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**Week 2: Smyrna – A Church Reinforced for Suffering**

**Daily Time With Truth**

As you read these daily scriptures, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What is God saying to me?
2. What do I want to say to God in response?
3. How will I live out this truth?

**Day 1: 2 Timothy 2:12-13 (NLT)**

Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will deceive others and will themselves be deceived.

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**Day 2: Romans 8:35-37 (NLT)**

Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, “For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”) No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

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**Day 3: James 1:2-4 (MSG)**

Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.

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**Day 4: Romans 5:3-5 (TPT)**

But that’s not all! Even in times of trouble we have a joyful confidence, knowing that our pressures will develop in us patient endurance. And patient endurance will refine our character, and proven character leads us back to hope. And this hope is not a disappointing fantasy, because we can now experience the endless love of God cascading into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who lives in us!

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**Day 5: James 1:12 (NLT)**

God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

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Discussion Questions:

1. How is Central Community Church similar to Smyrna? What do we need to be on guard against? Should we be surprised when persecution or suffering comes? How should we handle it?

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2. Read Revelation 2:8-11. How did Smyrna get their name? Pastor Bob said, “Jesus wants early Christians to know that even if they face death for Him…there is a resurrection coming that is a far better life than this.”

How does this theme connect with Smyrna?

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3. What is Jesus’ word to this church…or for that fact, anyone who is going through the crushing weight of persecution or suffering? What caused suffering in Smyrna?

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4. What is Jesus’ perspective on wealth and being poverty stricken?

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5. The crown was the symbol for Smyrna. What did it symbolize? What did Jesus say about it?

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6. Can you look back in your life to a time of suffering that God eventually worked for your good and His glory? As you share with your group, consider times of suffering you have gone through and how God brought you out of it. How were you transformed through it? How do the testimonies of other sufferers impact your walk with God?

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