



# GLOBAL CRISIS: 5 WAYS TO RESPOND LIKE JESUS

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## 7-Day Bible Study

Discover biblical guidelines for responding to global crises with living hope, faith, and love!

How do you find God in catastrophes? How can you encourage those suffering? And how can you do it without succumbing to discouragement, despair, and helplessness?

## Overwhelmed by Crises: How Do I Respond Biblically?

### You May Be Asking Yourself:

*Where is God in the midst of crises and persecution? Do disaster and suffering derail God's plan? And how do I respond to global emergencies without feeling overwhelmed and depressed?*

### Consider:

Today, listen to just five minutes of the news and you'll hear about wars, earthquakes, famines, diseases, and persecution. It's easy to ask, "Where is God in all this pain?" For many of us, these realities around the world result in us feeling depressed, discouraged, and helpless. Surely that's not God's will for His people who are called to be in the world for such a time as this! So how do we respond to crises?

First, global crises were not unforeseen by Jesus. In Matthew 24, Jesus describes our reality:

*And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately. Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world.*

Matthew 24:6-7

He goes on to explain the intense persecution His followers will face, many leaving their faith, betrayals, false prophets, and lawlessness increasing. As Jesus encouraged His disciples to endure, He reminds us that this persecution is because we belong to Him.

*If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you.*

John 15:18-20

Jesus was very clear about the hardships His followers would face. This isn't meant to make us numb or nonchalant about persecution and crises. But it is intended to remind us that God isn't in crisis, scrambling for a plan when persecution happens- his plans aren't destroyed or under threat. **Global chaos doesn't need to bring us to a crisis of our faith.** We do not have to worry about why these things are happening or despair that God has abandoned us in them. He promised not to leave us orphans in this world but to give us His Holy Spirit to comfort, strengthen, and teach us. Through His Spirit, we have the capacity to lead lives of extravagant love and tenacious faith in a broken world awaiting complete restoration at Jesus's second coming.

*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you...I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.*

John 14:16+18

Secondly, **Jesus gives us a mission in crises**. What is it? Is it to fix all these problems? Is it to establish world peace or set up kingdoms of this world? Do we just ignore the issues around us as we stay in a cluster of Christians? Thankfully, Jesus didn't ask us to do any of those things.

Jesus's words to His disciples before ascending into heaven were to go and make disciples of all nations.

*Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

Matthew 28:18-20

In Matthew 24:14, Jesus clarifies that the gospel must be preached to the whole world before His return when He and He alone can restore the earth, making the wrong things right. Only our merciful and righteous King Jesus can do this in fullness! When we see mercy and justice done on the earth now, it points to the future. Still, nothing can fully restore, redeem, and reconcile all the wrongs except for Jesus ruling and reigning on the earth! It is why we long for His return. It's why the last lines in the Bible in the book of Revelation declare that the Spirit and church cry, "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20) We are living in faith and hope for that day.

Our hope is planted not in current circumstances or our own understanding. **Our hope is firmly planted in Jesus, our Living Hope**. He has defeated sin and death, reconciled us to God, and has a plan to redeem and restore all the earth. We abide in Him.

*Remain in me, and I will remain in you.*

John 15:4

Though experiencing trials and surrounded by suffering, we have an eternal perspective through our merciful, victorious King. And our King has suffered and prevailed! He can take our suffering and persecution and use it for His plan and glory. Jesus says that when we experience persecution, we share with Him in His suffering. It is a declaration that we are His, and wherever Jesus goes, we will follow.

*[Faithful followers of Jesus] have defeated [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony. And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die.*

Revelations 12:11

In all of the crises, we remember our Savior who has walked the road to the cross and prevailed. As we meet Him in our suffering, His power and life manifest in us (2 Corinthians 4:10-11). That power manifesting in us is evidence of our Living Hope, Jesus. He is faithful and true, and His kingdom, which we are citizens of, is unshakable.

*All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.*

1 Peter 1:3-4

**Read Scripture:**

*We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.*

Hebrews 12:2-3

*We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.*

Romans 5:3-5

*I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."*

John 16:33

*For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!*

2 Corinthians 4:17

*We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies. Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies.*

2 Corinthians 4:8-11

**Reflect:**

Spend some time meditating on the verses above. Ask God to give you a revelation of Jesus, your Living Hope!

**Take Action:**

- Consider how you think about crises and persecution. Do you feel like God has abandoned you when life gets difficult? Take time to reflect on the Scriptures above and reform your worldview. For many of us, this is a major shift in thinking!
- Take the time to listen to the testimonies of the persecuted church [here](#). As we see the power of their testimonies, we realize God has not forsaken or forgotten these precious, brave believers. Neither should we!
- Next time you read or listen to the news, reflect on God's infinite compassion and desire to move in a world experiencing pain. Ask Him to reveal to you how He moves even when life is unbelievably hard. Is there an invitation for you to draw near to Him in hardship?

## A Prayerful Response to Crises: Combating Anxiety and Fear

### You May Be Asking Yourself:

*How do I respond with faith when so many terrible things are happening worldwide? How do I combat anxiety, fear, and helplessness?*

### Consider:

When you pray for the persecuted church and those in crises, you are coming to know Jesus' heart. ***Just by praying for your fellow Christians, you are saying, "I'm a part of Jesus's Body too! When one part suffers, all parts suffer."*** Your act of prayer is a powerful declaration of solidarity, as you share in Jesus' compassion for those who suffer and begin to understand His identification with those who are suffering.

Notice that there is no promise that prayer will combat sadness. When you join Jesus in interceding for those suffering, you may feel His sorrow fill your heart. Psalm 102:20 tells us He hears the groan of every prisoner, and we are asking to feel what He feels! His infinite compassion is moving our finite hearts- and it must change us! But His sorrow is not like the hopeless, crushing sorrow we face in this world. Jesus says, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." (Matthew 11:28-30).

When we carry Jesus's burdens in prayer, we aren't left discouraged, depressed, and sapped of strength. His burdens are always carried in the context of hope and purpose because He is called our Living Hope! In His body, on the cross, He reconciled the cosmos to Himself, made a way for the children of God to shine forever, and for all creation to one day experience the full manifestation of His healing, restorative work. He isn't just joyful; He is joy. He isn't just good; He is goodness. He isn't just hopeful; He is the living manifestation of hope! And when we share in His compassion, and mercy as we pray for the brokenhearted, we encounter all of His goodness, power, love, and hope.

Jesus's sorrow also differs from worldly sorrow because He knows the end of the story. This is the God who wept with His friend Mary over the death of her brother moments before He raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-44)! Jesus is moved with compassion for us in our current pain, and He also has a plan that will one day wipe every tear from our eyes and fill us with unimaginable joy! Even while sharing in our sorrow and comforting us, He is preparing to move in power on our behalf.

Worldly grief doesn't have that hope or power. It produces regret, bitterness, hopelessness, and even death (2 Corinthians 7:10). But not so with godly sorrow! Godly grief can drive us to pray, repent, or mourn with the brokenhearted, but it always leads to salvation. In other words, it leads us to Jesus. And that changes everything. When we pray with the compassion of Jesus, we come to know Him more and will trust Him even more with our own sorrows.

***Don't be afraid to take up the yoke of Jesus's heart. His burden is easy and light.*** It won't bring you down or cause you to stumble under its weight. You will find lightness and rest when you pray in keeping with his compassion. Your soul will be refreshed if the burdens in prayer you have carried have been His.

**Read Scripture:**

*So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.*

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Hebrews 4:14-16

*Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies.*

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Hebrews 13:3

*Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."*

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Matthew 11:28-30

**Reflect:**

Think about Jesus standing in intercession for you every day. He's praying prayers of love, longing, and delight over you! He is asking His Father to strengthen you in love and faith. When we pray we are praying in agreement with him.

**Take Action:**

- You can begin praying for persecuted Christians and those living in crises today! Take every fear and worry and lay it at the feet of Jesus as you ask Him how to pray for those suffering. Ask Jesus to let you feel His heart for people, places, and issues as you pray.
- Visit our [languages page](#) to learn about regions experiencing crises and persecution.
- [Sign up](#) for our prayer team emails. Staying updated means knowing how to pray for current needs.
- When you hear bad news or about a person or place in crisis, try to make it a habit to immediately say a prayer for them. Even 30 second prayers like this will build your faith and fill you with Jesus's heart for others. His compassion will not exhaust you as our own human resources for compassion sometimes do!

## A Generous Response to Crises: Combating Apathy and Helplessness

### You May be Asking Yourself:

*Will my giving really make a difference to those who need it most? How do I determine when and how much to give when there is so much suffering in the world?*

### Consider:

Jesus was alarmingly, unexpectedly practical. He came to reveal the greatest spiritual truth, yet a lot of what He did was feed hungry people and heal sore bodies. Before, during, or after His teaching, Jesus saw to people's physical needs. He spent countless hours pressed by crowds, healing each sick person who came to him. In fact, Jesus stopped what He was doing to heal the blind, crippled, a woman with a bleeding issue, and to bless little children (Luke 18:38-42, Luke 5:17-39, Luke 8:43-48, and Luke 18:15-17). Jesus stopped in the middle of sermons to help people with practical needs!

***Like Jesus, our response to people's pain needs to be practical.*** We are to have a spiritual response to need. Prayer is essential but we also need to respond with, "How can I help?" This is the Jesus Way.

James, the brother of Jesus, said that faith without works is dead. He displayed faith that was alive and active by giving, serving, and showing the fruit of the Holy Spirit in his life.

*What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds."*

James 2:14-18

Part of abiding in Jesus, sharing His thoughts and emotions, is walking in obedience by doing the good works He has prepared in advance for you to do. The Bible calls this being fruitful (John 15:5).

*Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.*

John 15:5

*For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*

Ephesians 2:10

This is what bearing much fruit means. God's not measuring fruitfulness by numbers and impressive feats. He's looking at what He alone could work through *your* acts of obedience and love. That's what carries His power! We say "yes" to the purposes of God through obedience.

One of the best tests of our obedience comes down to how we view and give money. We can't have two masters. It's either God or money (Matthew 6:24). Money represents living for this age. There's almost nothing that can't be bought if we are only living for ourselves and this life. But if we are living for Jesus and eternity, money is nothing more than a resource we use to worship, bless, and obey.

Cheerful giving is born out of this mentality. ***Cheerful givers have eternal perspective while understanding God's heart of compassion for people's practical needs.*** Be encouraged that this is something that you can grow in through practice! If you find yourself holding onto money like a lifeboat or constantly worrying over it, you can lean into Jesus in this area.

Ask God how He wants you to give. He cherishes the smallest amounts given in love (the widow's two small coins, Luke 21:1-4). Likewise, He sees our extravagant offerings (Mary and the perfume, John 12:1-3) and is moved by them. And just like the little boy who gave his lunch so that Jesus could multiply it to feed 5,000 people, He can multiply what we give. Because it's not about what we have- it's about ***giving freely to Jesus and letting Him use it for His glory*** (John 6:1-13)!

### Read Scripture:

*As you know, you Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then traveled on from Macedonia. No other church did this. Even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once. I don't say this because I want a gift from you. Rather, I want you to receive a reward for your kindness.*

Philippians 4:15-17

*Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name. And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.*

Hebrews 13:15-16

### Reflect:

God rewards our generosity in this life, not only through provision now, but through rewarding us with eternal treasure (Luke 6:38)! Contemplate what it means to store up treasure in heaven, where rust and rot can't steal or destroy. Are you living with eternity in mind? Is money just a resource to you or does it seem like the answer to all your desires? How we feel about money often reveals what we are living for.

### Take Action:

- Let's pray: *Jesus, I want to love you more than any earthly possession. I want to use all I have to love and serve you. You gave everything on the cross to bring me near to you forever. I want to live a life giving everything to you! Holy Spirit, show me how to give.*
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where He wants you to give and how He wants you to use finances for God's glory!
- You can give to those living under persecution, war, and crises [here](#). Your giving goes toward biblical resources that strengthen, encourage, and share Jesus with persecuted believers and those who have never heard of Jesus!
- Consider long-term sponsorship, bringing hope in Jesus to a people group or region of the world that is hostile to the gospel [here](#).



## An Encouraging Response to Crises: Combating Disconnection and Isolation

### You May Be Asking Yourself:

*Can we encourage people facing crises and persecution? Won't our words seem small and trite in light of everything they are going through?*

### Consider:

Today we are discussing an emotional response to those suffering. Once again, Jesus showed us what it looks like to care for the whole person. He healed bodies, taught spiritual truths, and engaged with people's emotions.

He restored the disciple Peter emotionally after He denied Jesus (John 21:15-17). He helped a stressed-out friend named Martha take a moment to consider what mattered most (Luke 10:41-42). He looked a woman caught in the act of adultery in the eyes and said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more" (John 8:1-11). He noticed people's feelings and responded to them. His responses were healing, liberating, and restorative. He saw where people were and drew near to them. No wonder the crowds and the masses loved to follow Jesus wherever He went!

But how do we reach out emotionally to those struggling? ***Our responses, filled with His Spirit living in us, can comfort, restore, and encourage just as Jesus did.*** 2 Corinthians 1:4 says that we can comfort others with the same comfort we have received from the Holy Spirit.

*All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ.*

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

This isn't normal empathy. Think back to a time when God whispered to you when you were struggling with anxiety, fear, depression, and hopelessness. That same encouragement can be "paid forward" to uplift someone else. Just as the Bible never fails to minister to people with power, so the loving words God has spoken to you in darkness can bring light to others!

When we share God-given encouragement, it does just what the word encourage implies— it imparts real courage to the trembling part of our souls. It breathes hope where there was only darkness. It whispers, "You are not alone. You are not forgotten. I will pray that you receive His strength today!"

The book of Ecclesiastes tells us that a strand of three cords is not easily broken (Ecclesiastes 4:12). Our spirits are stronger when we feel the strength and love of those standing beside us. When Satan wanted to tempt Eve, he got her alone (Genesis 3:1-5). Satan questioned God's goodness in subtle accusations, so slyly crafted to plant doubt in Eve's mind. Isolation can be a powerful weapon against us.

***Encouragement slices through that sense of being profoundly alone***, not just physically but also emotionally. The accuser says, "No one cares, no one remembers." Encouragement bellows, "You are loved; you are remembered!"



When followers of Jesus experience persecution of any kind (physical or other), it almost always is accompanied by discouragement. During the time of the New Testament church, Paul freely shares how encouraged he is by the care he receives from the churches while he is in jail.

*How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me....you have done well to share with me in my present difficulty.*

Philippians 4:10+14

We can minister encouragement that demonstrates the love and compassion of Jesus for others. That is powerful! Don't underestimate how God wants to use your words, service, and kindness to show His love to those who feel forgotten. He loves partnering with you.

### Read Scripture:

*All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ.*

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

*So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.*

1 Thessalonians 5:11

*Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.*

Hebrews 10:24

### Reflect:

Think about a time when you were discouraged. How did the Holy Spirit encourage you? What words or verses ministered hope and healing to you? Those words are a powerful part of your personal story!

### Take Action:

- You can send messages to encourage the persecuted Church [here](#). Your messages, sharing verses and words of comfort, will be sent to persecuted followers of Jesus worldwide! You can personally remind someone living under persecution that they are not alone in Jesus's Body of believers!
- Think of someone you know who is going through a hard time. Encourage them with a brief note or in person. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you an encouraging word for that person.



## A Worship Response: Declaring the Seen and Unseen Splendor of Jesus

### You May Be Asking Yourself:

*Do we grit our teeth and just barely get through suffering? Do we know how to rejoice in it, or does it turn us into grumpy complainers? Why would anyone rejoice in a crisis?*

### Consider:

*But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and he will stand upon the earth at last. And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God! I will see him for myself. Yes, I will see him with my own eyes. I am overwhelmed at the thought!*

Job 19:25-27

Job makes this sudden and surprising declaration of faith during inexplicable loss and suffering. It is astounding, confusing, and beautiful to see worship in the midst of pain. Why is this?

There is a revelation that accompanies seeing people give their lives for Jesus. It declares He is worthy! As we see the suffering so many are willing to go through because of the vision they carry in their hearts of our Savior, we realize with a jolt of hunger that we need to see Jesus more clearly! ***We, too, want a revelation of His worthiness to define how we live our lives!***

Jesus told a story comparing His Kingdom to a pearl of unimaginable worth.

*Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!*

Matthew 13:45-46

Followers of Jesus living in crisis or under persecution regularly point to that “pearl” and say, “Look! We found it! We found the One worth giving up everything else for.” Their joy even in suffering points to Jesus as a delight more excellent than all others. It doesn’t negate the pain of suffering. But it says that Jesus is worth more. He is more desirable than comfort, more beautiful than earthly gain, more satisfying than all the world could give.

*A mob quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them stripped and beaten with wooden rods. They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn’t escape. So the jailer put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks. Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening.*

Acts 16:22-25

In Bible times, the Apostle Paul and his ministry partner, Silas, singing in jail, testified to a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Their hearts, hidden in Christ, were unshaken by suffering or even the earthquake that followed! Today, we hear the stories of followers of Jesus like Ahmad. Ahmad has been arrested and beaten more than 150 times because of his faith in Christ, yet each time he spends the night in jail, he shares Jesus with his jailers. Today, though he lives in constant danger, he is unstoppable. He is one of the most joy-filled people you could ever meet.

When we hear these stories, we worship. We are confronted with the extreme value of knowing Jesus; We want to know Jesus like these brave Christians do. They are living challenges to us— giving us the example of what it looks like to give *all* of our lives to Him. Like the elders in Revelation that throw their crowns at the feet of Jesus as they worship Him, we see Jesus through the eyes of a church giving everything for Him (Revelation 4:10). ***As we see Him, we throw down our achievements, our pride, and everything else because NOTHING matters, like knowing and adoring Him.***

### Read Scripture:

*Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!*

Matthew 13:45-46

*I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith.*

Philippians 3:7-9

### Reflect:

Meditate on Jesus's worthiness. Picture all of heaven worshiping around His throne together and all of heaven and earth restored to His original design.

### Take Action:

- Take time to worship today, focusing on Jesus's worthiness.
- Does your life reflect the extreme value of knowing Jesus? Have you surrendered all of your life to Jesus? Would there be anything different about the way you are living your life?
- If you want to read the stories of persecuted Christians sharing the incomparable worth of Jesus, [visit guidelines.org](http://visitguidelines.org) and [read our impact stories](#). Most of the partners we work with around the world face the threat of persecution or live in war-torn nations facing crisis. Their faith is a precious witness that nothing compares to the joy of knowing Jesus!
- Pray this prayer: *Jesus, you are beautiful! You are worthy of all worship and love. Please give me a revelation of how worthy you are! I want to give you my life in full. I want to live in the understanding of your great worth and goodness. Fill my life with the joy of my salvation. Please help me to live in this joy even while suffering and facing crises.*

## A Bold Response to Crises: Countercultural, Inexplicable Faith!

### You May Be Asking Yourself:

*Do I boldly share Jesus with the world around me? Why are the boldest sharers of Jesus often those who have gone through suffering and persecution? Why would that make me want to share my faith in the love of Jesus even more?*

### Consider:

*And **because of my imprisonment**, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear.*

Philippians 1:14

The Philippian church, the first Christian church in Europe in the New Testament, was emboldened when they heard about Paul's imprisonment. They witnessed his arrest for preaching the gospel and saw that he didn't simply fall apart in terrible times—He was unshaken in his joy, faith, and love. As they saw him proclaiming Jesus's worth with joy, despite being in chains, they too began to declare the wonder of our incomparable King Jesus more boldly!

***Realizing that suffering, crises, and pain cannot steal our eternal hope is powerful.*** It makes us want to live for eternity. It makes the threat of loss, imprisonment, and death seem small. Paul said it this way in Romans 8:18: *Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later.*

In fact, Paul went one step further. Not only was suffering not worth comparing to the glory of eternity with Jesus, but God could use the suffering for good!

*And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ.*

Philippians 1:12-13

When we see how God can use suffering for our good and His glory we are able to give the hard things we are facing to Him, confident that He will lead us victoriously. This is what it means to trust Jesus as sheep trust their shepherd. We trust His plan and we know His ways are wonderful! When we realize this, we can't help but want to share this encouragement with others! We want to tell them about the One who anchors our souls in storms. There is nothing so worthy of our lives and so able to offer us unconditional hope. Like the Philippians did, we see Jesus sustain His followers in suffering, and it emboldens us to tell others.

After being threatened to stop talking about Jesus, Peter and John said: "*As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard*" (Acts 4:20). When we have met Jesus—seen His beauty, felt His love, encountered His goodness—there is no other message more worthy of our lives! Our mouths were made to worship and tell of His glory.

**Read Scripture:**

*And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear.*

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Philippians 1:12-14

*Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later..*

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Romans 8:18

*We love because he first loved us.*

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1 John 4:19

**Reflect:**

Meditate on the eternal glory that awaits you. Spend time reflecting on the kindness and joy of Jesus that strengthens us amid hardship.

**Take Action:**

- Do you know anything about people who are living under persecution? Engage with the persecuted in an ongoing capacity to be reminded of their faith! You can [sign up for Guidelines emails](#) or [write messages to persecuted Christians](#).
- Who can you tell about our Living Hope and unshakeable King, Jesus? Consider who in your life you want to engage in conversation with boldly. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you and give you the words!
- If this Bible study has encouraged you, consider sharing it with others or hosting a Bible study in your home, going through the lessons over several weeks. Remembering Sabbath in All Our Responses: Sustainable Faith and Love



## Remembering Sabbath in All Our Responses Sustainable Faith and Love

### You May Be Asking Yourself:

*I'm exhausted from my own life! How can I engage with need? How does Jesus expect me to have the capacity to respond?*

### Consider:

*There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.*

Hebrews 4:9-10

Our ability to respond to crises comes from a concept found in Scripture called Sabbath. Sabbath means "to rest."

Why is Sabbath important when discussing our responses to crises? Because, when living in a world in crisis, we can quickly become burnt out, numb, and exhausted. Especially when we are doing it in our own strength as finite humans. We need Sabbath. ***We need to rest as we encounter God and let him minister wholeness to our souls, minds, and bodies.*** It's in Sabbath rest that we learn to trust God more deeply. We trust him with our work and with our rest. Our confidence is not in our ability to "do." Our confidence is in Him.

God gave us the model of Sabbath because it's part of our partnership and intimacy with him. Being able to rest with Him, come to Him when we are weary, and receive from Him shows, not only our limits- it also shows trust and love. This is why God made the Sabbath. It's not meant to be a religious obligation. Jesus said that Sabbath was for man, not man for Sabbath.

*Then Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath.*

Mark 2:27

This is why he healed and restored and did miracles even on the day of rest— because it's who He is: the God who ministers to His people's real, gritty needs on Sabbath. He takes tired hearts, broken bodies, weary souls, and anxious minds and ministers love and peace— wholeness!

If we are going to say "yes" to the work God is calling us to, responding to a world in crisis with faith and love, then we also need to say "yes" to the rest He calls us to.

When Jesus's disciples returned from performing mighty miracles in His name, Jesus said let's draw away from the crowds for a while and go to a quiet place (Mark 6:30-32). He knew when to withdraw to rest with His Father, even while full of compassion for His beloved people. Just as God modeled rest for us after creation, Jesus was modeling the balance of Sabbath in the midst of being sent to a world full of pain and need. Jesus drew away from the crowds to pray, experiencing joy and fellowship with His Father, that He allowed to guide Him in everything. That's God's model for ministering to a world in desperate need!

When we say “yes” to allowing God to minister to us, we can give out of an overflowing heart. In his book, *Get Back Your Life*, John Eldredge talks about the need to “benevolently detach” sometimes from crises and demand to tend to our hearts. We can’t stay in crisis mode 24/7, and we’re not supposed to. While living on mission, God has also told us His will is for us to withdraw from work and endless demands to recharge regularly.

Part of this rest is bringing to God our burdens and pain. If ministry or trauma has worn you down, take Sabbath rest and bring that to Jesus. If need be, seek support. Remember, God wants to minister to you! Living vulnerably before God and receiving from Him according to our needs allows us to give that same comfort and ministry to others. If you haven’t received from God in rest, you won’t have something to offer.

The humility of rest prepares us for fruitful ministry, authentic connections, and overflowing hearts of faith and love. And that is exactly what a world in crisis needs. It’s what *YOU* need too. In all your biblical responses to crises, persecution, and pain, don’t forget Sabbath. It’s the only way you can live out the other responses effectively for a lifetime. ***Making time for regular rest is an investment in sustainably loving God and others.***

### Read Scripture:

*The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught. Then Jesus said, “Let’s go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.” He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn’t even have time to eat. So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone.*

Mark 6:30-32

*Then Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath!”*

Mark 2:27-28

*But despite Jesus’ instructions, the report of his power spread even faster, and vast crowds came to hear him preach and to be healed of their diseases. But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.*

Luke 5:15-16

### Reflect:

Reflect on Jesus resting in the above Bible passages. Many people feel guilt when resting because they don’t believe it’s godly or productive. Examine if you struggle with those types of thoughts. Ask Jesus to show you the joy and peace of rest.

### Action Steps:

- Do you make time to regularly rest and recharge so that you can engage with needs? Do you acknowledge your need for rest?
- Sabbath is a weekly occurrence, meaning you need regular rest. How are you setting up a structure to ensure you have regular days to recharge and be rejuvenated?



- The Bible talks about broken jars (Jeremiah 2:13), things that look like they can refresh us with water but don't. Make sure what you do in your rest time is ministering wholeness to your soul. Time with God, in nature, and with loved ones are powerful ways to ensure you're getting the rest you need.
- During your rest, tell God everything causing you anxiety and fear, worry and sadness. You can write them out, speak them or create something that reflects them. Then, give them over to Him and trust Him with them.
- [Sign up for Guidelines devotionals](#) for daily reminders to take quiet time in Bible study and prayer.

\*If you're experiencing a weariness that doesn't go away with rest, consider if you need to seek support. Counseling, evaluating what in our life is constantly draining/discouraging us, and making changes to address trauma might be necessary.



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