

TIME TO REFLECT

WAKE UP! GET YOUR HEAD ROUND THIS...

In North Korea people are executed for having a Bible and the only 'scriptures' are writings about the countries leaders. This is a land where stories from the Bible are passed on in disguise, where Bibles are hidden in baskets, under the floor, in the roof... Where people memorise the Bible, hold it close, treasure it, risk everything for it.



PRAY

Spend a few minutes focussing on God, asking his Spirit to be with you, guiding you, prompting you and preparing you for the next 30 minutes.



READ: 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17

"All scripture is God-breathed"
2 Timothy 3v16

THINK

What's going on? Paul, who wrote this letter in the New Testament, was no stranger to persecution. Amazingly his story is one of incredible transformation: he, the persecutor became the persecuted. As a young Jewish scribe he sought out Christians, but his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus turned all that on its head.

It's important to remember that the New Testament was written largely by - and for - early Christians who faced immense pressures - similar to those facing North Korean Christians today. They were at times hunted, arrested, imprisoned and killed because of their belief in Jesus. This is the New Testament norm, and unfortunately it's still the norm for many Christians today.

- Paul writes that "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted..." How does that make you feel? Is that your experience of following Jesus?
- What does Paul say is the purpose of the 'God-breathed' scriptures (v.16-17)? List the things he mentions. Have you seen the Bible used in these ways?
- How often do you read the Bible? Daily? Weekly? Less often? What stops you from reading it?
- In North Korea owning a Bible is punishable by death (see box below). Do we value our Bibles in the same way a North Korean Christian does?
- Any thoughts and challenges you want to share? Tweet us @opendoorsyouth or make a comment on [facebook.com/opendoorsyouth](https://www.facebook.com/opendoorsyouth). We'd love to hear your thoughts.

THE REALITY

A Christian was arrested when the police found a Bible in his home. He was badly beaten in prison and was certain he would die. "I've known this man for a long time," says a Christian friend of the prisoner. "When he came to faith, he made the decision that one day he would die for Christ. Every Christian in North Korea has made that choice. My friend knew that one day he could get caught and on that day he had to be steadfast in the faith and loyal to Jesus. I am convinced he can take the suffering because he constantly reminds himself of the joy that is set before him."

WE HAD TO BURN IT

Every day when Hye and her sister returned from school, her grandmother would fetch the Bible from its hiding place in a basket and read out Bible verses:

"She would always read her Bible with magnifying glasses and hid it immediately if she heard someone coming to the house."

But one day in 1994, Hye's father was arrested by the North Korean secret police, and her grandmother decided that it was too dangerous to keep the Bible. "We had to burn it. My grandmother said it was okay as long as we stayed true to our faith in God. But when the flames devoured the pages, my grandmother wept intensely."

Now, the only scriptures left were what the girls could remember. "My sister wrote whatever she remembered on paper and hid it somewhere in secret. She would look at those papers whenever she was going through difficult times."



IMAGINE

Imagine that all the Bibles that you own - or have access to - have been rounded up and burned. What would you remember? See if you can write down five verses from memory.

- How would you keep the Bible's story of God, and his interaction with the world, alive? If all Bible's had been taken away, how could you pass on that knowledge?



PRAY

- Say the Lord's Prayer out loud (try and do it from memory and reflect on each line). If you can't remember it look it up at Matthew 6:9-13.
- Many North Korean believers copy out portions of the scriptures or memorise them by heart. Sometimes they write out entire books of the Bible. Pray that God will speak to them through these words that are written into their hearts.
- Now do the same yourself. Read Psalm 121 slowly. Make a plan to read this Psalm every morning when you wake up and each night before you go to bed for the next week. By the end of the week see if you can recite the whole thing from memory.
- Pray for the protection of Bible-owning Christians in North Korea. The government has clamped down on anyone possessing 'illegal materials' and people have recently been executed for possessing Bibles.
- Praise God that Open Doors is secretly distributing Christian materials inside the North Korea - with over 45,000 given out 2012. Pray for all those hidden Bibles: ask God to make 'seeing eyes blind' so that none will be seen by the wrong people.



Visit our website for more current prayer news, articles and info this week!



Over the next week, do one or both of the following things to help you to wake up to the reality of life for Christians in North Korea.

- Write out a chapter of the Bible by hand - as believers do in many parts of the world where the Bible is banned.
- In North Korea possessing a Bible is illegal and punishable by death. Probably nowhere else in the world are so many copies of God's Word literally hidden underground. This week, hide your Bible somewhere outside the house - in a shed, perhaps, or in another dry hiding place. Then, every morning, go out and retrieve it before reading it.

