



LIFELINE Discussion Guide

Week of February 2, 2026

1. Tell a true story of a time when you were mistreated, abused, mocked, or treated unfairly. What happened? Was it in your school, workplace, family, or community? Did the abuse or mistreatment have any connection to your Christian faith or testimony?
2. Read Revelation 2:8-11 in two different Bible translations. Did Jesus give any critiques or criticisms of this church? What were some of the things this church was enduring in this text?
3. In the 1st century, the Roman Empire endorsed “emperor worship”, believing their Caesars were divine and embedded with “the spirit of Rome”. Why wouldn’t Christians recite the loyalty oath or burn incense to Caesar? (see Romans 10:9 and 1 Corinthians 12:3) What kinds of treatment did many Christians have to endure for their devotion to Jesus?
4. Smyrna had a large Jewish population. Were Jewish people typically in support of Christianity? Why or why not? Before he became Paul the Apostle, how did Saul treat Christians as a zealous Pharisee? (see Acts 9:1-2). How would you feel as a Christian knowing that BOTH the Jews and the Romans were against you?
5. Why would Jesus call the Jewish synagogue in Smyrna a “synagogue of Satan”? (verse 9). How does Revelation 12:10 describe Satan? Many Jews felt they were defending God and protecting truth by persecuting the Christians. But what were they actually doing?
6. Even though there were going to be imprisonments and even death, what two (2) instructions did Jesus give to the Christians in verse 10? What reward did Jesus promise? If you meet intense opposition as a Christian— at your school, workplace, or community—why shouldn’t you be afraid? (see also John 16:33)
7. If painful or traumatic things come crushing down on you, why might Jesus permit them to happen? Explain your answers. What did Peter say about the refining power of suffering/trials in 1 Peter 1:6-8?
8. Pastor Ryan said that “*The suffering church is a pure church.*” How can you explain this? How do hard times and painful situations refine a church? What happens to the pretenders, church-hoppers, and professional “visitors” when practicing Christianity comes with punishments, fines, or physical suffering?
9. What is the “*second death*” (verse 11) and why is it even more troublesome than the first one? If Jesus promises you victory over death, how can this give you confidence and courage to face suffering during your life?

Suffering draws out the sweetest worship, the strongest devotion, and the surest faith.