

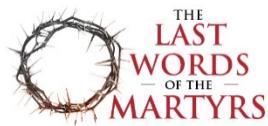
THE
**LAST
WORDS**
— OF THE —
MARTYRS

**100% OF
PROFITS**
SUPPORT THE
FAMILIES OF
MARTYRS

STUDY GUIDE

A Study Guide to Learn the Life-Changing
Lessons of Today's Christian Martyrs
and the Persecuted Church

JEFF KING
President of International Christian Concern

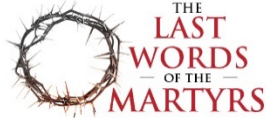


The Last Words of the Martyrs: Study Guide

Studying the life-Changing Stories from Persecuted Believers that Paid the Ultimate Price

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How to Use this Study Guide

Most Christians who come into contact with the persecuted are transformed and forever changed.

Nowhere else in the world do you see such complete devotion to the Lord and such high cost. They simply show us what the Church can and should be.

In the Lord's Prayer, all of the singular pronouns refer to God and all of the plural pronouns refer to mankind ("Our Father who is in heaven" ... "Thy will be done"). It is written this way to demonstrate that there is only one God and to show that we were never intended to follow Him alone.

In a Christian community we are wiser and stronger. We are more resilient together than we are alone. For that reason, ICC is offering a free copy of *The Last Words of the Martyrs: Study Guide*. Each of the ten sessions includes questions to facilitate group conversation, uncover significant truths and answer pressing questions.

Persecution may have taught our Christian brothers and sisters some significant lessons; but are these lessons relevant to us, in our time, in our culture and in the society we live in? We invite your Christian community to make that determination for itself.

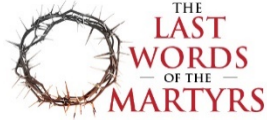


Table of Contents

Small Group Discussion	<i>Session #1</i>	5
Small Group Discussion	<i>Session #2</i>	7
Small Group Discussion	<i>Session #3</i>	9
Small Group Discussion	<i>Session #4</i>	11
Small Group Discussion	<i>Session #5</i>	13
Small Group Discussion	<i>Session #6</i>	15
Small Group Discussion	<i>Session #7</i>	17
Small Group Discussion	<i>Session #8</i>	20
Small Group Discussion	<i>Session #9</i>	22
Small Group Discussion	<i>Session #10</i>	24

Small Group Discussion *Session #1*

Reading: (30 pages)	<i>Book Page</i>
Foreword by Francis Chan.....	13
Introduction: The Journey Begins.....	21
1. A Secret Whispered	27
2. The Light of a New World.....	37

Foreword by Francis Chan13

1. Francis Chan shares the account of several South Korean missionaries who were captured by the Taliban in Afghanistan. For those who survived and were released, what did they feel afterwards?
2. Why was the experience so powerful for them?
3. Do you think it is necessary to be in prison – or in a very difficult situation –to grow close to Jesus and feel His presence?
4. Have you ever felt the presence of Jesus in a deep way like that?
5. Jeff (Francis??) says that, “Dealing with persecution correctly is a difficult task for Christians.” (page 17) Do you think that believers have a hard time understanding persecution? Why? What does Jeff say is the reason?

Introduction: The Journey Begins21

1. What did you think about the miraculous way Jeff was led to the ministry?
2. This chapter makes the argument that we are fighting a war that cannot be won on this side of heaven. (page 23) What is the war he is writing about? Why do you agree, or disagree, with his assertion that this war can’t be won and is a permanent reality?
3. Jeff wrote that he finds that God’s footsteps are often hidden by clouds that surround the mountain, and rarely lift. (page 24) Why doesn’t God make Christian life-path easier? Why is it so hard to discern His will most of the time?

A Secret Whispered27

1. On page 27, Jeff describes his view of the Christian life in Pakistan:

You have an underlying feeling of vulnerability in the back of your mind, and you are keenly aware that there could be someone hiding in the shadows who would be happy to drag you away and do you great harm.

What does it do to a person to live in a state of constant vulnerability?

2. Shahbaz knew that one day he would be killed by the Islamic extremists, yet he continued his ministry (page 29). What does it take for us to have Shahbaz's kind of dedication and determination? Why do you think he never emigrated to the west, to safety?
3. Did the stories of Dwight Moody or Colleen touch you? Discuss how.
4. Jeff writes that he is struck by the lack of focus and direction people in lives of people in the West (page 32) What do you think Jeff means by "unmoored"? Do you agree or disagree with his assertion?
5. Jeff speaks of the connection between the lack of persecution in the West and a weak church. Discuss that point.
6. Read this section on page 31 and discuss it:

The biggest problem today is that it is hard to find any wounds or scars in most Christians. Most of us do not have any wounds, scars, marks of death, or experiences of the cross. The biggest problem today is that it is hard to find any wounds or scars in most Christians. Most of us do not have any wounds, scars, marks of death, or experiences of the cross.

The Light of a New World.....37

1. What is the role of suffering in a relationship with Jesus Christ? What can we learn from suffering?
2. Do you think that Susanne Geske was right in her response to the men who brutally murdered her husband? Did she have a "right" to not forgive them?
3. After Tilmann was murdered, Susanne went on national TV and forgave her husband's killers. One of Turkey's most famous journalists said:

She said in one sentence what 1000 missionaries in 1000 years could never do (page 41).

4. Why did her forgiveness of her husband’s killers have such a profound effect on those watching in Turkey?

Small Group Discussion *Session #2*

Reading:

Book Page

3. Sometimes, Living is Harder than Dying47
4. Restoration57
5. The Land of the Living65

Conversation:

Before we beginning this session’s topics, do you have any thoughts or questions about what we discussed last session?

Sometimes, Living is Harder than Dying.....47

1. How did Amisha and Jono’s story affect you?
2. How did you feel about Jono’s forgiveness of Amisha for marrying a Muslim man? How is this akin to God’s reconciliation with us?
3. After reading Amisha and Jono’s story, how does it change your perception of your persecuted brothers and sisters?
4. On page 53, the author said “from death comes life.” Do you agree? When has this been true in your life?

Restoration57

1. How did the story of Pastor Mukhtar affect you?
2. In the Western Church, there can be the perception that persecuted Christians are surrounded by a “Holy Spirit bubble,” which protects them and allows them to survive painful torture unscathed. Why do you agree, or disagree, that this is true?
3. As you read about Jeff’s experience with Mrs. Mukhtar, what do you think about Jeff deliberately ignoring “a cultural boundary” (page 61)?

4. God tells us to weep with those who weep. Discuss why you think He tells us this. Why does it touch so deeply those who are suffering?
5. How is carrying the pain of our persecuted brothers and sisters a “restorative blessing” to the Western church (page 63)?
6. This section concludes with the charge to make the pain of the persecuted our own. How does the image of being part of “the body of Christ,” shape your understanding of Jeff’s statement?

The Land of the Living65

1. How did Raad’s story affect you?
2. Jeff finds that even his children could come before God in his heart. Is this right or wrong? Did Jesus touch on this subject?
3. Have you had the same struggle in your life?
4. Are you able to talk about your own “God-substitutes?” Talk about your struggle to let go of your own idols.
5. Read and discuss this passage from page 65:

God is calling us to let go of our earthly treasures and cling to Him. It’s not easy to make the Lord our consummate treasure, and it’s almost impossible to keep Him there.

6. Read and discuss this passage from page 66:

In so much of life, I have to let go and give to God what is truly His and accept anew that I am only stewarding what has been loaned to me.

7. Read and discuss this passage from page 67:

The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

Small Group Discussion *Session #3*

Reading:

	<i>Book Page</i>
6. A Great Light	73
7. A Better Country	79
8. In the Fiery Furnace	87
9. Beauty from Ashes	95

Conversation:

Before we beginning this session's topics, do you have any thoughts or questions about what we discussed last session?

A Great Light73

1. How did Abraham and Birtukan's story affect you?
2. This chapter states that the Western church is under attack by its deadliest foes: ease, materialism, worldliness, and apathy (Page 74). What do you think?
3. On page 72, the author states, "The great irony of being in Satan's crosshairs is that persecution and martyrdom for loving Jesus ends up being a great gift to the Church!"

What does he mean?

4. How does this verse tie into the chapter?

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

John 1:5:

5. How did God "redeem" Abraham's murder and Birtukan's suffering? What Biblical stories can you remember where God brought redemption from a story of pain?

A Better Country79

1. How did Chris Leggett's story affect you?
2. Discuss what you think the author means by the following quote found on page 80:

The concepts of "home" and "citizenship" are reoccurring themes in scripture. Our Lord continually returns to these themes to wake us up and make us think properly

about our lives.

3. Following the call of God, Chris and his wife moved their family, including four young children, to Mauritania in northwest Africa. What is your reaction to Chris Leggett moving his family, including four young children, into a dangerous situation?
4. To many, it seems that the death of Chris Leggett came at a very inadequate time. When has God produced an unexpected event that came at the “wrong” time in your life?
5. Chris’s prayer was that others would see Christ, and Christ alone, through his life. What practical steps can we take so that when people see our lives they see Christ?

In the Fiery Furnace87

1. How did Shehzad and Shama’s story affect you?
2. Discuss the following quote from Polycarp one of the great martyrs of the early church (page 89).

Eighty-six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme the King who saved me... Hear my confession: I am a Christian! You threaten me with a fire that burns for a moment and is soon extinguished, for you know nothing of the judgement to come, and the fire of eternal punishment reserved for the wicked. But why do you delay? Do what you will.

3. This author says on page 88 that some Western Christians think that God doesn’t let His children suffer, but that His plan for them is instead for personal wealth and blessing. Have you encountered this idea in your own church or community? Do you think it reflects a Biblical perspective?
4. Jeff says that we are still living on a rock controlled by Satan (page 92). How much power has God given Satan on this earth and why?

Beauty from Ashes95

1. In John 11, Jesus wept with Mary over the death of her brother Lazarus right before he went to the place of the tomb and raise Lazarus from the dead. Why would Jesus weep, if he knew he could, and was going to raise Lazarus from the dead?
2. What implications does this passage have for the persecuted church?

3. After reading the following passage from page 96, discuss why the persecuted church is not as susceptible to being trapped by the “why” questions in relation to our suffering.

These questions tend to be asked by the free and Western Church. It's not that the persecuted are immune to the questions, but the Biblical perspective of life tends to be clearer to the persecuted than the Western church.

4. Read the following passage and discuss the implications of Jesus weeping over Martha and Mary's pain.

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled... (and) Jesus wept.

But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," he said.

Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

John 11:33-44 (NIV)

Small Group Discussion Session #4

Reading:

	<i>Book Page</i>
10. Tell Them I Died Well	105
11. Held	123
12. Greater Love	133

Conversation:

Before we beginning this session’s topics, do you have any thoughts or questions about what we discussed last session?

Tell Them I Died Well105

1. How did Pastor Ohji’s story affect you?
2. The word “martyr” is derived from the Greek word *martyras*, which means witness (page 104). It is the same word that Jesus uses in Acts when He tells His disciples that the Holy Spirit will empower them to be witnesses throughout the entire world. How does this affect how you think of being a “witness” for Jesus?
3. When given the chance to recant his Christian faith and convert to Islam, Pastor Ohji looked at the other captives and said, “Tell my family I died well.” What does Western culture say that it means to die well? What does the Bible say that it means to die well? What was Pastor Ohji’s message to his family?

Held123

1. How did Jowaneh’s story affect you?
2. The book of Job is an account of a man who endured the loss of his children, his wealth and his home – all in the same day. Yet despite his loss, he remained steadfast in the midst of crisis. How is Jowaneh’s story like Job’s? In Jowaneh’s situation, how would you have responded?
3. (page 128) Why do you agree, or disagree, that dwelling on the “why?” is fruitless?
4. Read and discuss the first four paragraphs after “The Promise” on page 129.

Greater Love133

1. How did Akash and Sikander’s story affect you?
2. How did Akash and Sikandar’s actions exemplify God’s love? How does this stand in sharp contrast to the actions of the Muslim terrorists?
3. How does it contrast the difference between Christianity and Islam?
4. Read and discuss the quote from Akash’s mother on page 136.

5. Do we, as Christians, mourn the (eternal) fate of the terrorists or celebrate their fate?

Small Group Discussion *Session #5*

Reading:

Book Page

13. Finding Life in the Graveyard of Hope	141
14. The Hammer, The File, and the Furnace	149
15. We Don't Fear Anymore	155

Conversation:

Before we beginning this session's topics, do you have any thoughts or questions about what we discussed last session?

Finding Life in The Graveyard of Hope141

4. Talk about this chapter. How did it affect you?
5. Read the following passages and answer the associated questions.

"I was (let out of prison for a time) because of my (dying) father (but) I'm overjoyed because my [time in prison] has forever changed my parents. During these past days, while I have been home, my parents have professed their faith in Jesus." (page 145)

6. Talk about this passage and the incongruity of serving a life sentence but it leading to Gurunath being "overjoyed."

When Gurunath found himself in prison, all of the distractions and spiritual junk food were stripped away. Only then did Jesus become his daily bread and water. (page 146)

7. Would you willingly go through persecution or even prison (and torture) to have a closer relationship with Christ?

"This is God's strategy and His way. We will go through suffering in this life – we can't avoid it. Everything in our human nature urges us to flee our pain and suffering. But the very thing you think is killing you can be what He wants to use to bring you to a place you could never get to without it" (page 147).

8. Discuss this passage

The Hammer, The File, and the Furnace141

1. Talk about this chapter. How did it affect you?
2. Read the following passages:

“God is the one who makes known our story. God is great for us and I testify to His goodness!” (page 151)

3. How do you feel about Aleymatu’s declaration?
4. When suffering through emotional or physical pain, how can continue to praise and testify to God’s grace?

“If you want to (find eternal life) give away all your treasure and then, come, follow Me.” Matthew 19:21

5. Talk about what Jesus was saying and what was he trying to do with the rich young ruler.

A. W. Tozer, in speaking of Rutherford said, “It is necessary for God to use the hammers, the file, and the furnace in His holy work of preparing a saint for true sainthood. It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply.” (page 153)

6. How do you feel about Tozer’s conclusion?

We Don’t Fear Anymore141

1. Read the following passages and answer the associated questions.

The persecuted are at the front lines of this war: the longest running and most violent battle ever waged. (page 156)

2. How does this statement change how you think of persecuted Christians?

Two years after the attack, the congregation had dwindled to almost nothing – from 120 to 19 members. Most of the original church members were understandably too afraid to return to their church. Others left Mombasa, seeking safer pastures. (page 158)

3. Would you be willing to return to a church where you had been attacked and witnessed the massacre of your brothers and sisters?

4. How would it change your experience of Church? How would you cope?

“[After the attack] God inserted into me a spirit of courage,” He told ICC. “After your church gets shot up, you don’t fear anymore and you stop caring [about the danger]. “We have been through a lot, but we don’t fear anymore... There is nothing human beings can do to you.” (page 158)

5. If you experienced what Pastor Kevin did, would you respond the same way he does?

When (Josiah) heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes. “Great is the Lord’s anger that burns against us because those who have gone before us have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with (God’s laws).” (page 159)

6. Think about Josiah’s response. What emotion(s) was he feeling?

7. What was he horrified about? What did he fear?

8. How should we as Christians respond to the realization our nation (our neighbors) are not obeying the scriptures?

9. Talk about what you really want for our country? Do we care more about our nation’s obedience to the scripture or the fact that are neighbors are lost and will suffer judgment? Is either more important?

Small Group Discussion Session #6

Reading:

Book Page

16. The Church as it Should Be163

Conversation:

Before we beginning this session’s topics, do you have any thoughts or questions about what we discussed last session?

1. Talk about this chapter. How did it affect you?

2. Read the following passages and answer the associated questions.

The Cuban Church was crushed and broken by intense persecution, and that has made all the difference. (page 165)

3. What “difference” did persecution make in the Cuban church?

“What was left of the church were people who literally could not live without Jesus. (page 165)

4. How are people’s day to day lives different if they “literally cannot live without Jesus?”

This little rag-tag band did the only thing they knew to do: they prayed regularly, and they worked tirelessly—all while suffering interrogations, beatings, torture, prison time, and murder. This was the price of admission to the club of Jesus. (page 165)

5. If “that was the price of admission” to your church, what would the attendance be?

We began to sleep at the church so that we could minister most of the time. (page 166)

6. How does this attitude toward ministry differ from what we normally see?

The government’s imprisonments, torture, and murder of God’s pastors and sheep produced a church so pure and so hungry for God that it not only survived but burned incredibly bright, lighting up the twilight-grey Communist landscape. (page 167)

7. Do American Christians want this type of church?

8. Are we willing to pay the price to get it if it means “imprisonments, torture, and murder of God’s pastors”?

I asked them what the Chinese church would be like without persecution. To paraphrase, they said that the Chinese church would be a mile wide but an inch deep. (pages 167-168)

Does that describe any churches you know?

While they didn’t enjoy it, they considered it a gift from God as it served to keep the Church pure. (page 168)

9. Do we consider not having to endure persecution in the West as a gift?

Astoundingly, their main concern for the next generation of leaders was that they hadn't been hunted down, imprisoned for years, tortured, and murdered like their generation had been. (page 168)

- 10. What is your response to the Chinese Christians?
- 11. What are some ways to learn from their examples of faith and sacrifice without going through their same experiences?
- 12. What would have to happen for you to consider persecution a “gift from God”?

Experience taught them that persecution produces a deep and powerful faith. (page 168)

- 13. Do you have any personal experience of persecution that has taught you any lessons?

The KGB came to an obvious conclusion: where there was a cost to being a Christian, the Church would deepen and spread. (page 169)

- 14. Do you agree with the KGB's conclusion that suffering caused the church to grow?
- 15. When have you experienced this personally?

The obvious counterpoint to the effect of persecution is the effect of wealth and ease on the Church. Wherever there is ease and wealth, the Church might grow, but it will tend to be wide and shallow, lacking vitality and power. (page 169)

- 16. Will the American church desire deep growth if it means sacrificing wealth and ease?
- 17. What about if it means suffering persecution?

Small Group Discussion Session #7

Reading:

17. The Real Question171

Book Page

Conversation:

Before we beginning this session's topics, do you have any thoughts or questions about what we discussed last session?

1. Talk about this chapter. How did it affect you?
2. Read the following passages:

As I visited and served the persecuted Church, I would meet amazing Christians that had undergone intense persecution as well as discover national church movements that had blossomed under persecution. Along the journey, I sensed a huge gulf between Western Christianity (or my Christianity) and the Christianity that they were living out. (page 172)

3. Do you agree that there is a "huge gulf" between Western Christianity and the Christianity of persecuted Christians?
4. What is this gulf? Talk about the differences between the free and the persecuted Church.
5. What have you seen or experienced that form your decision?

Their message was always fleeting though as if they were rushing off to an important appointment and only had a minute to share. I saw their lips moving but never could never quite understand the whisper. The message was obviously of great importance to them, but it always remained just below the threshold of comprehension. (page 172)

6. What is the author speaking of here?
7. Why was it so hard for the author to grasp the lesson of the martyrs?

The martyr's whispered secret answers the question – what does it mean to truly walk with God and be a Christian? (page 172)

8. How would you respond to the question: "What does it mean to truly walk with God and be a mature Christian?"

When I look at the pictures we took then, I am struck by his steadiness and courage – despite the fact that he knew that his earthly journey was ending. (page 173)

9. What would it take for you to have "steadiness and courage" while expecting to be murdered for your faith?

For years, I accepted the martyrdom of believers like Shahbaz and others I've introduced you to in this book as the natural endpoint of courageous soldiers fighting on the front lines of the longest, greatest war ever fought. (page 173)

10. The author says the martyrdom of the believers mentioned was due to more than their being “courageous or loyal soldiers. What do you think he’s pointing to?

Yet, a startling pattern began to emerge in story after story of martyrdom that I hadn’t focused on before. In most cases, the martyr was given a choice to live at the moment of execution. The cost to continue living is surprisingly small in the world’s eyes, for all it takes is three little words, as mentioned in Kevin’s story: “I deny Jesus.” (page 173)

11. Given that choice what would your response be?

Most martyrs are regular people like you and me and I’m sure they weigh their options and argue back and forth within and ask themselves, “Should I just say the words and go free?” (page 173)

12. In such an extreme scenario, wouldn’t God forgive your denial?

“Would I have the courage to stay true to my Lord, even though it would cost me everything?” (pages 173-174)

13. Have you asked yourself this question?

14. What is your answer?

The real question was whether I would live like the martyr. (page 174)

15. Do you agree this is the “real question?”

16. As you have read accounts of martyrs throughout the book, what have you seen as being the key aspect(s) of living like a martyr?

17. If so, how would you answer it?

The persecuted Christian over time arrives in a state of complete depletion. (page 174)

18. Do Western Christians have to be get to “a state of complete depletion” to see follow Christ?

The value of Jesus is supremely magnified within these Christians, so that He truly becomes THE treasure of their life. He is not just a King to be worshipped and obeyed—He’s their everything, the one they love and need above all else. (page 175)

19. What is the difference between Jesus being “your king” and your “treasure”?

Joseph went from a comfortable existence as the beloved son of a wealthy man to the humiliations of slavery and prison. Moses was driven from a privileged position in the Egyptian court to a humble life as a shepherd in exile. David’s path led him from being son-in-law and favorite of King Saul to being hunted by Saul in the desert for a decade. (page 175)

20. Why do you think God got put Joseph, Moses and David through major trials before he used them?

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him. Philippians 3:7-9 (ESV)

21. What does it take for a Christian to get to this point in their spiritual journey?

Look at Paul's letters and David's psalms, and you will encounter men who were well-acquainted with pain and exhaustion. After years of suffering, they became utterly dependent on God and drew near to Him. (page 176)

22. Do we have to go through “years of suffering” to become “utterly dependent on God?”

23. What else causes us to become more dependent?

He wants you to experience Him in the deepest, most abiding, and transforming way, as the persecuted or the martyr does. And there is really only one way to get there. Unfortunately, it's by your death. (page 177)

24. What is your reaction to this bold statement?

25. What do you think the author means?

Small Group Discussion Session #8

Reading:

Book Page

18. Impregnable179

Conversation:

Before we beginning this session's topics, do you have any thoughts or questions about what we discussed last session?

1. Talk about this chapter. How did it affect you?

2. Read the following passage:

The biggest problem we have today is that Christians don't have any wounds or scars, marks of death, or experiences of the cross. Even though we have been saved and truly have Christ's life in us, this life has no way to come out. The reason is not that our behavior is too poor or too good. The problem is that we (you and I) are too

whole. We are impregnable. Because we have no wounds, Christ has no way to be released from within us. –Watchman Lee (page 180)

3. What is the downside of Christians not having “scars” or “marks of death?”
4. Watchman Nee said “Christ’s life has no way to come out” (of us). Talk about this. What does he mean?
5. The chapter explored the concept of human self-sufficiency. What makes self-sufficiency detrimental in the lives of believers? How can believers overcome the problem of self-sufficiency?
6. The chapter discusses the tendency of Western Christians to view Jesus as a means to secure our salvation, and not the king of their lives from that point forward. How has this been true in your life?

After long years of watching the persecuted Church and comparing what I saw with Scripture, I would say that our core problem as Christians isn’t our long list of sins and personal weaknesses. While God is definitely committed to our sanctification, He wants to do a lot more than getting you to sin less. He’s concerned about a much deeper problem. Two related and deadly cancers have been growing in your heart and in mine since the day we were born, and they will slowly strangle the LIFE out of us if we let them. (page 180)

7. What is the deeper problem the author references? Talk about it.
8. What are the “two cancers?”
9. How can these cancers “strangle the life out of us?”
10. What makes self-sufficiency so dangerous?
11. What is the author’s definition of an idol?

“Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God” Matthew 19:24 (ESV).

12. Matthew 19 says that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into heaven. How can an idol like wealth be so cancerous in our life that it prevents us from getting into heaven?

13. What sort of protections has God given us to avoid this from happening in our hearts?
14. What is the ultimate problem with both idolatry and the concept of human self-sufficiency?
15. What “good” things have you come to understand could become an idol in your own life?

Small Group Discussion *Session #9*

Reading:

Book Page

19. The Whisper Finally Heard187

Conversation:

Before we beginning this session’s topics, do you have any thoughts or questions about what we discussed last session?

1. Talk about this chapter. How did it affect you?
2. Read the following passage:

“Anyone who serves God will discover sooner or later that the great hindrance to his work is not others but himself. He will see that the outer man won’t submit to the Spirit’s control and this renders him incapable of obeying God’s highest commands”
–Watchman Lee

3. Do you agree with this quote?
4. Talk about the “outer man won’t submit to the Spirit’s control” in your life.
5. How have you been a “hindrance to God’s work?”

The Lord destroys our outer man either gradually or suddenly. It would seem the Lord usually spends several years upon us before He can accomplish this work of destruction.”

The breaking process is unique for everyone. For some, it may be quick, through torture or imprisonment. For others, it may be gradual, through the struggles of life.

6. How do you feel about the Lord being involved in the destruction of part of us?

7. What is the connection between “breaking” and surrender?

In the kingdom of heaven, the opposite is true. Incredibly, God is actually attracted to your weakness and brokenness. In fact, He absolutely needs your brokenness to bring you to life.

8. Why do you agree, or disagree, with this statement?
9. What practical steps can you take to surrender your life to God and live in full dependence on him? It may be helpful to make a list or prayerfully ask God to reveal the areas in your life that you need to surrender to Him.

Human beings value strength, pride, and confidence. We despise weakness and brokenness and cast broken things into the trash. At best, we pity weak and broken humans; at worst, we treat them as things to be used, run over, and crushed. How is that opposite in the Kingdom of Heaven?

10. Do you agree that God absolutely needs your brokenness to bring you to life?
11. Talk about the natural conflict that God needs our brokenness and yet we value strength and self-reliance.
12. Are you willing to humble yourself and unveil your weakness and brokenness if God would use it to encourage and strengthen others?

“The concept of a cistern is lost on most western Christians because e don’t live in desert climates. A cistern is a holding tank for rainwater that falls off your roof in the rainy season. It is collected and held underground to be used during long, dry seasons. A cistern is the key to your survival in a desert climate.”

13. The concept of a cistern as a life-giving pool of fresh water is lost on most western Christians because we don’t live in desert climates (page 192). How does this metaphor apply itself in the life of a Christian?
14. How does it apply in your own life?
15. What does it mean for you to have your cistern filled?
16. How do you get there?

The martyr stands as a spiritual lamppost, burning bright in this world of deep, deep darkness. Standing at the threshold of the portal to the next life, they are waving to you and calling out to you to follow them. The martyr isn’t calling you to courageously sacrifice your physical life in the moment of decision. No, the martyr calls you to die to your old way of life—to live as the martyr learns to live. (Page 194)

17. Does this passage touch you? Talk about it.
18. What is the martyr's message and challenge to you?
19. What is the whisper of the martyr? Discuss it.

Small Group Discussion Session #10

Reading:

Book Page

20. From King to Treasure197

Conversation:

Before we beginning this session's topics, do you have any thoughts or questions about what we discussed last session?

1. Talk about this chapter. How did it affect you?
2. Read the following passages:

First, as Christians, we need to reframe in our minds how to deal with pain and suffering in our lives. As human beings, our gut reaction to all pain is to fight, to pull back or to flee. Yet, I've shown you that the Lord is wanting to use the pain in your life to move you to a place of real closeness and dependence on Him. (page 198)

3. So what is the answer? We instinctively flee from pain and yet God needs it. What do we need to do?

This last stage of transformation in your walk with Jesus, from living with Jesus as King to living with Jesus as your highest treasure, is very subtle. Nevertheless, this is the end of the life-journey that the Lord Jesus is taking you on. (page 207)

4. Would you agree with this book's conclusion that the final stage for a mature Christian is to make Christ his treasure, not just his Lord?

This "treasure" stage in your walk is a plot of land, captured at high cost (usually through pain and suffering) and easily lost to our "outer man." We have to fight daily to live in this space, but this is your calling! (page 200)

5. What is "the treasure stage of your life?"

6. What does the author mean when he says “this plot of land . . . is easily lost to our outer man?” How can we lose our “treasure” to our “outer man”?

7. Do you identify with the rich young ruler and/or the martyr?

One of the great dangers of the West is the constant urge to be satisfied with a life of comfort and success. It becomes difficult to let go of our earthly treasures, and our human self-sufficiency. Pg?

8. What is dangerous about living “a comfortable and successful life”?

Jesus has asked me to give up my highest treasures more than once. When I first started seeking the Lord, I bargained with Him for salvation for years—just like the rich young ruler. Looking back, I realize that I was seeking a trade that I could live with. He sat and waited me out... for years! He waited patiently until I was finally ready to trade everything – to give Him my whole life in return for salvation.

For years I grasped that false “treasure” and offered Him numerous lesser things. But He stood His ground and waited until I was ready to give all. Over time, the stakes became higher for me because I realized that God not only wanted all of my “treasure,” but also my life! He wanted me to die!

It is truly frightening for the non-believer who doesn’t know the Lord and has never experienced His overwhelming love and generosity to be asked to die. (page 204)

9. Can you relate to this passage?

10. What does it mean to be a Christian?

11. Have you given Him everything in your life?

12. Talk about your journey to becoming a son or daughter of God.

This last stage of transformation in your walk with Jesus, from living with Jesus as King to living with Jesus as your highest treasure, is very subtle. Nevertheless, this is the end of the life journey that the Lord Jesus is taking you on. I’ve seen it happen in the lives of the persecuted and the martyrs, in the Scriptures, and in my own heart.

The land where Jesus exists as your highest treasure is located in the high mountains of our journey. I don’t dwell in this land naturally, certainly never long enough to make a home there.

It’s a place on the edge of a mountain, where I have a little cabin that I am only able to visit from time to time. (page 207)

13. Talk about this passage.

14. Do you agree this is where the Lord is taking you?
15. What will it take to get you there?
16. Looking back on the journey you began when you picked up this book, talk about how it has changed you.
17. As you conclude this study, what are your thoughts now on how you can personally do more than just remember the persecuted?