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iNSIGHT

The Suffering Church in India

Many Christians in India face harassment, discrimination, and occasional violence because of their faith, particularly in regions where religious conversion is viewed with suspicion. Despite these challenges, many continue to worship God, serve their communities, and practice their beliefs with resilience and courage. Here are two stories of people overcoming serious hardships to serve the Lord.



Faithful Through Every Obstacle

For many students, completing a Bible course requires commitment and discipline. For Neha, it required perseverance, sacrifice, and faith.

Living in Andhra Pradesh, India, Neha balances ministry responsibilities while caring for her son, who has special needs. The demands of daily life often left her exhausted, and finding uninterrupted time for study was difficult. What might have taken others a few months took Neha more than six months to complete the course.

Yet she refused to quit.

Through every interruption, every challenge at home, and every moment she felt discouraged, she continued returning to God's Word through the Galatians course.

Looking back, Neha says the greatest transformation was not simply gaining biblical knowledge—it was allowing God to examine her heart.

"Sometimes pride, jealousy, and the desire for appreciation can come into our hearts without our knowledge," she shared. "Through this course, I examined my heart and understood that I should serve God with the right motive."

As she worked through the lessons, Neha began to recognize areas where she had unconsciously sought approval and recognition from others. The study of Galatians challenged her to shift her focus from human praise to wholehearted obedience to Christ.

"The lesson helped me correct my thinking and depend on God more," she explained.

The course also strengthened her ability to recognize and respond to false teaching.

One day, Neha learned that a woman in her community had stopped attending church after being told that growing in faith would inevitably bring suffering like Christ experienced. Frightened by what she had heard, the woman withdrew from fellowship.

Because of what she had learned through the Galatians course, Neha was able to lovingly speak truth into the situation.

She reminded the woman that Jesus is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" and that while every believer faces challenges, Christ gives His followers peace, strength, and victory through the Holy Spirit.

"Through this course, I learned that we should always be careful about false teachings and stand on God's Word," Neha said.



Several passages from Galatians became especially meaningful during her studies.

Galatians 3:11, "The righteous shall live by faith," helped her gain a deeper understanding that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone. She describes this truth as a foundation upon which the entire Christian life is built.

Another verse, Galatians 6:7, "A man reaps what he sows," served as a personal challenge and reminder that God sees every action, motive, and decision.

"We cannot deceive God because He knows everything about us," she reflected.

As her understanding of Scripture grew, so did her spiritual maturity.

Today, Neha's desire is simple: to become more like Christ. She prays that God will continue producing the fruit of the Spirit in her life.

Her journey also highlights the importance of faithful discipleship. Throughout the course, the facilitators regularly encouraged her through phone calls and personal support whenever challenges threatened to derail her studies.

Neha's story reminds us that transformation does not always happen quickly. Despite the challenges of caring for her family and navigating the demands of everyday life, Neha completed the course. More importantly, she emerged with a deeper understanding of Scripture, a stronger foundation in truth, and a renewed desire to serve Christ with humility and faith.

Through biblical training, God continues to strengthen believers like Neha—not only to stand firm in their own faith, but also to encourage others to do the same.

From Paddy Fields to Gospel Ministry

Thomas and his wife, Pooja, never imagined that God would use their simple lives to bring the Gospel to an unreached tribal village in India.

Both are first-generation Christians from Andhra Pradesh, raised in Hindu families that did not understand their decision to follow Christ. Their journey of faith came with rejection, hardship, and sacrifice long before ministry ever began.

For Pooja, following Jesus cost her almost everything.

She came from a wealthy Hindu family, but when she chose to become a Christian and insisted on marrying a Christian man, her family turned against her. Her father, who still works as a soothsayer, refused to support her because of her faith. She was sent away from her home and rejected by those closest to her.

Yet she remained faithful to Christ.

Her courage became a foundation for the ministry she and Thomas would later build together.

Thomas came from a simple background, and together the couple survived by working as daily laborers in paddy fields. Life was difficult. Income was uncertain. Although they carried a burden to serve God, they had no Biblical training, no ministry experience, and little formal education. They simply had willing hearts and a deep sense that God was calling them to something more.

That began to change when Pastor Elijah, John, and a ministry team visited their remote area and introduced them to the diploma training program.

“They did not simply come as teachers,” Thomas shared. “They came as mentors, encouragers, and servants of God.”

The team traveled into difficult rural areas, listened to their struggles, prayed with them, and reminded them that ministry was not reserved only for highly educated people. Through face-to-face teaching, they helped ordinary believers understand that God could use anyone willing to surrender to His call. Both developed a deep hunger for God’s Word.

For Thomas and Pooja, this changed everything.

Even though transportation was difficult, they committed themselves to the program. Every month, they traveled nearly 40 kilometers from their village to the training center. They stayed for four days of classes before returning home to continue farming work and daily responsibilities.

The first course they studied was the One-to-One Course, which gave them a strong Biblical foundation and introduced them to interactive

learning and discipleship. Slowly, their confidence began to grow.

Then God placed a burden on their hearts for a village in the Araku Valley—home to a tribe—where there were no known Christians.

It was considered a closed village where outsiders were rarely welcomed. Many people were afraid to go there.

But through prayer, God gave Thomas and Pooja a clear vision to begin ministry in that place.

“With nothing but faith, we entered the village,” Thomas said.

They began slowly, visiting families one by one, praying with people, and building relationships. Pooja used her education to teach basic lessons to children in the village. At first, only a few gathered. Then more children began to come.

Today, around 30 children regularly attend their small tuition center.

Through the children, doors opened to the parents. Conversations began. Relationships deepened. Some families accepted Christ and



Continued from page 3

now gather together in the couple's small hut for Sunday worship.

What once seemed impossible has become a growing village ministry.

"Our face-to-face Bible training gave us confidence, knowledge, and spiritual strength," Thomas explained. "Within one year, God helped us establish ministry among people who had never heard the Gospel before."

The couple still faces many struggles. They continue farming to meet daily needs. They still live simply and do not yet have children of their own. But they now see the village children as part of their ministry family.

"God has given us spiritual children and a purpose greater than ourselves," Thomas said.

Looking back, the couple sees God's faithfulness in every step of their journey—from rejection and hardship to ministry and discipleship. Thomas reflected, "God took our willingness and turned it into ministry. If God can use us, He can use anyone willing to obey His call."

Today, the Gospel is reaching a village that once had no Christian witness because faithful leaders invested time to train and disciple ordinary believers.

And Thomas and Pooja continue praying that many more unreached villages across India will hear the name of Jesus Christ.



Please pray for Neha, Pooja, and Thomas to continue growing in their faith and that the Lord would give them more opportunities to learn and to serve.

All names have been changed for security reasons.

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For a detailed list of opportunities, please see iteeg.org/opportunities.

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