

PERCEIVE | RECOGNIZE | ACKNOWLEDGE | YIELD

The
RIPPLE EFFECT
Study Guide



GLOBAL
CHRISTIAN
RELIEF

Pray:

FOUR STEPS TO ENGAGE WITH THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

At the heart of this study is the PRAY framework—a simple yet powerful way to engage with the stories, Scriptures, and realities of Christian persecution. Each session is built around one of these steps, guiding you to respond with both your heart and your actions.

P – PERCEIVE - PAGE 1

Open your eyes to Christian persecution. In this step, we take an honest look at the realities faced by our brothers and sisters around the world. Through stories, statistics, and Scripture, we begin to see the global Church as one family—and recognize the cost of following Christ.

R – RECOGNIZE - PAGE 8

Understand what God says about persecution. The Bible is clear: persecution is part of the Christian journey. In this step, we explore how God uses suffering for His glory and how we are called to stand with those who are mistreated for their faith.

A – ACKNOWLEDGE - PAGE 18

Ask, “What does this have to do with me?”

This step challenges us to move from awareness to engagement. We reflect on our own role in the Body of Christ and consider how God might be calling us to respond—through prayer, advocacy, giving, or sharing these stories.

Y – YIELD - PAGE 26

Surrender to God’s plan for you. The final step invites us to be still before God, listen for His leading, and trust Him with our response. Yielding isn’t passive—it’s an active posture of obedience, allowing God to use us to strengthen His Church and bring Him glory.



Some things are simply built into who we are. For followers of Jesus, caring for the suffering Body of Christ isn't just a good idea—it's in our spiritual DNA.

Scripture makes this clear: *"As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers"* (Galatians 6:10).

God calls us to a unique kind of love and solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world, especially those facing persecution.

At Global Christian Relief, this conviction shapes everything we do. Our mission isn't about growing an organization—it's about waking up the Church. When we hear the stories of persecuted believers—stories of courage, forgiveness, and unwavering faith—something stirs inside us. Our own faith is challenged and revived. We remember that the Church is one body, and when one part suffers, we all feel it.

You'll see this truth woven throughout this study. We call it the "Ripple Effect." Just as a single stone tossed into a lake sends waves outward, one act of faith or compassion can create far-reaching impact—touching lives across continents and generations. The stories and prayers you encounter here are meant to awaken that Ripple Effect in you, inspiring action that strengthens the global Church.

John asks us plainly: *"If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?"* (1 John 3:17). True faith responds with compassion and action.

As you go through this four-week study, I invite you to let God awaken that instinct within you. Pray. Give. Stand with those who suffer for His name. This is Kingdom work—and it's work we're made for.

Let's walk it out together.

—Brian Orme
CEO, Global Christian Relief



STANDING WITH THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Every movement starts with a step of faith. At Global Christian Relief, we believe that step begins when one believer chooses to stand with the persecuted Church.

This study invites you into a global story—one where ordinary Christians, across five continents and some of the most dangerous places on earth, are courageously living out the Gospel. And it's not just their story. It's ours too.

When churches are burned in India or families flee violence in Nigeria, we respond quickly—with food, shelter, trauma care, and the hope of Christ. But our work goes deeper than crisis response. We equip the Church to grow stronger for generations: distributing Bibles, discipling children, training pastors, and addressing root causes like poverty and discrimination.

Everything we do flows from a five-pillar model: spreading the Gospel, creating more freedom, addressing deep-rooted causes, ensuring survival, and fostering generational faith. Together, these pillars ensure the persecuted Church doesn't just survive—but thrives.

Still, the real story of GCR isn't found in systems or structures. It's found in faith. One courageous believer inspiring another. One prayer sparking hope in someone who thought they were alone. That's the Ripple Effect.

This study is your invitation to be part of it. Through prayer, learning, giving, and sharing stories, you become a lifeline—reminding persecuted Christians they are seen, supported, and never forgotten.

We are one Church. One family. Let's stand together so the light of the Gospel continues to shine—no matter the darkness.

Perceive

OPEN YOUR EYES TO CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

“Remember those in prison, as though you were in prison with them, and the mistreated, as though you yourselves were suffering bodily.”

— Hebrews 13:3

PART 1: LEADER INTRODUCTION

Leader, read or paraphrase the following to your group:

This week, we begin our journey by opening our eyes to the reality of Christian persecution around the world. For millions of believers, following Jesus means facing discrimination, isolation, violence, or even death. These aren't just distant stories—they are the lived experiences of our brothers and sisters in Christ today.

As we enter this session, let's remember:

- Persecution is not new. Jesus Himself warned His followers that suffering would come (see John 15:18-20).
- The cost of following Christ is real, and for many, it means losing family, community, or even their lives.
- Yet, during suffering, God is at work—strengthening His Church, spreading the Gospel, and inspiring courageous faith.

Our goal is not just to learn facts, but to let these stories move our hearts. We are one Church, one family. When one part suffers, we all suffer. Their stories are our stories.

As we begin, ask God to open your eyes and your heart to what He wants to show you about the persecuted Church—and about your own faith.



LET'S PRAY:

Lord, as we begin this journey, open our eyes to see the reality of our persecuted family around the world. Soften our hearts to their stories and help us respond with compassion and unity. Teach us what it means to stand together as one Church. Amen.

PART 2: AT A GLANCE

Ready for a pulse check? We'll dive into these topics in more detail later, but go ahead and take a moment to have your group share their answers to these questions:

1. When you think of Christian persecution, what comes to mind?
2. How prevalent do you think the persecution of Christians is today?

PART 3: GOING DEEPER



DONGWON

Dongwon grew up in North Korea, where faith in Jesus is forbidden and punishable by death. After escaping to China, he reached the end of himself—alone, desperate, and ready to give up. But when a local pastor shared the Gospel, Dongwon's heart was transformed. "I started weeping uncontrollably as an unfathomable peace flooded my soul," he remembers.

Even after his conversion, Dongwon faced arrest and the threat of repatriation. Yet God's promise — "Don't be afraid. I am with you"—carried him through. Now living in South Korea, Dongwon secretly supports the underground Church in North Korea, dreaming of a day when his homeland will be filled with worshipers of Christ. His story is a powerful witness: even in the world's darkest places, the light of Christ cannot be extinguished.



**WATCH THE
FULL STORY**

AZAD

Azad once lived as a Muslim extremist in the Middle East, but a dream of Jesus changed everything. As he searched the Scriptures to disprove Christianity, he found instead the truth of Christ. Choosing to follow Jesus cost Azad dearly—he was cut off from his family, threatened by religious leaders, and forced to move for safety. Yet his faith only deepened.

Now, Azad risks his life to smuggle Bibles into a country officially closed to the Gospel, determined to share the hope he found. His family has suffered loss—his son was killed while helping others—but Azad’s conviction remains unshaken. “A believer should be like a wolf,” he says, strong and persevering. He asks for prayer: “Pray that God will brighten our way in peace.” Azad’s courage is a reminder that the Gospel is worth every cost—and that God’s Word cannot be chained.



WATCH THE FULL STORY

SUZANNE



Suzanne’s world changed forever the day Boko Haram militants stormed her village in northern Nigeria. She watched her father gunned down before her eyes. When she refused to follow the attackers, they shot her too—leaving her blind and broken, presumed dead beside her father’s body. But God was not finished with Suzanne. Miraculously, she survived and was taken to safety.

Though the attack left deep scars, Suzanne’s faith only grew stronger. She draws daily strength from Jesus’ words and chooses to forgive those who tried to destroy her family. “In ignorance he committed his actions, Oh God, forgive them,” she prays. Suzanne’s resilience and radical forgiveness shine as a beacon of Christ’s love in a region where violence is rampant. Her story calls us to pray and stand with believers in Nigeria—so they can remain a light for Christ, even in the face of unimaginable darkness.

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment. So don’t be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of me his prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God. He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.” — 2 Timothy 1:7–9

WHAT THEY CAN TEACH US

For millions of Christians around the world, these stories reflect their everyday reality. They live with the constant threat of persecution for their faith—the threat of intimidation, isolation, beatings, imprisonment, and even death—and they choose to follow Jesus anyway.

It's a humbling thought, knowing that our brothers and sisters in Christ are willing to suffer for their faith. It's also a foreign concept for many of us. Persecution? That sounds so extreme. Does that stuff really happen anymore? The short answer: yes—to millions of believers all over the world.

According to the Pew Research Center, 75 percent of the world's population lives in areas with severe religious restrictions—many of whom are Christians. The US Department of State has identified 24 different countries where Christians face persecution from their neighbors or from their government—simply because they believe in Jesus Christ.

Daily life for these Christians is a struggle. The hostility they experience as a result of their faith can take many forms. Some suffer verbal harassment and discrimination at work or school. Others endure more extreme persecution, including imprisonment, torture, rape, and even death.



BREAKING IT DOWN

With millions of Christians facing persecution on a regular basis, it can be hard to wrap your mind around the realities of suffering.

Every month, according to the GCR Red List:

- **408 Christians are killed for their faith in Nigeria alone.**
- **200 churches and Christian properties are destroyed in India alone.**
- **62 Christians are arrested for their faith in China alone.**

Eye opening, right? Christian persecution is more prevalent today than at any other time in the modern era—and it's getting worse.

Each year, GCR releases its Red List, which reveals the 25 worst nations for Christian persecution. The Red List highlights the top offenders of five different categories—killings, building attacks, arrests, displacements, and abductions and assaults. Several of the countries are on multiple lists. Take a look at the list and get familiar with some of these heart-breaking statistics.



DOWNLOAD THE RED LIST

VIOLENT VS. SYSTEMATIC

As we open our eyes to persecution, it's easy to focus on the violent events that we see on the news. Violent persecution can take many forms, such as churches being torched or Christians being beaten. But, although thousands of incidents like these occur each year, that's not the most common form of persecution.

More often, Christians experience social pressure and discrimination within their community. Social persecution could include being kicked out of your family or fired from your job because of your faith. Social persecution is often quieter, and is less likely to make the news, but can be extremely damaging to its victims.

A PROPER RESPONSE

Although the level of persecution around the world has been on the rise, persecution itself is not new. As long as there have been Christians, there has been persecution. In fact, Jesus told His followers to expect it, saying, *“If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also”* (John 15:20) and *“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”* (John 16:33)

It’s easy to hear about Christian persecution and feel afraid. But that shouldn’t be our response. Scripture says, *“for God did not give us a spirit of fear.”* (2 Timothy 1:7) Rather, hearing about our brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering should motivate us.

Here’s where we need to take a breath.

When you hear about the millions of people who suffer, you might think, “How can we stop this from happening?” Naturally, persecuted Christians of course wish for persecution to stop. But the most common prayer request they pass on to GCR and our partners is this: Please pray God will give me the strength to be a witness for Christ in the middle of these hardships.

These Christians actually expect persecution, to some extent, as they remember the words of Jesus: *“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me”* (Matthew 16:24). For them, with so much on the line, there can be no halfway commitment to Jesus Christ. These believers are all in.

It’s humbling to think of Jesus’ words in the context of persecuted Christians. All they have to do is remain silent about their faith or simply deny Christ to avoid punishment or suffering—and yet, daily, they choose to deny themselves instead. How much more should we be proclaiming Christ with the freedoms we have?

We invite you to stand with your fellow believers—empowering them, strengthening them and praying for them.

*“Provide justice for the needy and the fatherless;
uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute.”*
— Psalm 82:3

PART 4: TIME TO REFLECT

You've just absorbed a lot of information about Christian persecution. Let's take a few minutes to reflect on what you have learned and dig into some challenging questions.

1. Think back to your answers to those first two questions in this lesson. Have you learned something new about Christian persecution in this section? If asked those questions again, how might you answer differently?
2. When we hear about millions of Christians suffering, it's easy to become numb to the overwhelming statistics. How can we resist becoming desensitized to the persecution of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world?
3. Now that you are aware of the daily realities that Christians face throughout the world, how can you help others open their eyes to it, too? Think of three people who may not know about Christian persecution and share what you have learned. Send them to globalchristianrelief.org to review the Red List, read personal stories about persecuted Christians, and watch videos about individuals who have been persecuted for their faith.

PART 5: PRAY



Lord, I am humbled to learn about the millions of Christians who are facing intimidation, discrimination, beatings, imprisonment, and even death for their faith. They know where they stand—they are all in—fully committed to following You. Help me not to turn a blind eye to their suffering. I pray You would strengthen them and give them the grace they need to endure this persecution. Jesus, You said in Your Word, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,” (Matthew 5:44), so I pray for those who are persecuting my brothers and sisters in Christ. Put an end to their hostility—to their hatred. Let them come to a saving faith in You. Amen.

“But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” –Matthew 5:44

Recognize

WHAT DOES GOD HAVE TO SAY ABOUT PERSECUTION?

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith."

— Galatians 6:10

PART 1: LEADER INTRODUCTION

Leader, read or paraphrase the following to your group:

Last week, we opened our eyes to the reality of Christian persecution today. We saw the cost our brothers and sisters pay for following Jesus—and we began to understand that their stories are our stories.

This week, we go deeper. We ask: What does God say about persecution? How does He use it? And what does it mean for us as one Body, united in Christ?

The Bible is honest about suffering. From the story of Joseph—betrayed, enslaved, and imprisoned, yet used by God to save many lives—to the story of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, we see that persecution is not a sign of God’s absence. In fact, God often works through suffering in ways we can’t imagine. Joseph could say to his brothers, “You planned evil against me; God planned it for good” (Genesis 50:20).

Sometimes, God rescues His people and brings them to places of influence, as He did with Joseph. Other times, like Stephen, believers lose everything for the sake of Christ. Yet even then, God is at work—spreading the Gospel, strengthening His Church, and drawing people to Himself.

Around the world today, many Christians know that following Jesus may cost them their freedom, their families, or even their lives. Yet they remain faithful, trusting that God can use even their suffering for His glory.

Scripture calls us to remember those in prison as if we were there with them (Hebrews 13:3). When one part of the Body suffers, we all suffer. We are called to stand together, to pray for strength and courage for our persecuted family, and to ask God how He might use us to share the hope of Christ—no matter the cost.

As we begin this session, let’s ask God to help us recognize His heart for the persecuted Church and to show us how He is working through suffering to bring life to others.



LET’S PRAY:

Lord, give us eyes to see Your purpose in suffering and persecution. Strengthen our persecuted brothers and sisters to remain faithful and use their witness—and ours—to bring hope and life to many. Unite us as one Body, and teach us to trust You, even when the cost is great. Amen.

PART 2: AT A GLANCE

It's time for another pulse check. Take a moment and have each member of your group share their answers to these questions:

1. **How do you think God feels about persecution?**
2. **Can you think of any scriptures about persecution that might shed light on this?**

PART 3: GOING DEEPER

Ramesh grew up in the shadow of the Himalayas, destined to follow his family's long line of Hindu priests. But after encountering Jesus while studying overseas, his life changed forever. When Ramesh returned to Nepal and began sharing his new faith, he faced hostility from his family and community. The persecution intensified when authorities, enforcing strict anti-conversion laws, falsely accused him of evangelizing and distributing Bibles.

Ramesh was arrested and spent seven days in custody, enduring harsh interrogation and pressure to renounce his faith. Yet, even in prison, he clung to Christ's words: "People will persecute you." Instead of despair, Ramesh found joy—trusting that God could use even this suffering for good. After a two-year legal battle, he was acquitted, but the experience only deepened his resolve to serve the growing Church in Nepal.

Today, Ramesh leads efforts to equip believers with Bibles and audio Scripture, knowing that God's Word is the anchor for those facing persecution. He asks the global Church to pray for Nepalese Christians: "Persecution is not fun, but after, the persecution becomes joy. We are living for God, and we need each other's prayers to stand strong."

Personal stories like Ramesh's can help drive the reality of persecution home, but if we're honest, there's still a bit of a disconnect for many of us. We think, "He's in prison halfway around the world—what could I possibly do to help?" Or, perhaps if we're a little more honest, "Why should I care?"

The Bible makes it clear that God sees believers as one Body—one Church. *"For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free."* (1 Corinthians 12:12–13a)

WHEN ONE MEMBER SUFFERS

It's altogether too easy to divide the Church in our minds into those who are suffering for their faith and those who are able to worship freely. But there is only one Church—just one Body of believers.

God designed the Church to work together in unique and powerful ways. Those who are persecuted need the free Church to stand with them—to pray for and support them.

The free Church desperately needs the persecuted Church as well. We need to see and learn from those who have stood strong in the midst of suffering, who have counted the cost and deemed Jesus more than worth whatever they might lose.

Paul takes it a step further in 1 Corinthians 12:26 saying, "So if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it."

Let that sink in for a moment. If one member suffers, all the members suffer. Have you ever thought about Christian persecution that way? When your fellow believers are suffering, you—as a member of the same Body—suffer with them. You share their grief, mourning the loss of their freedom, their family, their job—whatever the situation might be. You grieve and you pray.



BREAKING IT DOWN

We see the call in Scripture to suffer with our fellow believers, but it might still feel like a foreign concept. After all, these are people we have never met, and likely never will. Let's revisit Ramesh's story, which you read at the start of this section. Imagine if it were your brother or your father unjustly accused and sitting in that jail cell for his faith. What if it was someone you loved, enduring interrogation and pressure simply because they followed Jesus? How much more would you pray for them? Wouldn't you be sharing their story with everyone you know, asking them to join you in prayer?

When we pause and reflect, we realize persecuted believers like Ramesh are members of our spiritual family. Some are sitting in jail cells right now, in need of our prayers and support.

PERSECUTION AND SCRIPTURE

Now that we know why we should care about persecuted Christians, let's unpack more of what the Bible has to say about persecution itself. God calls us to be a voice for the voiceless in Psalm 82:3: *"Stand up for those who are weak and for those whose fathers have died. See to it that those who are poor and those who are beaten down are treated fairly."*

The words of Hebrews 13:3 echo Paul's appeal to suffer with other members of the Body of Christ, *"Remember those in prison, as though you were in prison with them, and the mistreated, as though you yourselves were suffering bodily."* (Hebrews 13:3)

And in His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus turned the idea of persecution on its head, saying:

"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you." — Matthew 5:10–12

GOD USES PERSECUTION

We see from the scriptures we've just read that God is not surprised by persecution. He knows it will happen. But what Satan intends for harm, God intends for good—using persecution to draw people to Himself and to bring glory to His name.

ISOLATED IN CAPTIVITY



WATCH THE FULL STORY

Safiratu's life was shattered when Boko Haram stormed her village in northern Nigeria. Nine months pregnant and unable to flee, she was beaten and left alone, her unborn child lost. For a week, she crawled through the wilderness, surviving only by God's provision. Eventually, she reunited with her children—only to be captured again, this time witnessing the brutal murder of four of her children and the forced separation of her family.

In captivity, Safiratu endured unimaginable hardship: forced marriage, hunger, and violence. "We have no one to turn to. We are in Your hands," she prayed, clinging to God when all hope seemed lost. After a year and a half, she escaped during a firefight, trekking for days on swollen feet until soldiers found her. Alone and grieving, Safiratu found healing through her church's trauma counseling and the support of other believers. "Patience is life," she says. "We must be tried if we believe in Jesus. Even though He was persecuted, He stood firm—and so can we."

Isn't that an amazing perspective?

When persecution stripped everything away, it led Safiratu into a deeper dependence on God—finding Him to be truly sufficient, even in captivity.



FAITH REFINED IN THE FIRE



WATCH THE FULL STORY

Suman's journey to faith began with a miracle: her brother's healing after prayer in Jesus' name. But following Christ in her Hindu-majority village came at a steep cost. Her family was ostracized, attacked, and ultimately displaced. The most devastating blow came when extremists from her own extended family killed her sister Bindu for refusing to renounce Christ.

Grief and fear could have crushed Suman's faith, but instead, she discovered a new depth of trust in God. "No matter how many troubles I face, I found life in Jesus," she says. Even after losing her home and loved ones, Suman clings to God's promises: "Ask, and it shall be given to you." Her brother Bima echoes this hope: "If I live, I live for God. If I die, I die for God." Through unimaginable weakness and loss, Suman's faith has only grown stronger. She asks for prayer—not just for safety, but for reconciliation and peace in her village. Her story is a living testimony that Christ's power is made perfect in our weakness.

"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.' Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me. So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong." — 2 Corinthians 12:9–10



WEAKNESS LEADS TO STRENGTH

God uses the suffering that comes with persecution in profound ways. Anyone who has walked through intense suffering can tell you that there is something about hardship that allows us to know God more fully. An Egyptian Christian reflected on the impact persecution had on him: “In great suffering you discover a different Jesus than you do in normal life. Pain and suffering bring to the surface all the weak points of your personality. In my weakest state, I had an incredible realization that Jesus loved me even right then.”

2 Corinthians 12:9–10 highlights this seemingly contradictory idea of weakness leading to strength: *“But [Jesus] said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.’ Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may reside in me. So, I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”*

A RIPPLE EFFECT

Watching people lose everything for the sake of Christ or suffer intensely and still find joy in the Lord creates a Ripple Effect. Those who hear their stories can’t help but wonder, “Who is this Jesus they follow? And why is He worth all of this?” Time and time again, persecution has opened the door for the spread of the Gospel. We see this throughout history. A leader or nation tries to suppress Christianity, only to realize it has grown tremendously in the face of adversity.

This very phenomenon is happening in Iran today. The pressure for Christians there is severe, but the Church is thriving. In fact, the secret Church in Iran is estimated to be hundreds of thousands of believers strong—and growing. God is using persecution to bring more people to a saving faith in Him.

There is something incredible about looking at the lives of those who are suffering for the cause of Christ. They have peace—they know God is in control. We can see God’s grace poured out over these individuals as He gives them courage and even joy as they stand strong through the storm.

PART 4: TIME TO REFLECT

Once again, we've covered a lot in this section. Now it's time to slow down and reflect on what you've learned. Let's allow what God says about persecution to sink in.

1. Think back to how you answered that first question at the start of this section. Has your understanding of how God sees persecution changed at all in light of what you've read? If so, how is it different?
2. We talked about the disconnect that so many of us struggle with as we think of Christians half a world away. Did thinking of Ramesh as your family member change the way you respond to his story? How can you use this approach as you learn more about fellow believers who are suffering for their faith around the world?
3. Safiratu lost nearly everything—her home, her children, her health—and found herself relying on God alone for survival. How does her experience of being stripped down to the essentials challenge your understanding of dependence on God? Are there things in your own life that keep you from fully trusting Him in times of hardship?
4. Throughout history, we've seen how contagious the faith of Christians can be to those around them. It creates a Ripple Effect, drawing others to God as they want to know the reason for such devotion. Have you seen examples of this Ripple Effect in your own life or in the lives of others around you? How would thinking of your relationship with Christ as a way to make the Gospel attractive to others change the way you live each day?
5. Persecuted Christians often feel isolated and alone—especially when they aren't able to fellowship with other believers. But they understand the power of prayer and are asking fellow believers to remember them as we talk to the Lord. They gain so much joy when they know their brothers and sisters in Christ are praying for them because, to them, prayer is the ultimate form of fellowship. What can you do to remind yourself to pray for Christians who are facing persecution?

“I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.” — John 16:33

FAITH IN ACTION

Take a few minutes to host a prayer vigil for hurting brothers and sisters around the world. In solidarity with persecuted Christians, act as though the vigil is a secret meeting. Dim the lights. Use low voices as you sing and pray. Let it remind you of the restrictions they face on a daily basis. Let it change the way you see the Body of Christ.

PART 5: PRAY



Lord, I'm overwhelmed as I think of the millions of Christians around the world who are suffering for their faith. I confess that, at times, my heart has been calloused to their pain. Would You help me to see through Your eyes?

Help me to love them as You do. Place in me a burden for my brothers and sisters who are hurting. I ask even now that You would watch over them—sustain and encourage them. Give them what they need to withstand these storms. Thank You for the way You use persecution for good—for the way You draw people to Yourself and allow them to know You more fully. Use my life to create a Ripple Effect for those around me, that they may come to a saving faith in You. Amen.



Acknowledge

WHAT DOES CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION
HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

*"But be doers of the word and not hearers only,
deceiving yourselves."*

— James 1:22

PART 1: LEADER INTRODUCTION

Leader, read or paraphrase the following to your group:

In our last session, we explored what God's Word says about persecution. We saw that God can use suffering—whether it ends in rescue or loss—to accomplish His good purposes and draw people to Himself. We learned that the testimony of faithful believers, even in the face of death, is a powerful weapon for the Gospel.

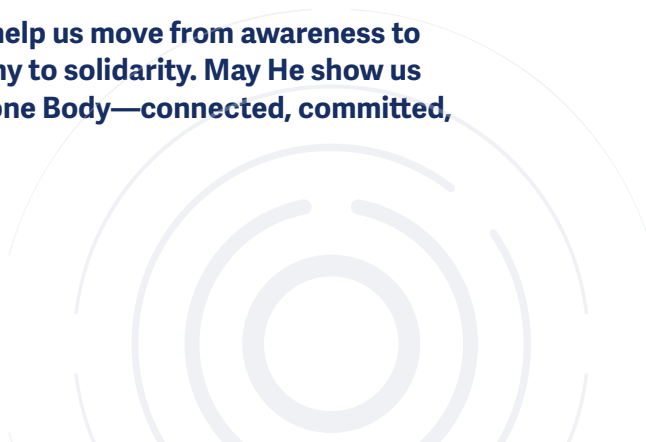
Today, we take a step closer to home. We ask: What does Christian persecution around the world have to do with me? Why should I care? And how does God want me to respond?

The Bible is clear: we are one Body in Christ. When one part suffers, we all suffer. Our persecuted brothers and sisters aren't distant strangers—they are family. Paul's letters, many written from prison, remind us that we are connected. He prayed for believers facing hardship, and he asked them to pray for him in return. Their faith, endurance, and prayers strengthen us—and our prayers and encouragement strengthen them.

We see this connection in action today. When believers in Nigeria receive letters and prayers from Christians around the world, it lifts their heads and reminds them they are not alone. When parents of kidnapped daughters in Nigeria read messages of hope, they say, "Your prayers are keeping us alive." This is the Body of Christ at work—each part caring for the other.

As we begin this session, let's ask God to open our eyes to the needs of our persecuted family—and to show us how we can hold tightly to the "other end of the rope." We may not be called to the front lines, but we are called to stand with those who are. Our words, our prayers, and our actions matter.

Let's pray that God would help us move from awareness to engagement, from sympathy to solidarity. May He show us what it means to truly be one Body—connected, committed, and courageous together.



PART 2: AT A GLANCE

Let's start by having everyone in your group share the first thoughts that come to mind when they hear the questions below:

- 1. Before you started this study, would you say you were aware of Christian persecution happening around the world? Why or why not?**
- 2. Has your awareness grown after going through the first two sections?**
- 3. You've heard about a lot of suffering—do you wonder whether you can make a difference at all for the persecuted Church?**

PART 3: GOING DEEPER



WATCH THE FULL STORY

When Boko Haram attacked her village, Tabitha refused to deny her faith in Jesus, even as violence claimed loved ones and forced her to flee with her children. After months of hardship and loss, she found hope again through support from GCR's partners, who helped her rebuild her life and forgive her enemies. Today, Tabitha stands strong in her faith, grateful for a new beginning.

In the "Recognize" section, we began to talk about why we should care for the persecuted Church and we're going to start there again in this portion of the study—not because we think you didn't hear it the first time, but because it's so easy to slip back into a thought pattern that

goes a bit like this: "I realize persecuted Christians like Tabitha are hurting. But I've never met them and probably never will—they are on the other side of the globe—not part of my daily world here at home. Caring for them seems so out of reach. I wouldn't even know where to start anyway."

Pretty soon, you're not thinking about it at all. You've all but convinced yourself that Christian persecution was just something you read about once and might think about every now and again—you know, if someone mentions it.

Our goal is to help you guard against that slow slide back to the status quo. Tabitha and others mentioned in The Ripple Effect series are real people walking through real suffering. Here's why we should care:

There aren't two churches—a persecuted church and a free church. There is one Church, with Christ as the head. That means when you talk about the body of believers, you and your persecuted brothers and sisters are one and the same. We are them. They are us. One Church.

God's Word is full of scriptures that drive this point home. Galatians 6:10 says, *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith."*

The writer of Acts tells believers to, *"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood."* (Acts 20:28)

CALLED TO STAND WITH THE PERSECUTED

We realize that it's hard to think of things that aren't part of your daily world. But the simple truth is God has called us to stand with and support our brothers and sisters.

Remember the words of *Psalm 82:3: "Provide justice for the needy and the fatherless; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute."*

JOINING GOD ON MISSION

If we are thinking in terms of lives reached for Christ, persecuted Christians are most effective at spreading the Gospel in their own communities. They have counted the cost and chosen to live out the mission every day, denying themselves and taking up their crosses to follow Jesus. This is irresistible faith, drawing their family, friends and neighbors in as they wonder who or what is worth such devotion.

"And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching."
— *Hebrews 10:24–25*

LEARNING FROM THE PERSECUTED CHURCH



While held captive by Boko Haram, a Nigerian Christian named Ingenuru watched as her mother was viciously beaten for her faith. Yet even during the beatings, her mother would cry out and pray in the name of Jesus, knowing it would only make the violence worse. Her defiant faith was such an encouragement to the other prisoners that the militants eventually took her away to break the women's spirits. Ingenuru never saw her mother again, but she learned a vital lesson. "It was only by prayer that we were able to resist," she says. "If not for prayer, we would have not been able to go on."

The free church has so much to learn from our persecuted brothers and sisters. For the persecuted, trusting in Jesus could mean

losing a job, family, friends, or even life itself. And they follow Him anyway, echoing the apostle Paul's words in Philippians 1:21, "*For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*" They understand what it means to rely on God, asking Him to sustain them and help them stand strong in the midst of suffering.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE

While it's true that much of the persecuted Church is half a world away, hearing their stories can change the way you live here in the U.S. Seeing those who are suffering take an all-in stance to following Jesus can bolster your own faith as you follow Him.

Realizing that millions of believers count themselves blessed to be found worthy to suffer for the cause of Christ might make you take risks you wouldn't have before. Maybe it's stepping out in faith and sharing about Jesus with your neighbors. Perhaps it's choosing to reflect the joy of the Lord in the midst of challenging circumstances. Whatever the situation, God can use these powerful stories about your brothers and sisters to draw you closer to Him and help you shine His light in your own community.

CAN I REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

When confronted with a challenge as large as Christian persecution, it's easy to feel overwhelmed or wonder if your actions matter. After all, you're just one person, and the suffering of our brothers and sisters spans continents and cultures.

But consider this: In dozens of countries, following Jesus means risking your safety, your livelihood, or even your life. Every day, believers are pressured, threatened, or attacked simply because of their faith. And yet, the global Body of Christ is vast—millions of Christians in the U.S. alone gather for worship each week. Imagine the impact if even a fraction of us chose to pray, give, and stand with those who suffer. Your response—no matter how small—can ripple out to bring hope and strength where it's needed most.

NUMBER ONE REQUEST

What do you think the number one request from persecuted Christians is? You might be surprised to hear it's not financial support or even Christian materials—it's prayer. The persecuted Church understands the power of prayer and they desperately need us to stand with them in this way.

When asked what North Korean Christians need most, Rev. Minho Song points to the power of prayer. "We do not know how many people are out there, but they are holding on to their faith," he shares. "Regardless of all that, God's grace was there to hold me through. And I realized that people around the world were remembering me and praying for me. And this is why I was able to survive."

Will you remember your persecuted church family in prayer and stand with them today?



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

How are people just like you partnering with Global Christian Relief to see lives changed around the world? Making a difference for persecuted Christians sounds great, but what does it look like, practically speaking?

It looks like individuals committing to pray for those who are persecuted for their faith. Many have subscribed to a monthly prayer calendar called The Prayer Force Alert so they know how to pray for their brothers and sisters in Christ.



GET YOUR PRAYER CALENDAR

In addition to prayer, making a difference looks like people who are sharing the stories of the persecuted church and giving to help them be a light in their communities. GCR then partners with persecuted Christians on the ground to distribute Bibles, provide trauma counseling, and meet needs for food, water, shelter and more.

Remember Tabitha at the start of this section? When Boko Haram attacked her village, she lost nearly everything for refusing to deny Jesus. After escaping with her children, Tabitha found hope again through the support of GCR's local partners, who helped her start a small farm and rebuild her life. That's what making a difference looks like.

Another example is Raheel and Ruth in Pakistan. For more than 25 years, their family was trapped in bonded labor at a brick kiln—caught in a cycle of debt, poverty, and discrimination because of their Christian faith. When GCR supporters stepped in to pay off their debt and provide a donkey cart for earning income, everything changed. Now, Raheel and Ruth can provide for their children, dream of a brighter future, and share hope with others in their community. That's what making a difference looks like.

It looks like families fed, clothed, and sheltered; slaves set free; churches and homes repaired; medical care for those who are injured; the Good News of Jesus Christ shared. And all this because individuals trusted that they could have an impact—that God could use them to make a difference in the lives of persecuted Christians around the world.

PART 4: TIME TO REFLECT

1. What does it mean to you that there is only “one Church”—that persecuted believers like Tabitha, Raheel, and Ruth are part of your own spiritual family? How might this change the way you pray or act?
2. After hearing stories of courageous faith and practical support, what is one way God might be inviting you to move from awareness to engagement—whether through prayer, advocacy, giving, or sharing these stories?
3. Rev. Minho Song said, “I realized that people around the world were remembering me and praying for me. And this is why I was able to survive.” Why do you think prayer is the number one request from persecuted Christians? How can you make prayer for the persecuted church a regular part of your life?

“And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.” — Hebrews 10:24–25



PART 5: PRAY

Lord, it's one thing to learn about Christian persecution happening halfway around the world, but it's another thing entirely to turn the focus back on me, asking how I should respond to this suffering. If I'm honest, it's often too easy to stick with my daily routines and keep my head in the sand when it comes to the persecuted Church. But I know that's not how You would have me respond. Your Word shows me that You care for those who are hurting and that You have called the Body of Christ to stand together, supporting and praying for one another. Help me to stand with my brothers and sisters in Christ. Give me Your eyes for their suffering and Your heart to help them. And when I ask, “What does Christian persecution have to do with me?” remind me—it has everything to do with me, because I'm a follower of Jesus. Amen.

Yield

BE STILL AND PRAY FOR GOD'S PLAN FOR YOU.

"If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will find it."

— Matthew 16:24–25

PART 1: LEADER INTRODUCTION

Leader, read or paraphrase the following to your group:

In our last session, we asked: What does Christian persecution have to do with me? We explored Paul's letters—many written from prison—and saw that the Church is one Body. When one part suffers, we all suffer. We are connected, and we need one another.

Now, as we begin our final session together, we turn to the next question: **What does God want me to do in response to all I've learned?** As James reminds us, we're not called to be hearers of the Word only, but doers. So how do we move from awareness to action—knowing that we are connected to our persecuted brothers and sisters, even from thousands of miles away?

Scripture is clear: Each of us is a unique part of the Body of Christ, designed and placed by God with a purpose. First Corinthians 12 tells us that God arranged every member of the Body just as He chose. None of us is here by accident. Jesus Himself prayed for our unity in John 17, asking that we would be one—so that the world would believe He was sent by the Father.

That means your gifts, your story, your place in the world matter. God has given you a role to play in His mission—right where you are. Some of us teach, others encourage, create, give, or serve in practical ways. All of us are called to leverage what we have for God's glory and the good of His people.

You don't have to be on the front lines to make a difference. Sometimes, it's as simple as praying, writing a letter, sharing a story, or giving what you have. We've seen how God uses the faithfulness of ordinary people—children, teenagers, adults, and seniors—to create ripples that reach around the world. When you respond to God's call, you not only impact others—you allow God to shape and grow your own faith.

As we begin, let's pause and pray. Ask God to open your heart to what He might be calling you to do. Don't compare your response to anyone else's—listen for the Holy Spirit's leading. Sometimes the next step is clear; sometimes it's just one small act of obedience at a time. But as you take that first step, trust that God will guide you to the next.

Remember: it's in the DNA of every believer to care for the suffering Church. The question isn't if you'll take action, but how. May God show you your part in His story—and may your obedience spark a Ripple Effect that strengthens the Church and brings glory to Christ. Let's pray together as we begin.

PART 2: AT A GLANCE

Ready for another pulse check? Take a moment to have each of your group members share their answers to these questions:

- 1. When faced with a decision or with figuring out how to respond to something, do you find yourself turning to God first for direction, or do you try to determine what to do next on your own?**
- 2. Do you ever find it difficult to be still and wait on the Lord? If so, why do you think that is?**

PART 3: GOING DEEPER



Mamta, a 71-year-old Christian in India, never imagined her faith would lead her to jail. Arrested during a prayer meeting in her home, she was afraid—until God gave her unexpected courage. “I was very scared at that time,” she recalls. “But when they entered inside, I suddenly felt that my fear was gone.” In that moment, Mamta yielded her fear to God and found peace in His presence.

During her seven days behind bars, Mamta’s confinement became an unexpected mission field. “God gave me a chance to spread the Word,” she says. “I told God’s promise in the morning, in the evening, in the night.” Even in a place meant to silence her, Mamta found freedom in surrender—trusting God to use her, not through striving, but through quiet faith and obedience.

Mamta’s priorities remain clear: she asks for prayer not for herself, but for peace in her family, for the revival of her ministry to the poor, and for the chance to restart prayer meetings in her home. She even prays for the man

whose complaint led to her arrest. “My victory will be when this person recognizes you,” she says to God.

Her story reminds us that sometimes the most faithful response is not to rush into action, but to yield—to be still before God, to trust Him with our fears and our future, and to pray for His will to be done. In a world that urges us to “just do it,” Mamta’s surrendered faith calls us to “be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10) As we reflect on Mamta’s example, let’s ask ourselves: Where is God inviting us to yield—to trust, to wait, and to pray—so that He can work through us in ways we might never expect?

“But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in having that name.”
— 1 Peter 4:16



“In fact, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Evil people and impostors will become worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

— 2 Timothy 3:12–13

WAITING ON THE LORD

Along with His command to be still before Him, we also see a recurring theme of waiting on the Lord throughout the Bible. Part of yielding to God is trusting that His plan and desires for us are best, that His timing—however different from ours—is right, and that He is worth waiting on.

- *Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. (Psalm 33:20)*
- *For God alone my soul waits in silence; from Him comes my salvation. (Psalm 62:1)*
- *But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles. (Isaiah 40:31)*
- *The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. (Lamentations 3:25)*

Waiting on God can be hard. Incredibly hard. But waiting on the Lord can also be incredibly formative. As we wait, He shapes our character, molding us into people of strength and wisdom. As we wait, He also brings maturity and clarity—gracing us with a seasoned perspective that it's not all about us. Rather, it's about Him and the work He is doing.

Waiting on the Lord is challenging, but it is inextricably linked to yielding to Him.

SURRENDERING TO GOD

A heart yielded to God is one that can be still before Him, that waits on His timing and is surrendered to His plan. We often think of yielding and surrendering as being passive postures. And in a way they are. You are no longer striving to make your own plans a reality.

But when you surrender to the Lord, you are surrendering to His plan. Instead of striving to advance your own ideas and agenda, you are now advocating to see God's plans fulfilled in your life and in the lives of those around you. In that sense, surrender isn't passive at all.

Every year, thousands of people feel God drawing them to support persecuted Christians by partnering with Global Christian Relief. From praying for those facing persecution, to donating to help restore damaged communities and provide relief to believers who are hurting, these individuals are embodying

what it means to be the Body of Christ—what it means to share in the sufferings of their fellow brothers and sisters.

These people have yielded before the Lord, and they are living on mission to make a difference in the lives of persecuted Christians. And while they set out to help fellow believers, every one of them will tell you that supporting the persecuted church has had a remarkable impact on their own lives. They're seeing hearts around them change as they hear about the all-in faith of believers around the world. They're finding a deeper appreciation for the freedoms we enjoy and experiencing a greater motivation to share their faith with others. All because they were willing to yield to God and His plan.

RELYING ON CHRIST

As we think about what it means to yield to the Lord, we need look no further than the persecuted Church—to the millions of believers who are living wholly surrendered to His plans as they face hardship and suffering for their faith.

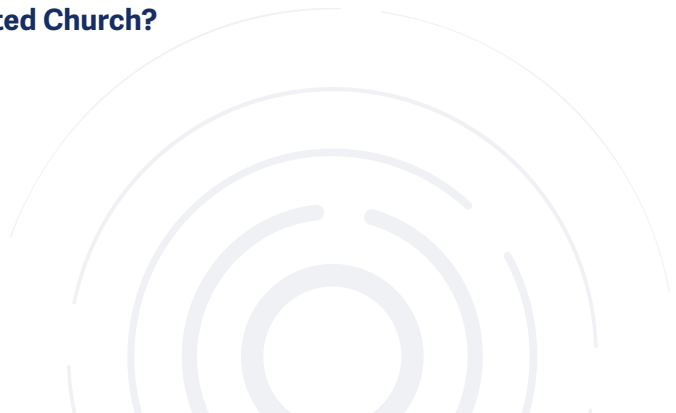
They understand what it means to rely on God for everything. Think back to Mamta's story. Imprisoned unfairly, she trusted God to use her in a desperate situation. And God did so in a miraculous fashion.

An Egyptian Christian shared about his dependence on the Lord, "You Americans have plans A through Z. We only have one plan, and that is for God to show up. If He doesn't, we are out of luck."

How might living in this kind of complete surrender to the Lord change your daily life? How might it change the lives of those around you?

It takes courage to yield to the Lord—courage to be still, courage to wait on Him, and courage to surrender to His plan.

Do you have the courage to yield to what He may be asking you to do for the persecuted Church?



PART 4: TIME TO REFLECT

In the spirit of yielding, let's slow down and take some time to reflect on what you have read in this section.

1. We've talked about how being still before God gives you time and space to think about who He is. Have you thought about using stillness to meditate on what God has revealed to you—both about the world we live in and about His Word? What do you think God is saying or has said to you about these things?
2. Have you ever thought about surrender being an active posture instead of a passive one? How does the idea of surrendering to God's plans change the way you view this concept? In what ways do you think God is calling you to actively surrender to help the persecuted Church?
3. Persecuted Christians seem to rest in utter dependence on God. They have to trust Him for everything. What can we learn from our fellow brothers and sisters about relying on the Lord? Do you think it's harder or easier to trust Jesus here where we enjoy religious freedom?



PART 5: PRAY

Lord, I confess that I often don't wait on You well. It's hard to quiet my mind and heart before You when the world is rushing by so quickly. Help me to be still before You. Help me to yield to You, waiting on Your timing and surrendering to Your plans. Would you show me how You would have me help the persecuted Church? I know I have so much to learn from them, from their total dependence on You. Help me to bless them, support them, and stand with them—even if it means breaking out of my comfort zone to do so. I want to live a life surrendered to You. Amen.

JOIN US AND TAKE ACTION

After completing The Ripple Effect and learning about your brothers and sisters in countries where faith costs the most, you might be asking, “What can I do to help?”

Here are three practical ways you can make a difference:

1. PRAY

Sign up for GCR emails and stay up to date on exclusive stories and urgent prayer needs from the persecuted Church—and keep your pulse on what God is doing in and through suffering believers around the world. Remember, it’s in the DNA of every believer to care for the persecuted—and our first call of action is always to pray.

Visit globalchristianrelief.org/subscribe to sign up today.

2. ADVOCATE

As you’ve learned about the courageous faith of persecuted Christians, consider how God might be inviting you to help share their stories and needs within your own church community and broader network. Becoming an advocate is a simple but powerful way to stand with our persecuted family—by sharing updates, leading prayer, and inviting others to get involved.

Visit globalchristianrelief.org/advocate for more information and to sign up.

3. GIVE

Give today and help provide Bibles, discipleship, food, medical supplies, trauma care, safe houses, and much more for your persecuted family.

You can give a one-time gift to your persecuted family—or you can become a monthly giver—whatever God is calling you to do.

Visit globalchristianrelief.org/give to give today.

The
RIPPLE EFFECT
Study Guide



Global Christian Relief
P: 888-524-2535
P.O. Box 27001 | Santa Ana, CA 92799 USA

GCRelief.org