

**Community Group Discussion Questions**  
**RENEWING THE CHURCH’S MISSION – NO. 3**  
**“Renewing Our Faith” – Revelation 2:8-11**

**Theme:** *Jesus gives us 5 action steps to help us face suffering and remain faithful!*

If we could ask Jesus Christ for His assessment of the church today, one wonders what He would say. In certain respects, we do not have to guess at His answer, because the needs of the church are essentially the same in every generation. Revelation chapters 2 and 3 contain letters sent by Jesus Christ to seven churches in the Roman Province of Asia (western Turkey). These churches had a variety of needs. One such need was to remain faithful in the midst of suffering.

No matter how short or long our lives, each of us will experience some degree of affliction. How do we handle it? The letter that Jesus wrote to the church at Smyrna reveals five down-to-earth answers.

**Gathering Together (Icebreaker)**

What is your favorite Bible story describing courage in difficult times?

**Growing Together (Truth/Equipping)**

Read Revelation 2:8-11:

1. Why do you suppose the Lord allows losses, heartaches and difficulties to come our way? See 2 Corinthians 1:3-11 and James 1:2-4.
2. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus knows from personal experience what it’s like to suffer and also knows every detail about our difficult life experiences?
3. Using the chart below, discuss how each of the 7 characteristics of Jesus helps us to trust Him during difficult times. Is there one that stands out as particularly helpful for you right now?

<b>7 Reasons for Trusting Christ in Our Suffering</b>	
<b>Jesus is...</b>	<b>Biblical Support</b>
1. Eternal	“These are the words of Him who is the <b>First</b> and the

	<b>Last.”</b>
2. Victorious	“These are the words of Him ...who died and came to life again.”
3. All-Knowing	“I know...I know....”
4. All-Wise	“I know your poverty--yet you are rich!”
5. Sovereign	“The devil will put <b>some</b> of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for <b>ten days.</b> ”
6. Purposeful	“The devil will put some of you in prison to <b>test</b> you.”
7. Generous	“I will give you the crown of life.”

4. In what 4 ways were Christians in Smyrna suffering? See vs.9 and 10. Of these 4, which ones tend to be true for American Christians? Do you believe that the persecution of Christians in the west will increase? Why or why not?
5. What is the most challenging form of persecution you have experienced or seen aimed at other Christians? See 1 Peter 4:3-4; Hebrews 10:33-34.
6. Review the 5 action steps mentioned in this passage (and in the sermon) for dealing with suffering. Which of these did you find particularly helpful? Why?

**Getting Real Together (Accessibility)**

1. What is your Christian faith costing you?
2. What helped you to deal with a significant difficulty in your life?
3. How did the video story about 10-year-old Myriam is from Mosul, Iraq, impact you? What lesson did you learn from her response to suffering?
4. If a friend of yours was going through a difficult experience and looked to you for encouragement, what would you say based on this letter from Jesus to a suffering church?

**Praying Together (Supplication)**

1. Pray that when the inevitable difficulty comes because of your faith in Jesus, that, rather than backing down or retreating, you will demonstrate courage and compassion. Pray that the promise of Jesus regarding your heavenly reward will be of encouragement to you. Pray for the persecuted church in other countries, your brothers and sisters in Christ in Iraq, Iran, Syria and other places, that the Lord will sustain and comfort them.