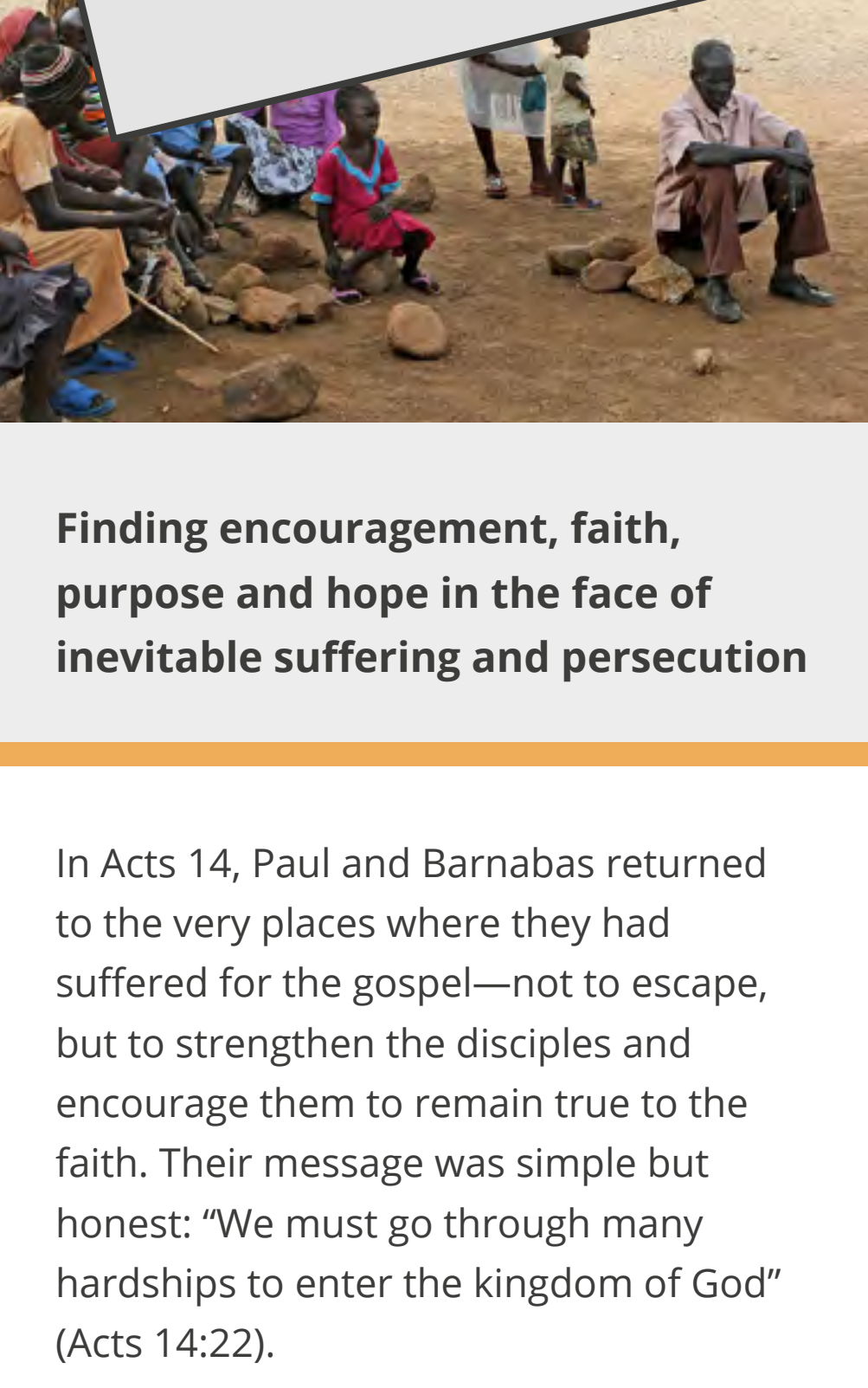




Strengthen

2025 - First Edition

Standing Strong through Persecution



Finding encouragement, faith, purpose and hope in the face of inevitable suffering and persecution

This magazine issue flows from that same heart. It is filled with stories, Bible studies, and reflections written by believers who live and serve in the midst of persecution. These are not theories, but truths formed in suffering—shared to build up others who walk similar paths.

Like Paul and Barnabas reporting to their home church, our contributors testify to what God is doing through hardship. May their voices strengthen your faith, lift your eyes to Christ, and remind you that suffering is not the end of the story—but part of the journey to the Kingdom.

In this issue:

Tap on the links below if you want to jump to specific articles within this magazine edition.

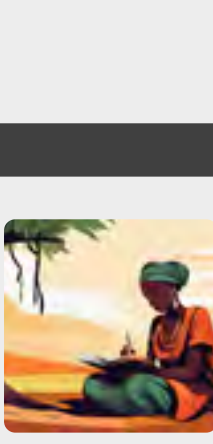


Theology

ARTICLE # 1

Theology of Persecution & Suffering

Christians face persecution for their faith, but John 15 teaches us to respond with hope, love, and strength through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

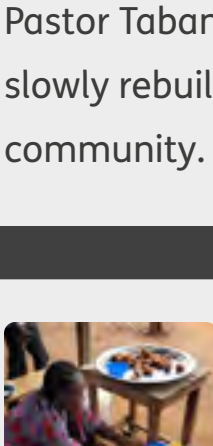


Bible Study

ARTICLE # 2

Faith in the Fire: Daniel Chapter 3

A short study on Daniel 3 exploring how courageous faith in the midst of persecution reveals God's presence and brings Him glory.

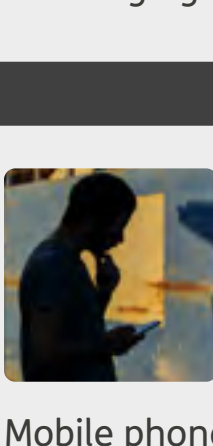


Stories

ARTICLE # 3

Hannah's Redemption Amid Persecution

After fleeing violent religious tensions in Ethiopia, widow Hannah and her four children lost everything, but through trauma care and emergency support, she found strength in faith.

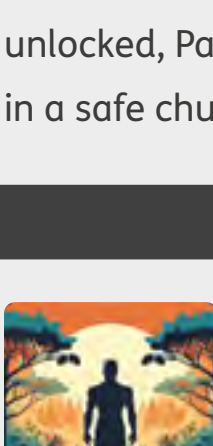


Stories

ARTICLE # 4

Resilience oppression & pain

In Nicaragua, Sofia and her family have borne a huge cost for their faith—but by God's grace, they keep going.

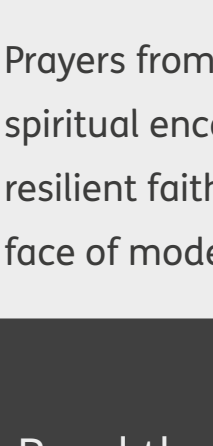


Stories

ARTICLE # 5

Surviving Tragedy

A young man's journey of healing and forgiveness after surviving severe tragedy in North Kivu, DRC.

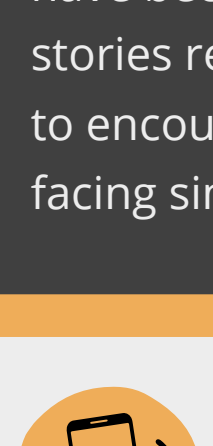


Practical Tools

ARTICLE # 6

The "God sees me" Journal

The God Sees Me journal helps trauma survivors heal by encouraging honest reflection, prayer, and connection with God's comforting presence through a simple daily exercise.

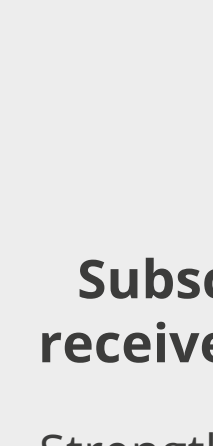


Stories

ARTICLE # 7

Rebuilding Through Resilience

After losing everything to a rebel attack in 2020, Pastor Taban started a brick-moulding business to slowly rebuild his life and support his family and community.

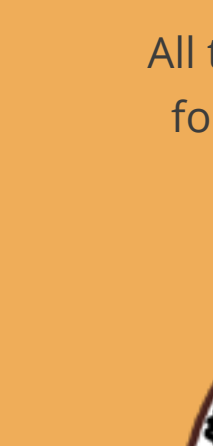


Stories

ARTICLE # 8

Amina's Journey of Faith

After converting to Christianity, Amina faced persecution from her Muslim husband, she relocated multiple times, and started a small business to rebuild her life.



Kids Zone

ARTICLE # 9

With Jesus in the Storm

This kids lesson uses the story of Jesus calming the storm (Mark 4:35-41) to teach children how we can trust Jesus and live with faith even in the the most challenging times.

Practical Guides

ARTICLE # 10

How to stay safe online

Mobile phones and other devices are a wonderful way to stay connected and find encouraging resources to strengthen your faith, but it can come with risks.

Stories

ARTICLE # 11

A Pastor's Perseverance in Crisis

After being brutally beaten and abducted by militant forces and having his phone forcibly unlocked, Pastor Elias was reunited with his family in a safe church haven with ministry support.

Advocacy

ARTICLE # 12

Made in the image of God

You are created in God's image and deeply valued. This article shows how Scripture and human rights affirm your dignity, offering hope and strength amid persecution or injustice.

Prayer

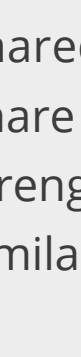
ARTICLE # 13

Prayers from the Valley

Prayers from The Valley of Vision, offer readers spiritual encouragement, drawing on the Puritans' resilient faith to inspire hope and strength in the face of modern suffering and persecution.

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Please note

To protect those in vulnerable situations, names, locations, and images throughout this magazine have been changed. However, the stories remain true and are shared to encourage and strengthen others facing similar trials.



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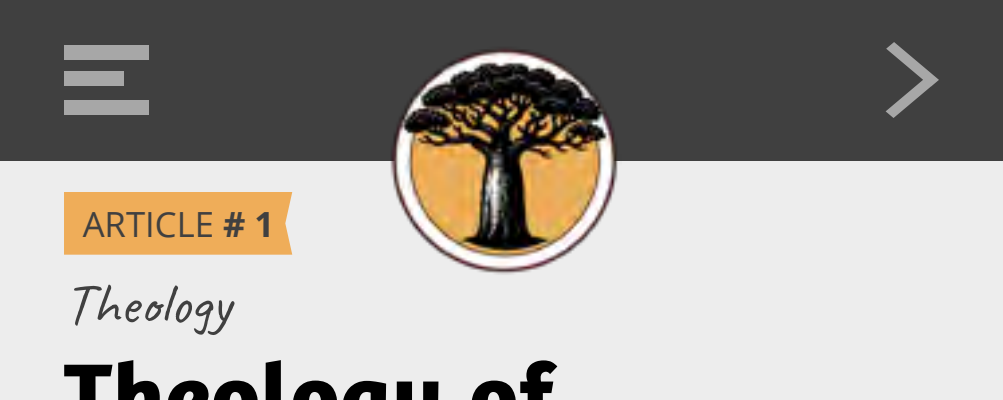
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*Theology*

Theology of Persecution & Suffering

Written by Modibo | 2025

 Internally Displaced Family. Photo: Michel Isamuna

Throughout the history of the Church, until today, Christians have experienced persecution and suffering. The global Body of Christ continues to experience various forms of persecution. According to Open Doors, “In 2025, more than 380 million Christian believers will face persecution and discrimination because of their faith in Christ”. For the twelfth consecutive year, there was an increase in persecution, driven by violence in Sub-Saharan Africa and tighter church control in Central Asia.” John 15 helps us understand how to respond to such persecution.

God’s Kingdom reality

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth for his own glory and sovereign dominion. But the Fall introduced injustice, conflict, suffering, and death. Through the sin of the first Adam, humanity has fallen from glory. However, the last Adam, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, brought eternal redemption and restoration for all who believe in Him. Christ’s followers are called to display his character, which is only achieved through Biblical discipleship. A Christlike character proves that God’s light and righteousness are emerging in this world. Now, in addition to the general physical, psychological, and spiritual suffering because we live in a broken world, there is a Kingdom reality of persecution and suffering for righteousness’ sake. God’s mission throughout Church history is inseparable from such persecution.

The hatred against God and his people

John 15:18-19: “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you”.

Because of their faith in and allegiance to Christ, his disciples may face the same hatred he experienced. “When we intentionally live according to the way of Christ, we can count on meeting opposition from those who hate Christ,” writes Tom Ascol. The emerging Kingdom and the broken world are in confrontation with one another. But praise be to God, there is victory in Christ. Many millions of people experience hardship and suffering, often without any hope or encouragement. But Christ’s followers can stand firm and endure persecution and suffering with hope – even through death – because our Master has conquered it all. In him and by him, we have inherited the faith that overcomes the world.

The privilege to be treated as the Master was treated

John 15:20-21: “Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they would obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me’”.

Jesus insisted that his disciples’ lives were distinguished from the world. And from the beginning he prepared them to face persecution as a result. His disciples obediently passed his teachings on to others, and this earned them the privilege of being treated as their Master was. But they could stand firm until death because he prepared them. Similarly, the Church in Sub-Saharan Africa must emphasize discipleship to Christ. It is the best way to equip Christians to be victorious in persecution. Knowing God and making him known to others is a way of strengthening Christ’s disciple to withstand persecution. Unfortunately, the prevalence of nominalism and the prosperity gospel across Africa has produced church goers who cannot withstand persecution. Many backslide and compromise during persecution because they have not been biblically discipled. All believers should know that God’s truth is worth the distress they face.

The guilt of perpetrators of persecution

John 15:22-25: If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfil what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’

God’s Kingdom on earth, with the light, truth and justice embedded in Christ, is in a confrontation with the kingdom of darkness. Sin is fundamentally a deliberate and intentional violation of God’s will. Jesus made it clear that the authors of persecution are guilty of sin before God. But as Christ’s disciples, our kingdom mindset should allow us to follow our Master’s instruction to show them love and pray for them. That is our challenge to take up.

The work of the Holy Spirit

John 15:26-27: “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning”.

In God’s Kingdom we grow to spiritual maturity in Christ through discipleship and have access to advocacy. It is no longer by our own efforts we must face persecution, but rather by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through his Spirit, Christ’s true witnesses wisely proclaim the truth and present Christ to all mankind. Donald LeRoy Stults explains that persecution and suffering for Christ are important parts of our overall work to advance the Church in every part of the world. From this view, the testimony of Christ requires God’s enablement through the Holy Spirit in persecution and suffering. According to this biblical theology of persecution and suffering, the Triune God is fully active in achieving God’s goal even through all kinds of mistreatments. The knowledge that God is with us, moreover, that we are becoming like Him amid persecution, is the source of our victory whatever be the cost of discipleship. God’s promises of his presence and action become the source of inward boldness, strong faith, persevering hope and sustainable resilience. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit confronts those who are rebellious against God, convicting them of sin, righteousness and judgment. (See the story of Paul of Tarsus.)

Conclusion

John 15 provides teaching on biblical discipleship, persecution and suffering. They are part of this broken world but also an important aspect of God’s mission to bring redemption to all mankind and raise followers. Becoming like Christ will bring the same hatred manifested by Satan and his victims against our Lord, but abiding in Christ is far more valuable than anything that can be lost in persecution. Therefore, the problem is not the occurrence of suffering and persecuted, but rather poorly established faith and immaturity in Christ. Since persecution and suffering are attached to God’s mission, we must make disciples according to the biblical model in which we emphasize our new birth in Christ, our resurrection life, and our unique faith that overcomes the world. Allegiance to Christ and obeying God in all circumstances is the best response a disciples can have to persecution, suffering, and even death.



Discussion questions

Read John 15:18-27

- Why does John 15:18-19 say people might hate Christians, and how can we stay strong?
- How can learning about Jesus (John 15:20-21) help us face hard times?
- How does the Holy Spirit (John 15:26-27) help us share our faith when things are tough?

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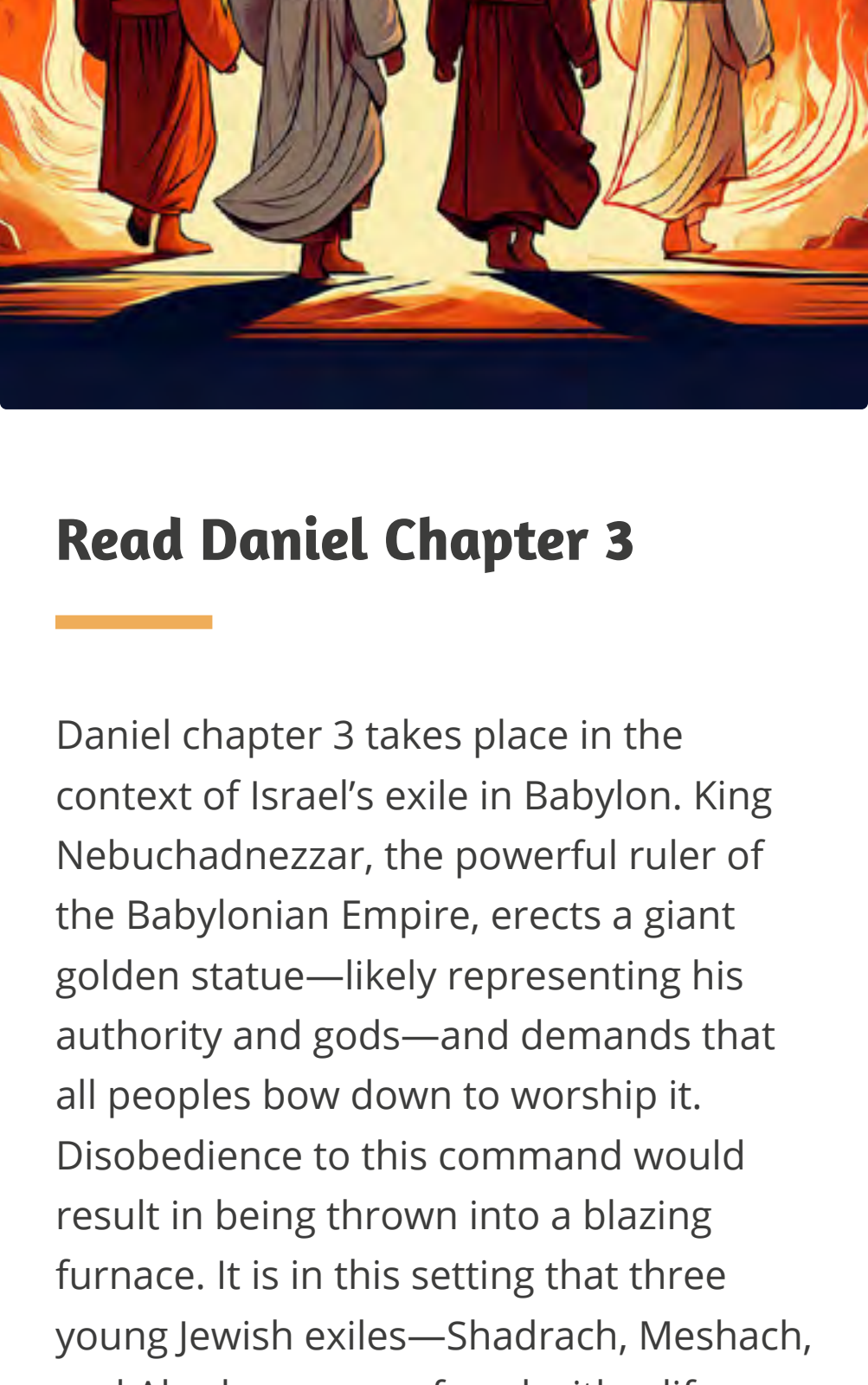


ARTICLE # 2

Bible Study

Faith in the Fire: Daniel Chapter 3

Bible Study | 2025



Read Daniel Chapter 3

Daniel chapter 3 takes place in the context of Israel’s exile in Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar, the powerful ruler of the Babylonian Empire, erects a giant golden statue—likely representing his authority and gods—and demands that all peoples bow down to worship it. Disobedience to this command would result in being thrown into a blazing furnace. It is in this setting that three young Jewish exiles—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—are faced with a life-or-death decision. Their faith in the one true God forbids idolatry, but refusal to comply means certain death.

In the face of this extreme pressure, they choose to stand firm. Their bold declaration, “But even if He does not...” (Daniel 3:18), reveals a deep and tested faith that inspires believers today to trust God, not only for deliverance but in His sovereign will.



“But even if He does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

DANIEL 3:18

Introductory thoughts

Many Christians around the world today are enduring hardship, discrimination, or even persecution for their faith. While not all face physical danger, the pressure to conform, compromise, or remain silent is real. Daniel 3 serves as a powerful reminder that God honors those who remain faithful to Him—even when it costs them something. This story is not merely about deliverance from danger, but about the kind of faith that chooses loyalty to God regardless of the outcome. It calls us to ask: do we serve God only when He delivers us, or will we remain true even if He doesn’t?

1. The pressure to conform

The story opens with Nebuchadnezzar setting up a massive golden image and issuing a royal decree: everyone must bow and worship the statue when the music plays. This was not merely a political act—it was a spiritual test. The pressure to conform was immense and public. While we may not face literal statues today, we are constantly confronted with social, cultural, and ideological “idols” that demand our allegiance. The world around us calls for compromise and acceptance of values that often stand in opposition to the truth of God’s Word. Faith, in this kind of environment, is always tested.

2. The courage to stand

When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are reported for refusing to bow, they are brought before the furious king. Given one last chance to conform, they respectfully but firmly refuse. Their words to the king are striking: they declare that God is able to save them, but even if He does not, they will not serve the golden image. This is not defiance for defiance’s sake—it is courageous obedience rooted in trust. They believe in God’s power to deliver but are not demanding it. Their faith rests not in what God will do, but in who God is. That kind of trust challenges us to consider the depth of our own faith: are we only loyal when the outcome goes our way?

3. God is present in the fire

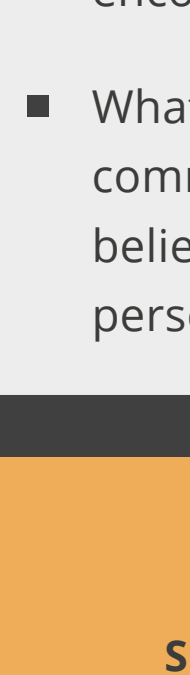
The king, enraged by their defiance, orders the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual. The three men are bound and thrown into the flames. What happens next is a powerful testimony: not only are they unharmed, but a fourth figure appears in the fire with them. Nebuchadnezzar himself is astonished. The presence of this divine figure shows us something essential—God may not always remove the fire, but He will never leave us in it alone. When we walk through the furnace of affliction, He is with us. Sometimes His greatest miracle is not deliverance from suffering but His sustaining presence within it.

4. The witness of faithfulness

In the end, Nebuchadnezzar is transformed by what he witnesses. He praises the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and decrees protection for their worship. The faithful three are promoted in the province of Babylon. This reminds us that our faithful stand—especially in trials—can become a powerful witness. The courage of believers under pressure often speaks more loudly than words. While not every story ends in promotion or recognition, God is glorified when we remain steadfast, and others may come to know Him through our witness.

Conclusion

Daniel 3 is a call to faith that does not bend to pressure or fear. The story reminds us that God is sovereign, present, and worthy of our trust—whether He delivers us from the fire or walks with us through it. May the words of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego become a banner over our lives: “Our God is able... but even if He does not... we will not bow.” Faithfulness in suffering is not only possible; it is powerful, and God is glorified through it.



Discussion questions

- Are there areas in your life where you feel pressure to compromise your faith or values?
- When was the last time your obedience to God came with a cost? How did you respond?
- What fears most often silence your boldness for Christ?
- How does the phrase “But even if He does not...” shape your understanding of true faith?
- How can you deepen your trust in God’s character, even when outcomes are uncertain?
- Is there someone around you who is struggling to stay faithful? How can you support or encourage them this week?
- What can your local church or community do to prepare believers to face trials and persecution with courage?

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ARTICLE # 3

Stories

Hannah's Redemption Amid Persecution

Trauma Care - Ethiopia | 2025



Hannah smiling again outside her small store

In September 2024, at least 90 Christians in Central Ethiopia were displaced when tensions between Muslims and Christians turned violent. Among them was Hannah, who fled with her four children. Because of your support, Hannah can look back today and see that God has used this suffering to strengthen her faith in Him.

In September last year, in Central Ethiopia, there was intense religious tension between Muslims and Christians. According to local church leaders and local contacts, the incident was triggered by reports of Muslim students experiencing difficulties in various parts of the area, which some believed were caused by a Christian. The Muslim community in the town decided to sideline Christians from the area; unfortunately, this escalated into violence targeting both Orthodox and Evangelical Christians.

During this conflict, over 20 homes belonging to Christians were set on fire, and five Christian-owned businesses were vandalised. Six Christians were physically attacked and taken to hospital for medical attention. Efforts were made to quell the situation by deploying federal military to the area. However, as tension escalated, two individuals who were identified as ‘mobilisers’ were killed by the military during the unrest. This further worsened the anger within the Muslim community, leading to threats of continued attacks against Christians. In light of these threats and the growing insecurity, more than 90 Christians fled. They sought refuge in a nearby town and were accommodated in a local church.

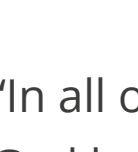
Hannah is one of the survivors who fled. She is a widow and a mother of four children (three boys and a girl), all in their twenties. She became a believer after the death of her husband 15 years ago. She owned and operated a small cafeteria in the town, which was the family's only source of income. When the attacks started, her business and home were destroyed. They destroyed everything she owned. Thankfully, she and her children were able to escape and find refuge in a nearby town.

“When we left our home, it was very difficult. We couldn’t even find a way to get out... we hid in a neighbour’s house, three houses down from ours. What they wanted to attack were men... and my sons are now men, I couldn’t hide them... I can’t explain the pain and worry I felt in the chaos. Our possessions were destroyed, we lost everything...” she recounts.

After two months, the local government announced they could return to their homes. But their destroyed homes and business only added to the continuous isolation and insults from the community.

“I advised against it [returning], but they [children] kept their stand, so we made our way back... After we went back, it was a very difficult situation; there was no one talking to us, having conversations with us, they wouldn’t even say good morning to us.”

The fragile ceasefire did not last long. “Fifteen days after we got back, there was a rumour about attacks happening again.” She tried convincing her sons to leave the place, to no avail. Thankfully, peace was restored after the government intervened. “We are still living. Though we don’t have work, we have food and water, we are still standing; in fact, I feel like God has given me a time of rest.”

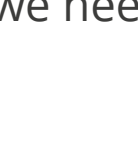


God wanted to strengthen my faith, because He knows from where He has rescued me.

“In all of this, I sleep in peace, because God knows how He is going to let me live. We don’t know our tomorrow, we only know our today, God only knows our tomorrow, so He will let us live as He pleases! Glory to God! God wanted to grow us. That’s what I say when I think of this situation; God wanted to strengthen my faith, because He knows from where He has rescued me.”

Hannah was one of the 20 people invited for a trauma care workshop. Her heart was heavy; she was worried about how she would continue living with the people who attacked her and who still have the potential to attack her again. She didn’t know how to forgive and move past what happened. After the trauma care, she says she has learnt how to forgive and find hope in learning that Jesus passed through this as well.

“Because I came here, countless things have changed in me because of the training. One training was about forgiving and not doing wrong to other people, and I used to wonder how I was going to forgive and live with them when I go back. But from the training I’ve received, now I’ve learnt about humility, and how Jesus was also persecuted. I’ve learned that Christianity has been hated on this earth, and Jesus was also persecuted. Jesus was also hated, and He was also cast out.



I’ve learned that... Jesus was also persecuted. Jesus was also hated, and He was also cast out.

So, what I have learned is to befriend these people... having them as friends and telling them the Gospel through my actions towards them,” Hannah shared. “We need to know they won’t love us, but we need to live for them.”

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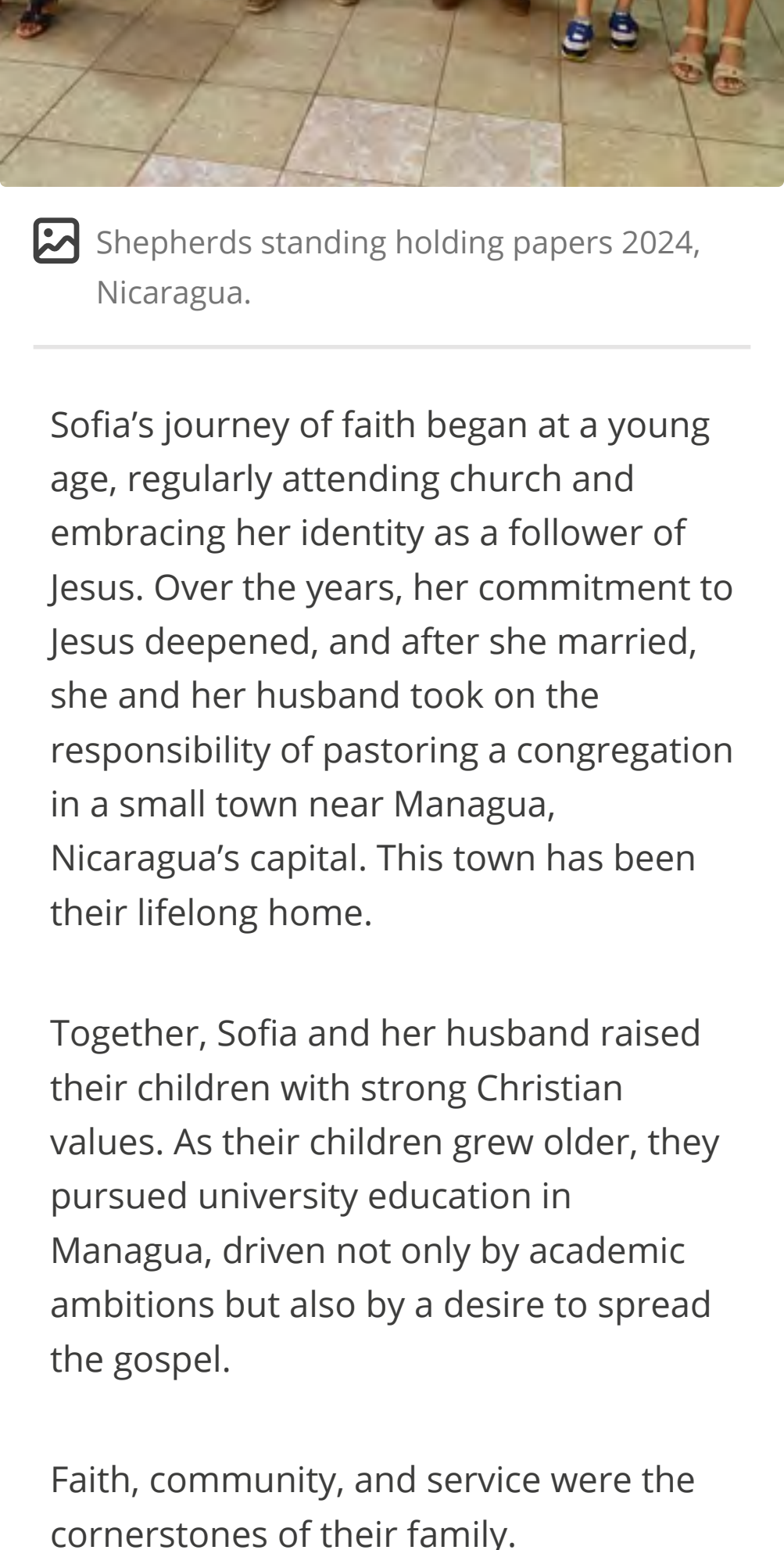
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Stories

Resilience oppression & pain

Trauma Care - Nicaragua | 2025



 Shepherds standing holding papers 2024, Nicaragua.

Sofia's journey of faith began at a young age, regularly attending church and embracing her identity as a follower of Jesus. Over the years, her commitment to Jesus deepened, and after she married, she and her husband took on the responsibility of pastoring a congregation in a small town near Managua, Nicaragua's capital. This town has been their lifelong home.

Together, Sofia and her husband raised their children with strong Christian values. As their children grew older, they pursued university education in Managua, driven not only by academic ambitions but also by a desire to spread the gospel.

Faith, community, and service were the cornerstones of their family.

It was a good, stable life—until their faith in Christ drove the family to speak out against injustice. Then, the pressure mounted.


By Faith, Protesting Injustice

In 2018, Nicaragua was shaken by widespread protests against social security reforms. Initially peaceful, these demonstrations soon escalated into violent clashes. Motivated by a sense of justice and faith, Sofia's sons decided to join the protests at different locations in the capital.

During the summer of 2018, one of her sons attended a church service at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Managua, where participants were attacked by police and forced to remain sheltered in the cathedral for five days. Her other son participated in a march in a different part of the city and had to hide in a house for two days following a police assault.

Sofia was terrified for her sons. “On one hand, I was proud that my children were defending justice,” she says, “but on the other, listening to the news, watching the skies darken, hours passing by, and my children not arriving home, my heart grew smaller and smaller.”



 A large group seated in church

During these turbulent times, Sofia found solace in her faith. “I began to pray, to pray without ceasing, to pray while remembering all those biblical passages that came to my memory, my faith, my hope,” she remembers. She believes it was through her prayers that her sons returned home safely, despite witnessing multiple murders and unjust detentions.

Unyielding Faith

The aftermath of the protests brought new challenges to Sofia's family. The stress and anxiety took a toll on her health. “In the days immediately following the protests, [despite] knowing my children were at home, [I was] unable to go out due to the great fear I constantly felt that [authorities] might come to our house and take them away,” Sofia says. “[This] caused me to feel strange one afternoon. I couldn't breathe; pressure began to build in my chest.” She went to the hospital and was diagnosed with a heart condition.

Still, Sofia's dedication to her church and her relentless prayer life remained unwavering. “I realised I must cling to my faith without wavering because certainly, He who promised is faithful, and that is my assurance today,” she explains. She continued to pastor alongside her husband, praying ceaselessly for her

family, congregation, and country.

But the family's trials did not end with the protests. Sofia's husband refused to participate in the 2021 voting process, believing that the elections lacked transparency and fairness.

His decision led to the denial of their church's legal status, constant surveillance by police and government agents, and difficulties in obtaining essential documents for their children's education. Their refusal to vote effectively rendered them “non-existent” in some legal records, complicating their ability to secure necessary certifications.

This situation was similar to other Christian leaders in Nicaragua who faced massive opposition from the government because of their stance. “Many pastors are suffering; some cannot even sleep, filled with anxiety,” Sofia explains. “They do not know if tomorrow they will be the ones to lose what they have: their churches, their lands, even their bank accounts.

“For those of us already experiencing the closure of our organisations, we wait to see what will happen to us next. Our hope is to stand firm until the end, not to bow or kneel to any government system that goes against the laws and principles of the Kingdom of God.”

Challenges for Dissenters

Sofia's story offers a glimpse into the broader challenges faced by Christians in Nicaragua. Christian pastors who dissent from the government often keep a low profile to avoid reprisals. They live in constant fear of surveillance and persecution. “It is not easy, nor is it impossible,” Sofia says. “However, I cannot deny that it is a great challenge to remain hopeful, to keep the fire burning.”

The Nicaraguan government uses bureaucratic strategies to control or shut down religious organisations. According to the Nicaragua World Report 2024 by Human Rights Watch, the government closed over 3,500 non-governmental organisations in 2023 under the “foreign agents” law, which targets organisations receiving foreign funding and engaging in political activities. This law has significantly impacted pastors and congregations who protested against government injustices in 2018.

In response to these restrictions, many churches have started meeting in homes or other discreet locations to protect their members from surveillance and persecution. This underground approach helps them keep their faith alive amid adversity.

Sofia and her husband were among those affected by the government's actions. After the 2018 protests, they were informed they were no longer eligible for certification as pastors. Sofia's efforts to help young people with medicine and food led to accusations of attempting a coup d'état.

During church activities, she is often questioned about her certification and told that without it, she is not a pastor, making her feel discriminated against even by other pastors.

“We have lost everything,” Sofia says. “Due to financial difficulties, we could no longer pay for the place where we rented and gathered. We then had to move to a place that does not provide the necessary conditions, and even today, we are still there. This caused some [church members] to leave, while the most faithful and loyal remained despite the circumstances. We have been tested, yet we thank God for everything, knowing it is the only way to bring our prayers before Him.”

 Women and men standing during a time of worship

Reliance in the Face of Pain

Despite these extraordinary challenges, the faith and resilience of Nicaragua's Christian community remain unshaken. Pastors like Sofia continue to preach the gospel with unwavering commitment. “It is in times of discomfort that we show who we are, why we are here, and what we were born for,” she says. “This is the time to transcend, for the name of God to endure. It is the time to leave a legacy, to wake up, to speak.”

A local organisation has played a crucial role in providing emotional, pastoral, and discipleship support to approximately 9,400 people and offering legal and accounting tools to help churches comply with government regulations. This support has enabled the Christian community to persevere.

Sofia also started volunteering with a local organisation, helping to serve and equip other leaders risking so much to live out their faith. For now, she's doing everything she can to keep going—to keep the light of Christ on display in Nicaragua, no matter what.

God's Word reminds her of His hope. Jeremiah 20:11 has become hugely important to her as she continues to seek after Christ. “This verse, which I recite every day, is my motto, my faith,” she says, sharing the scripture: “But the Lord is with me like a mighty and awesome one; therefore, my persecutors will stumble, and they will not prevail. They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper; their everlasting confusion will never be forgotten.”

Prayer

Like Sofia, many other Christians in Nicaragua are suffering because they have chosen to follow Jesus and not succumb to government pressure. Pray for Sofia and these Christians.

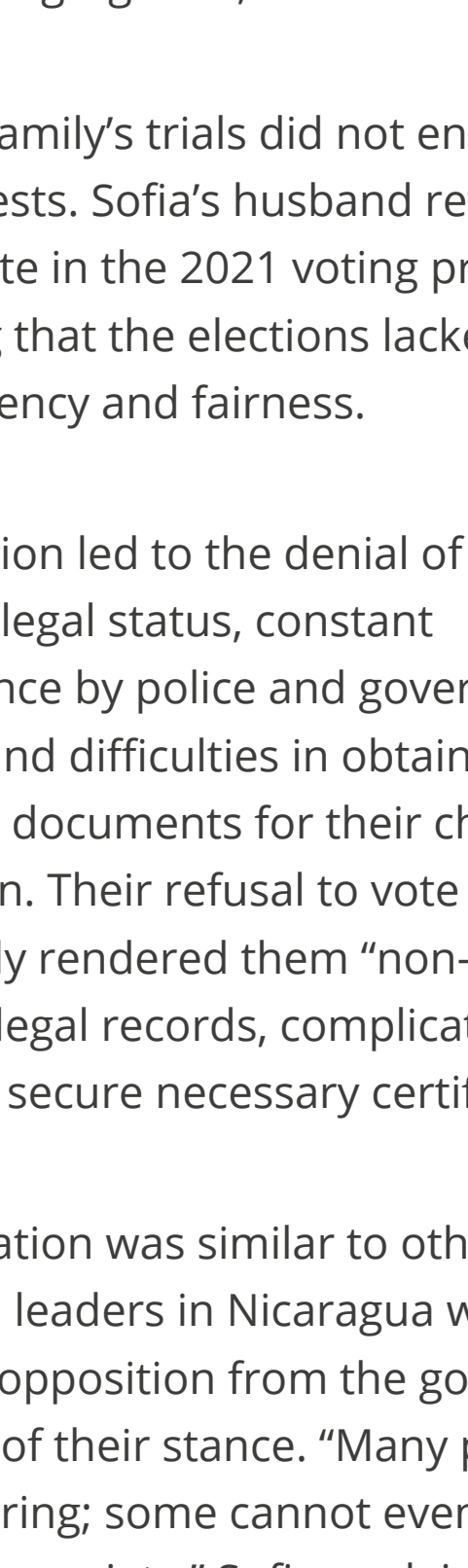
May God keep them safe in the midst of these challenges and may they remain steadfast in their faith. May the local ministry continue to deliver the help they need, despite the barriers encountered along the way.

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ARTICLE # 5

Stories

Surviving Tragedy

Trauma Care - DRC | 2025



David found healing and forgiveness after the bitterness of losing his parents.

On the night of October 23, 2023, the ADF attacked Masosi, a neighbourhood about 2km from Oicha centre in Beni territory, North Kivu province, and killed 27 Christians amongst 35 deaths recorded. The Christians died from bullets, hammer blows, and machete cuts. Amongst the victims were Mr. and Mrs. Joseph, and their four children (2 girls and 1 boy of barely a year old). Three of their children survived: David, 21, who was out of the family house when the attackers came, his brother, who hid on the roof, and his sister, who hid under the bed.

Bereft of their parents, David, as the eldest, became the parent to his two siblings. He juggled school and odd jobs to put food on the table. This was stressful for the young man. He managed to make ends meet with his siblings until July 2024, when his sister moved in with their grandmother in another community.

David has battled with surviving and fending for his family, trauma, and the pain of unforgiveness against the ADF. He continues to live with his youngest brother. October 2024 marks a year since David lost his parents. He shares that “I had developed great bitterness against those who killed my family. I kept that in my heart.”



I had developed great bitterness against those who killed my family. I kept that in my heart.

After the death of David’s family members, he could no longer concentrate on anything, even his studies for the 2023-2024 academic year, which the local ministry supported him with school fees for. “Me and my little ones failed despite the efforts made. I have to retake the exams,” he said.

His younger brother, Isaac, was also traumatised from watching from the rooftop as his parents were killed with a machete by the ADF.

In May 2024, the local trauma care team organised a debriefing session with 30 Christians in Oicha. David and his brother were part of the sessions.

“When I met the brothers and sisters, they taught me to forgive and to bring my burdens to the cross of Jesus Christ. Now I am free; I don’t know where I would be if they hadn’t come,” he said. “Matthew 7:7 gave me a lot of strength,” David added.

On Thursday, October 3, 2024, the local partners again visited David and his brother for prayers and encouragement. They were more relieved from the pain of losing their relatives and attested to being more committed to church activities after the trauma debriefing session of May 2024.



When I met the brothers and sisters, they taught me to forgive and to bring my burdens to the cross of Jesus Christ. Now I am free, I don’t know where I would be, if they hadn’t come.

During the visit, meditations were drawn from Psalm 68:6-12 and Jeremiah 3:12. They were also given 8kg of rice, 5 litres of palm oil, 10kg of beans, 5kg of sugar, and detergents as basic needs for the family. The two brothers have also further received support for their school fees for this academic year.

The presence of the team assured David and his brother that they were never alone and that they are part of a bigger family in the Body of Christ which cares for them.

“Really, thank you! God bless you,” were words of gratitude David had to say to the brethren who support his family.

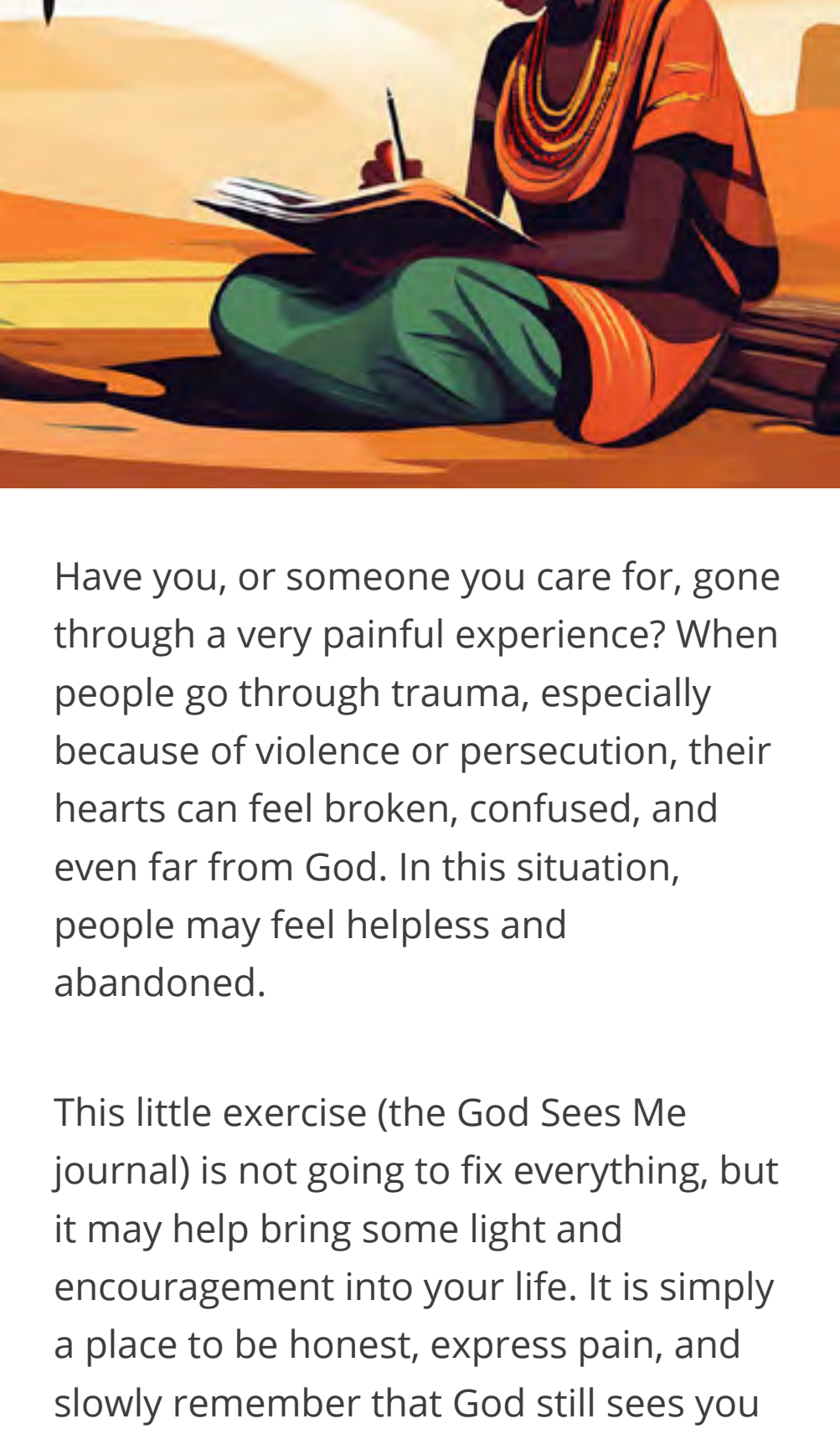
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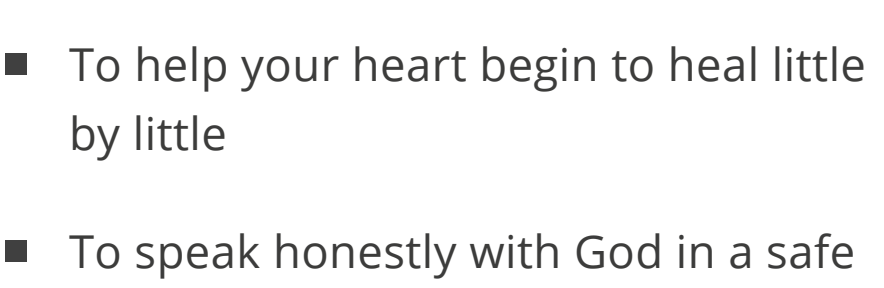




Have you, or someone you care for, gone through a very painful experience? When people go through trauma, especially because of violence or persecution, their hearts can feel broken, confused, and even far from God. In this situation, people may feel helpless and abandoned.

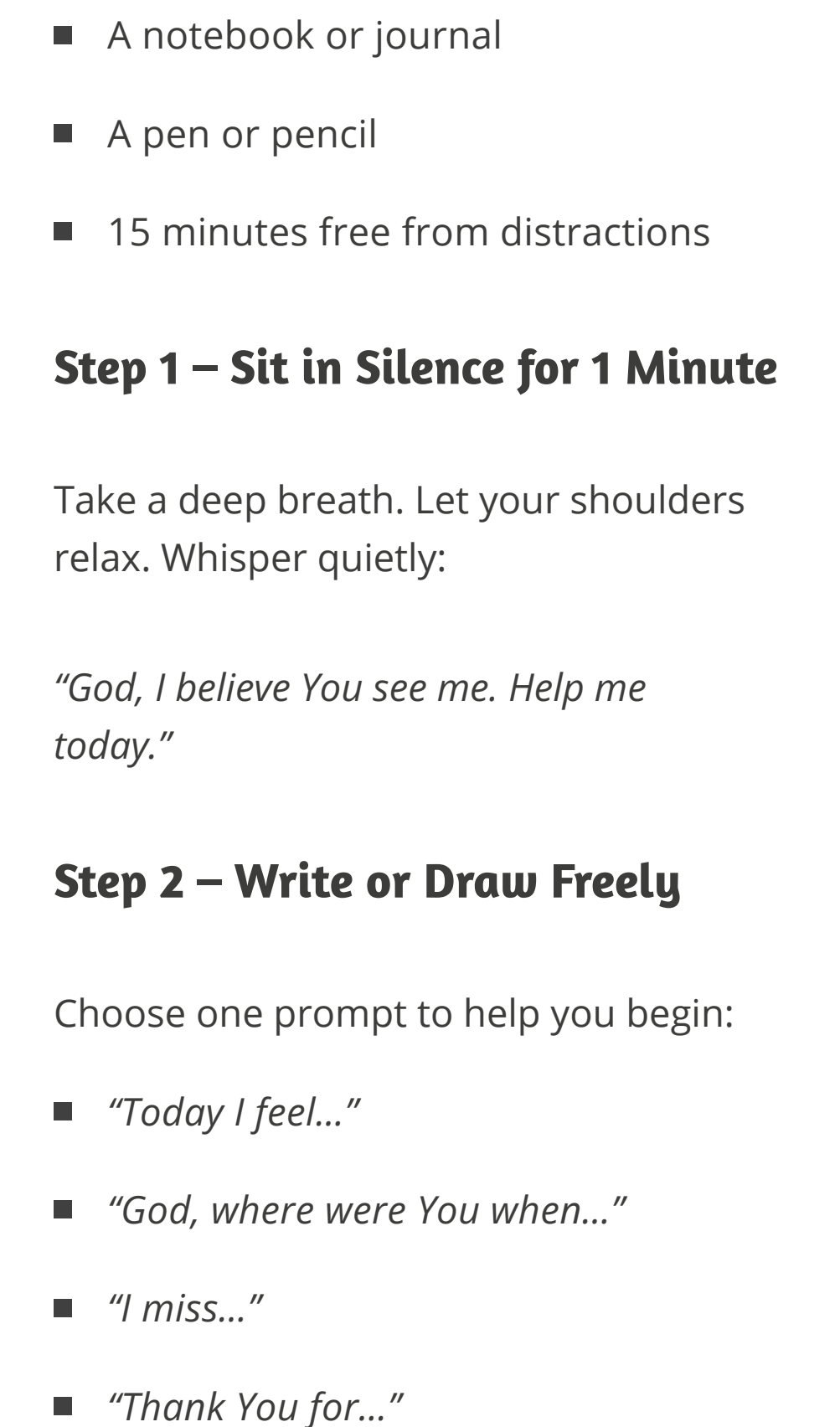
This little exercise (the God Sees Me journal) is not going to fix everything, but it may help bring some light and encouragement into your life. It is simply a place to be honest, express pain, and slowly remember that God still sees you and cares for you—even when it doesn't feel like it. It is based on Christian counseling and the truth of the Bible.

You don't need to write a lot. You don't need perfect words. All you need is a few minutes each day to sit with God and be yourself.



“You have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul.”

PSALM 31:7 (NLT)



Why Use This Journal?

- To help your heart begin to heal little by little
- To speak honestly with God in a safe way
- To remember that you are never forgotten by Him

Sometimes, it's hard to pray or read the Bible after trauma. This journal gives space to feel, to cry, and even to say “I don't understand”—and still know that God is near.

How to Use the Journal

You will need:

- A quiet place
- A notebook or journal
- A pen or pencil
- 15 minutes free from distractions

Step 1 – Sit in Silence for 1 Minute

Take a deep breath. Let your shoulders relax. Whisper quietly:

“God, I believe You see me. Help me today.”

Step 2 – Write or Draw Freely

Choose one prompt to help you begin:

- *“Today I feel...”*
- *“God, where were You when...”*
- *“I miss...”*
- *“Thank You for...”*
- *“Please help me with...”*

You can write a sentence or just one word. You can even draw something. There is no wrong way to do this.

Step 3 – Read One Bible Verse

You may choose one of these verses:

- Psalm 34:18 – *“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.”*
- Isaiah 49:15 – *“I will not forget you.”*
- Romans 8:38–39 – *“Nothing can separate us from God's love.”*

Let the words speak to your heart. You can write them down if it helps.

Step 4 – Pray a Short Prayer

You can pray something like this:

“Dear God, I don't understand everything. But I believe You see me. Please stay close to me. Amen.”

Healing takes time

Healing from trauma takes time. It's okay to move slowly. It's okay to feel weak. This journal is not about performance—it's about presence. Your presence with God. His presence with you.

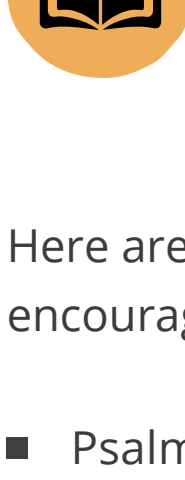
Even on days when there are no words, just opening this journal is a step of faith.

And remember:

“The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.”

PSALM 121:5

You are not alone. God sees you. He holds your tears. As you keep practicing with this simple journal, you or the person you're caring for will feel the gentle love of God again.



Bible verses to meditate on

Here are more bible verses to encourage you:

- Psalm 34:18 - *“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”*
- Isaiah 41:10 - *“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*
- Psalm 147:3 - *“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”*
- Matthew 11:28 - *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*
- Psalm 23:4 - *“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”*
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 - *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”*
- Psalm 55:22 - *“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.”*
- John 16:33 - *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*
- Lamentations 3:22-23 - *“Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”*
- Psalm 91:1-2 - *“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’”*

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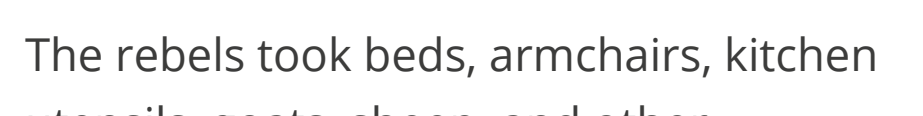
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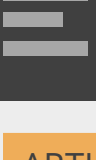
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Resi





ARTICLE # 8

Stories

Amina's Journey of Faith

Socio-Economic Development | 2025



Amina prepares coffee and doughnuts, building a new life through her small business.

Amina is a 43 year old mother of three (2 boys and 1 girl). She is married to a Muslim and hails from a Muslim background. Amina gave her life to Christ in 2023, during an evangelism campaign led by the Apostolic Church in her community, situated in the Ombella M'Poko prefecture, Central African Republic (CAR). There was no turning back after this, her first encounter with Jesus Christ. She secretly went to worship services until January, 2024, when her husband openly confronted her about her conversion.

"My husband had suspected I was going to church. Whenever I came back home after church, he would ask me where I had been, something he never did before. I was afraid I had been caught, but he never said anything clearly, so I continued," Amina shared.

"On Sunday, January 28, 2024, when I returned from church, as I entered the house, I saw him angry like never before. He was shouting out loud, he threw my clothes and my kitchen utensils out of the house and asked me to leave. As we exchanged words, he started beating me. He called other Muslim neighbours and explained to them that I had been going to church with the children. They insulted me and asked me to leave the house," she further explains.

"They also insulted my children and said we were worthless," she recalls.

Amina gathered the things scattered on the floor and left for another neighbourhood where she found a place to stay.

The stigma from Muslims on Amina because of her faith continued in this new neighbourhood. Amina shares that she had received several death threats from her husband whilst there. Coupled with the marginalisation, she decided to relocate with her children to yet another neighbourhood. There again, her husband and relatives discovered her whereabouts and continued with the mental torture.

Amina has today had to move for a third time, this time entirely out of Bangui, to a village situated some 15km from Sibut, in the Kemo prefecture of the CAR.

"Life was difficult for us. I didn't know anyone. People looked at us as strangers. I was confused and I asked myself if I was doing the right thing. I talked to God about my situation. I did not know much of God, but I remember the pastor said He has ears to listen to us and He is good," she confessed.

On March 9, 2024, a local organisation supported Amina with a small amount of money to start a micro project.



When I saw brothers and sisters I never knew offer me money to start a business, I believed God has ears.

"When I saw brothers and sisters I never knew offer me money to start a business, I believed God has ears. I used the money to start a small hot coffee and doughnuts business (puff rolls) every morning in a small shed I built. Now I am more stable and more independent. People now respect me ... I no longer need to hide my Christian identity. I go to church and do my business," she says.

Amina also shares that with the proceeds from her business, she has been able to replace all that was broken and destroyed when her husband sent her out (clothes, kitchen utensils), and she can also now afford school and other needs of her children.

"My parents who rejected me now call me to ask for help. I thank the Lord for His kindness to me and my children. May Almighty God bless my brothers and sisters who spared no effort to support us during the painful times I had gone through," Amina shared with a glad face.



What can we learn from Amina's story?

Have you faced a similar experience as Amina? Have you been expelled by your family or ostracized in your community?

- **Can you put your trust God to help you?** Amina prayed and believed God listens, even when life was hard. Can you talk to God about your problems?
- **Can you stay strong in your faith?** Amina kept following Jesus, even when people rejected her. Can you hold on to your beliefs when others are against you?
- **Who can support you?** Amina got help from her church and a local organisation. Are there people, like a church or group, who can help you with support or resources?
- **Can you start a small business?** Amina began selling coffee and doughnuts to earn money. What small work, like selling something, can you start to support yourself?
- **Is it safe to move somewhere new?** Amina moved to a safer place for her and her children. Can you find a safer place to live if where you are is not safe?
- **Can you rebuild little by little?** Amina replaced her things slowly with money from her business. What small steps, like buying one thing, can you take to rebuild your life?
- **Can you live your faith courageously?** Amina stopped hiding she was a Christian and earned respect. Can you show your beliefs openly, even if it's hard?
- **Can you forgive others?** Amina helped her parents, even after they rejected her. Can you try to forgive people who hurt you to feel peace?

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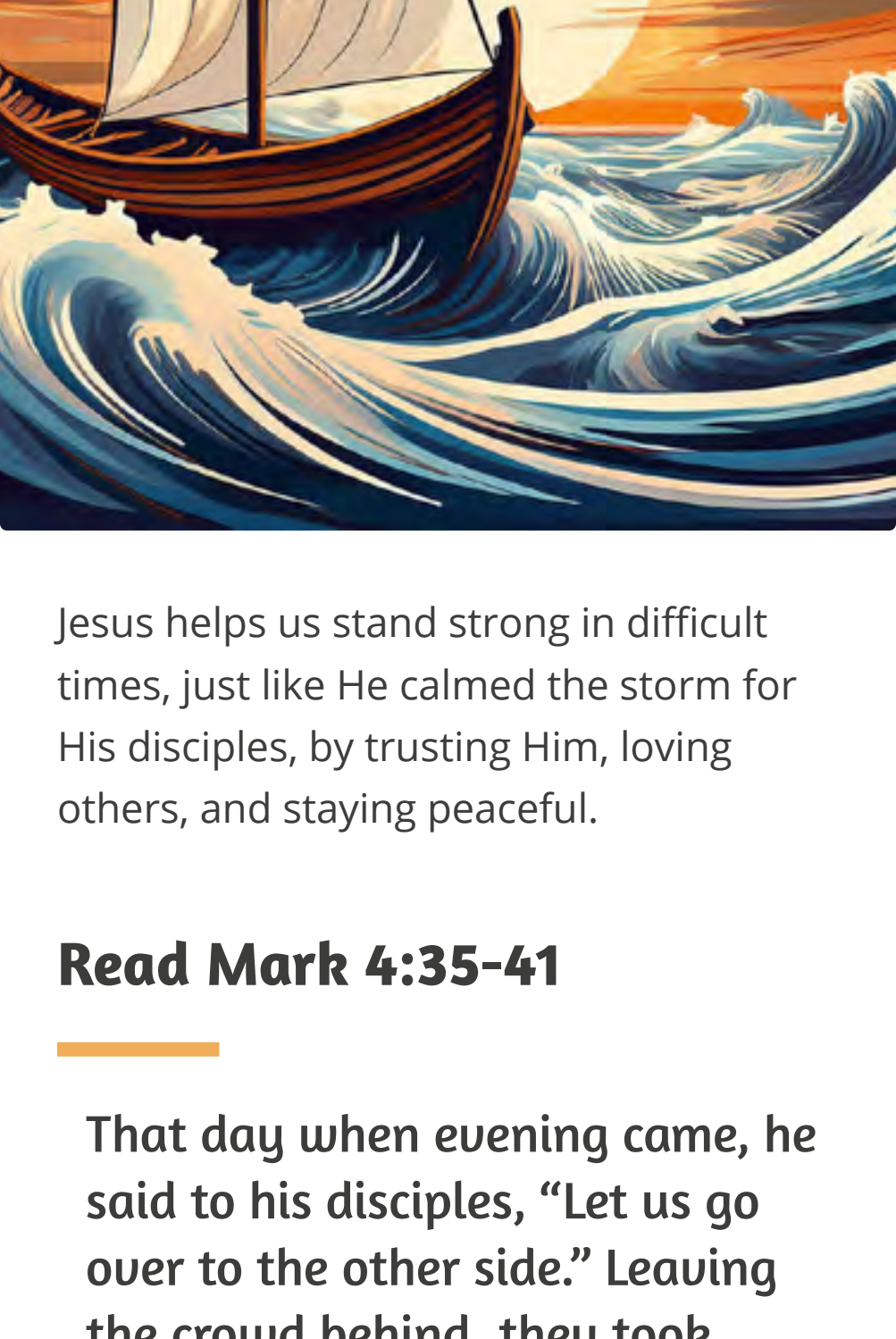


ARTICLE # 9

Kids Zone

With Jesus in the Storm

Persecution Preparedness | 2025



Jesus helps us stand strong in difficult times, just like He calmed the storm for His disciples, by trusting Him, loving others, and staying peaceful.

Read Mark 4:35-41

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

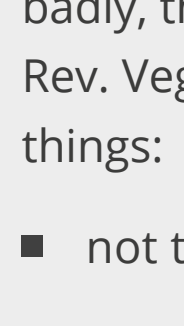
He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

Sometimes life feels like a big storm, and we might feel scared or think Jesus isn’t with us. But Jesus is always with us, even when things are hard. He can calm any storm and wants us to trust Him, love others, and stay peaceful no matter what happens. Just like the disciples learned more about Jesus in the storm, we can learn to trust Him more when things are tough.

What can we learn from this story?

- **Storms happen even when we follow Jesus:** The disciples obeyed Jesus by going to the other side of the lake, but a big storm came anyway (Mark 4:35-37). Sometimes, following Jesus brings challenges, but He has a plan.
- **Jesus is with us:** Even though Jesus was sleeping, He was right there in the boat (Mark 4:38). He’s always with us, even when it feels like He’s quiet.
- **Trust, don’t fear:** Jesus asked, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” (Mark 4:40). He wants us to trust Him instead of being scared, no matter how big the storm is.
- **Jesus is powerful:** The disciples were amazed (even terrified) that even the winds and waves obeyed Jesus! If Jesus can command the weather, then he can certainly help you!
- **Stay peaceful:** Jesus calmed the storm with just His words: “Quiet! Be still!” (Mark 4:39). He can give us peace and help us stay calm, even when things are tough.
- **Storms come to an end:** The storm stopped when Jesus spoke, and the lake became calm (Mark 4:39). All storms, even hard times, will end with Jesus’ help.



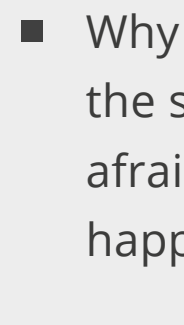
Illustration

Rev. Dr. Veguilla’s Story

In Cuba, a pastor named Rev. Dr. Veguilla faced a big “storm” when he was put in prison for five years just for being a Christian. Even though he and other Christians were treated badly, they learned to trust Jesus. Rev. Veguilla said they learned three things:

- not to fear,
- not to hate, and
- not to harm others.

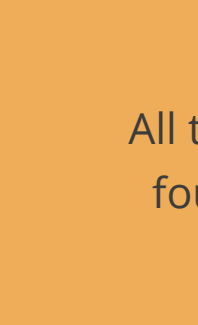
Instead of being scared or angry, they trusted Jesus, stayed peaceful, and showed love, even to those who were unkind. Their storm was hard, but Jesus helped them through it, and they grew stronger in their faith.



Discussion questions

- Why were the disciples scared in the storm? Have you ever felt afraid when something hard happened?
- How did Jesus show He was in control of the storm? How can He help us in our storms?
- What can we do to stay calm and trust Jesus when things are tough, like Rev. Veguilla did?
- How does it make you feel to know that Jesus can stop storms and that hard times won’t last forever?

Adapted from
STANDING STRONG THROUGH THE STORM BY
Paul Estabrooks and Jim Cunningham



Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for being with us in every storm. Help us to trust You, stay peaceful, and remember that You will bring hard times to an end. We want to follow You and learn more about Your love. Amen.

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ARTICLE # 11

Stories

A Pastor's Perseverance in Crisis

Persecution Preparedness | 2025



 Pastor Elias preaching in his church

On a Sunday evening in April 2024, after worship service in a Khartoum Church, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) abducted Pastor Elias from his home in the city, .

He was severely beaten and injured after neighbors had complained to the RSF about his smartphone and his distribution of relief money.

They continued beating him, demanding all his passwords to access his bank accounts, Facebook, and WhatsApp. As the beatings intensified, he was eventually forced to surrender to his persecutors.

At midnight, they abandoned him far from his home, leaving him traumatised and in severe pain. Pastor Elias spent the night in the cold and struggled to return home the next day. He began searching for a safe haven and medical attention.

With a local ministry's assistance, he relocated to a new area where he now resides safely within a church. Later in April 2024, his wife and children were supported to join him in their new home after a prolonged separation without communication.

They now live together in a church-owned building, supported by relief food from a local organization as they slowly rebuild their lives.



Remember to stay safe online!

This short story serves as a reminder of how important it is to stay safe online. Remember:

- Lock your phone tight
- Be smart with apps and chats
- Stay safe on social media and websites
- Be ready if your phone is taken
- Respect and protect others safety
- Listen to local experts

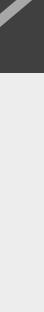
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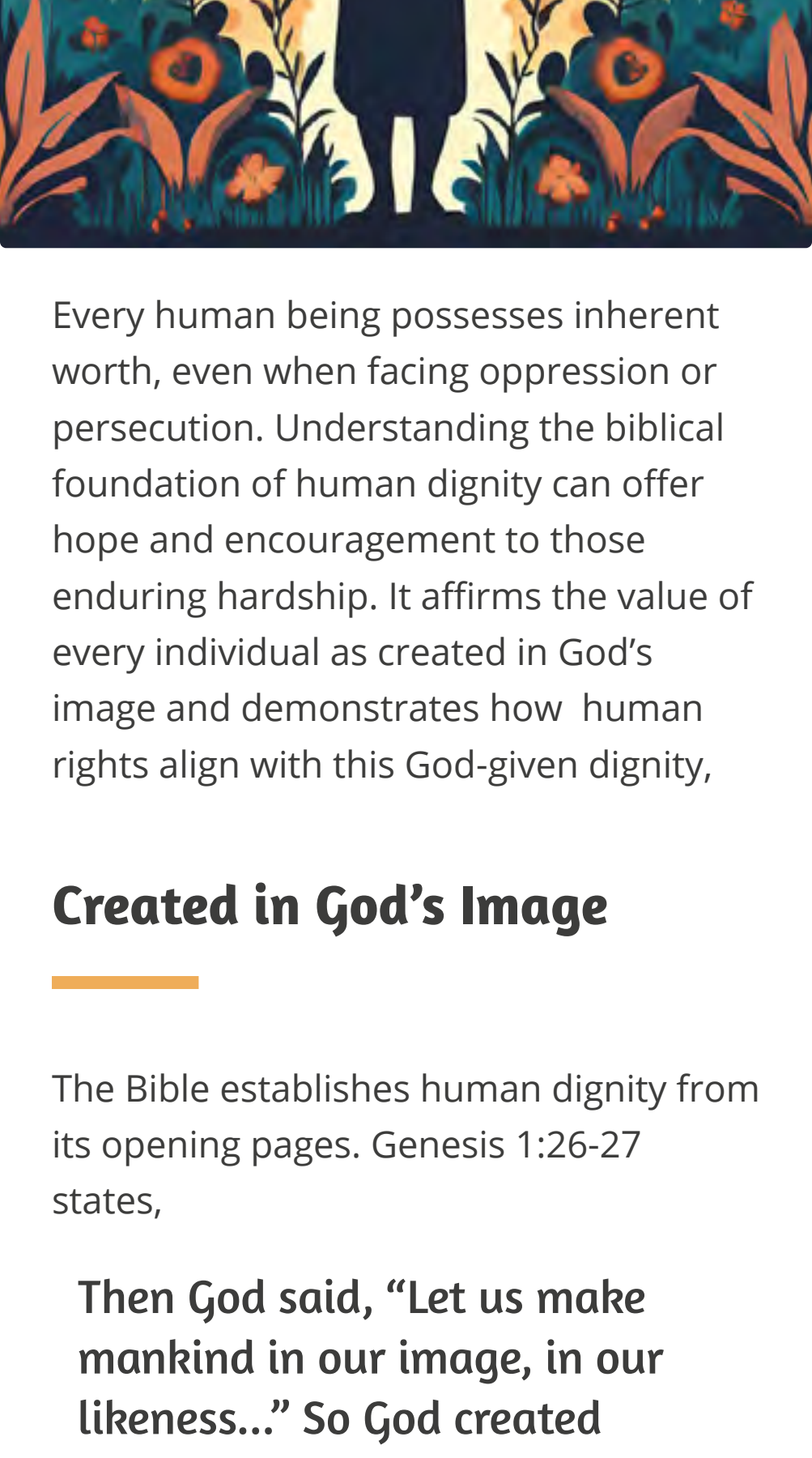
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Made in the image of God

Christian Worldview, Advocacy | 2025



Every human being possesses inherent worth, even when facing oppression or persecution. Understanding the biblical foundation of human dignity can offer hope and encouragement to those enduring hardship. It affirms the value of every individual as created in God's image and demonstrates how human rights align with this God-given dignity,

Created in God's Image

The Bible establishes human dignity from its opening pages. Genesis 1:26-27 states,

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness..." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

This truth reveals that every person is crafted with divine love and purpose, reflecting God's nature. No external factors—poverty, persecution, or societal rejection—can diminish this inherent worth.

This biblical principle aligns with global human rights standards. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1948, declares in Article 1,

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

This echoes the Bible's teaching that dignity is universal, providing a foundation for resilience in the face of adversity.

Equal as God's Children

The Bible further emphasises equality among all people. Galatians 3:26-28 proclaims, "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Through faith, every person becomes part of God's family, equal in His eyes, regardless of ethnicity, social status, or gender.

For those enduring oppression, this passage offers profound hope. God does not value one individual above another; all are equally cherished. This truth counters the devaluation often experienced under persecution, encouraging perseverance with the assurance of divine acceptance.

Treating All with Respect

Scripture also guides how people should treat one another. James 2:1-4 warns against favouritism: "My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?"

This passage challenges discriminatory behaviour, urging equal respect for all, as every person bears God's image.

For those facing persecution, this teaching may seem distant when others fail to show respect. Yet, it calls believers worldwide to advocate for the oppressed, offering hope that God's people are called to uphold fairness. Prayer can seek transformed hearts and just treatment.

God's Call to Defend the Oppressed

God's heart for the vulnerable is clear throughout Scripture. Isaiah 1:17 commands, "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."

This directive shows God's commitment to those suffering under injustice, urging His followers to actively support them.

Similarly, Psalm 82:3-4 instructs, "Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

These verses assure those facing hardship that God sees their pain and calls His people to intervene. Even in isolation, trust in God's presence and justice can sustain hope.

Human rights frameworks reinforce this biblical mandate. UDHR Article 7 states,

"All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination."

This right to equal treatment aligns with God's call for justice, empowering individuals to pray and work toward fair treatment.

Seeking Justice

Justice is integral to upholding dignity. Proverbs 24:24-25 warns, "Whoever says to the guilty, "You are innocent," will be cursed by peoples and denounced by nations. But it will go well with those who convict the guilty, and rich blessing will come on them."

This underscores the importance of addressing wrongdoing fairly, ensuring accountability to protect the vulnerable.

For those oppressed, this promise of justice may feel distant, yet it reflects God's character as a just judge. The UDHR supports this principle in Article 8, stating,

"Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law."

These aligned principles encourage advocacy for justice, both personally and for others.

Jesus Offers Freedom

Jesus' mission centres on liberation for the suffering. In Luke 4:18, He declares, "'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free."

Jesus addresses not only physical captivity but also emotional and spiritual burdens, offering hope to those under persecution.

Galatians 5:1 affirms, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

Through Jesus, true freedom is found—freedom to live with purpose and courage, even amidst trials. His presence strengthens resilience against oppression.

Living Out Human Dignity

These biblical and human rights principles call for practical application.

- First, embrace your personal worth as a person created in God's image, inherently valuable. In moments of despair, reflect on Genesis 1:26-27 and pray for God's perspective to renew strength.
- Second, understand human rights as God-given entitlements. The UDHR's affirmations of equality (Article 1), non-discrimination (Article 7), and remedy for rights violations (Article 8) align with Scripture's call for dignity and justice. Even if these rights are denied, they remain true, encouraging prayer and peaceful advocacy.
- Third, recognise and stand up for the dignity and human rights of others. Isaiah 1:17 and Psalm 82:3-4 urge action to defend the oppressed. This can mean speaking out against unfair treatment in your community, supporting those who are marginalised, or praying for those facing persecution elsewhere. Simple acts, like offering kindness to someone who is suffering or sharing the truth of their worth in God's eyes, reflect James 2:1-4's call to avoid favouritism. Where possible, learn about organisations that advocate for human rights, such as Amnesty International, which align with UDHR principles, and consider supporting their efforts through prayer or safe, lawful means.
- Fourth, trust in God's unwavering presence. Psalm 82:3-4 and Isaiah 1:17 reveal His commitment to the oppressed. Jesus' promise in Luke 4:18 assures freedom and hope, sustaining through hardship.

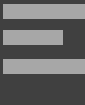
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ARTICLE # 13

Prayers

Prayers from the Valley of Suffering

The Valley of Vision | 2025



Introduction

The prayers of the Puritans, as compiled in The Valley of Vision, offer profound encouragement for those facing suffering and persecution today, rooted in their deep trust in God’s sovereignty, grace, and the believer’s reliance on Christ.

Drawn from a largely forgotten Puritan writings from hundreds of years ago, these prayers reflect the resilient faith of a people who themselves endured significant persecution, with many becoming martyrs for Christ. Despite their trials, their lives and stories have profoundly impacted the church for centuries, providing timeless expressions of hope and endurance. Their vivid scriptural language and honest acknowledgment of human frailty resonate with modern believers, offering comfort, perspective, and a vision of divine glory to sustain those navigating adversity.

The Valley of Vision

Lord, exalted and holy, gentle and humble,
You have led me to this valley of vision,
where I dwell in the depths yet see
You in the heights;
surrounded by the weight of my sin, I
gaze upon Your glory.

Teach me through paradox:
that the path downward leads
upward,
that humility lifts me high,
that a broken heart becomes a healed
heart,
that a repentant spirit rejoices,
that a soul that turns to You triumphs,
that having nothing means owning
everything,
that carrying the cross brings a crown,
that giving is receiving,
that this valley reveals Your vision.

Lord, in the daylight, stars shine brightest
from the deepest wells,
and the deeper the well, the clearer
Your stars glow.

Let me find Your light in my darkness,
Your life in my death,
Your joy in my sorrow,
Your grace in my sin,
Your wealth in my poverty,
Your glory in my valley.

Amen.

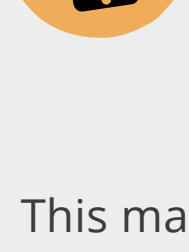
From “The Valley of Vision”

A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions.

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Updated here into contemporary language.



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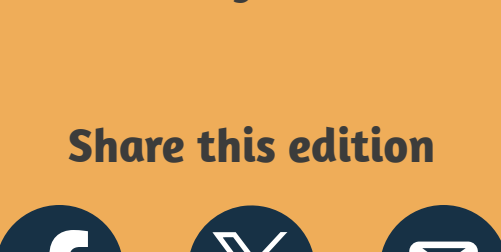
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