



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

the
DNA
of a
PERSECUTED
CHRISTIAN

OUR INHERITED STRANDS
OF IDENTITY FROM CHRIST



HUMBLING OURSELVES BEFORE GOD

"Through [Jesus] we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." Romans 5:2-4

**SMALL GROUP
INSPIRATIONAL GUIDE**

ISSUE THREE



HUMBLING OURSELVES BEFORE GOD

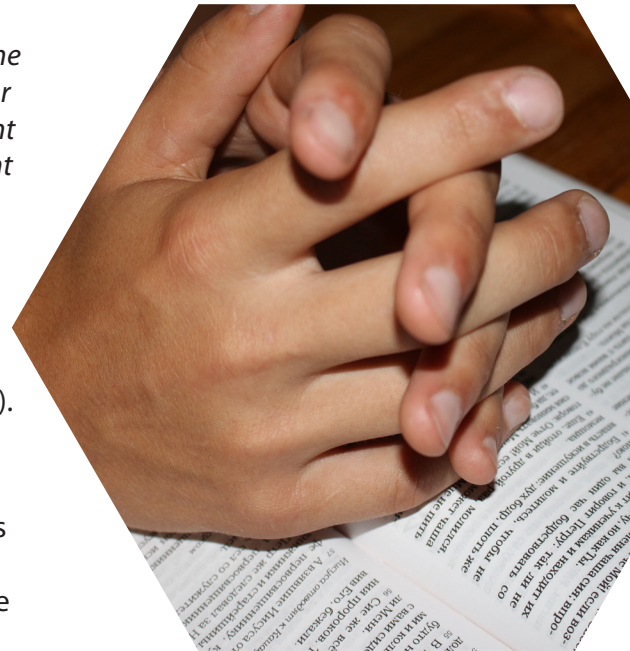
In this six part series, **'The DNA of a Persecuted Christian'**, we are looking at the strands of identity, which we have inherited from Jesus, that enable our persecuted brothers and sisters to live for Him in spite of hardship and suffering. As you hear some of their stories we hope that you will learn more about the persecuted Church and will continue to pray with us for them. We trust that this series not only broadens your insight into the lives of our persecuted family but also shows you more clearly the inheritance, or DNA, that the body of Christ, whether free or persecuted, shares. (For more on this series see p. 4.)

EXAMINING OUR FAITH

Dr Samuel Brengle, a Commissioner in the Salvation Army wrote, *"The axe cannot boast of the trees it has cut down. It could do nothing but for the woodsman. He made it, he sharpened it, and he used it. The moment he throws it aside, it becomes only old iron. O, that I may never lose sight of this."*

Just like an axe is nothing without the woodsman, we are nothing without God. God is the giver and sustainer of everything. He wants us to humble ourselves before Him, not to control us, but to take care of us in a way only He can. Even Jesus humbled Himself before God and His will – to the point of death on the cross (Philippians 2:8).

1 Peter 5:6-7 says, *"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you."* Persecuted Christians understand that they're nothing and God is everything. And it is only through humbling themselves before Him that they can endure persecution. May we, as God's children, never lose sight of this!



READ James 4


How do you conquer pride? Is it something you can do by yourself? (vv. 6-10)

Do we have any right to boast in our own plans? (vv. 13-16)

READ Lee's story on p. 3

Can you think of a situation in your life when you've had to humble yourself before God?

What can we take away from Lee's story about living humbly?



GOD PLANNED ALL THIS FROM THE BEGINNING

Lee*, a North Korean businessman, was mistrustful of all Christians. He had spent long years in a North Korean labour camp just because he had been discovered listening to a Christian merchant sharing the Gospel message. He served out his sentence in prison, forced to work day and night with very little food. Once his sentence was over, Lee had nowhere to go so he crossed the river into China, illegally, seeking freedom and food. When he arrived, he came across an Open Doors field worker who visited Lee and told him the Gospel. Eventually, the visits turned into discussions about the Bible and times of prayer.

Soon Lee told the worker that he was suffering from a kidney stone, but Lee was reluctant to see a doctor because he was a North Korean defector. When Lee finally gave in and visited the doctor, they discovered that he needed two urgent operations. But Lee barely had the funds for one.

With his life hanging in the balance, Lee became humble before God. When the field worker came to visit him the next time, Lee asked him earnestly to pray for him, saying, *"My health must be restored by the God you have revealed to me."*

That night, the miraculous happened. After praying with the field worker until 3am, Lee felt an unusual vibration around his kidney. Lee explained that he had felt something hard inside his kidney softening, turning into something like flour as it flowed downwards.

At Lee's next appointment, the doctors were stunned. Their diagnosis revealed that the kidney stone had been ground into fine powder and settled at the bottom, just as Lee had described his experience during prayer. *"The doctors could not hide their astonishment,"* said the worker. *"God planned all this from the beginning, when I had trouble getting through to [Lee] and persuading him to trust me."* After experiencing God's miraculous healing, Lee now hopes to return to his hometown in North Korea and share with his family that God indeed exists and has healed him.

*Name changed and representative image used for security reasons.

PRAYER

Thank the Lord for the example of true humility in the life and ministry of Jesus. Pray that in our lives, and the lives of our persecuted brothers and sisters, the meekness and goodness that Christ lived out, will shine through us to be living testimonies for Him.

Pray for those who persecute our fellow followers in Christ. May God do a mighty work in their hearts and lives to turn away from the pain and suffering they're causing Christians. May they rather humble themselves before God who is able to save them from the sin that so easily entangles them.

Pray for Lee as he returns to his hometown in North Korea to share the Gospel with his family. May the Lord give him wisdom and guidance to witness to his family and may God open their hearts to be receptive to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.



"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." - Matthew 18:3



WHAT THIS SERIES IS ALL ABOUT

So what is the **'The DNA of a persecuted Christian'** series all about? As Christians, one of our core beliefs is that we are all part of one body, the Church, and we are all united under Jesus, the head of the body.

As 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 says, *"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many."*

We all share the same DNA then – adopted children of God who were once dead in our sins, but now are alive in Christ. And because we are all part of the body of Christ, we believe that the persecuted Church is also part of the **DNA** of every Christian.

As Christians living in 'safer' places in the world, we have a lot to learn from the persecuted Church. Though we live in places where we aren't violently persecuted for our faith, we too face situations in life where we feel afraid, sometimes because of our faith. For many persecuted Christians, danger is never far away and they often fear the consequences of their faith being exposed. But God gives them and us comfort in our fears and teaches us not to be afraid. Persecuted Christians know all too well what it is to face their fears head on with endurance, humility, and boldness.

This is why prayer is so important and it's something that the persecuted Church partakes in daily. As you read about the different characteristics that make up the DNA of persecuted Christians, and, really, the DNA of all Christians, pray for their situation, pray for their safety, and pray for those who persecute them.

Through their stories we can learn to love our enemies, pray for those who persecute us, and endure through hard times: these are all things that persecuted Christians often experience in a very different way to us. And as you go through this series, we hope and pray that you will gain a deeper insight not just into the DNA of persecuted Christians, but the whole body of Christ's DNA. We are, after all, **ONE** body.



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide



@opendoorssa



Open Doors South Africa



open_doors_sa

P.O. Box 1771, Cresta, 2118

T +27 11 888 9341 | F +27 11 888 9362 | E southafrica@od.org | I www.opendoors.org.za