



1 Peter 1:3-7 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, **5** who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. **6** In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. **7** These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Conversation Starters

1. Describe some of your first experiences with faith or a faith community?
2. Did your early experiences lead you to trust God? How do you respond to Brian's statement, "More than health or wealth we need hope." How has your response changed over the years?
3. Can you describe a time when you questioned the 'goodness' of God?
 - a. How did that affect you?
 - b. If you were a follower of Jesus how did it impact your faith?
4. Brian said, "Suffering and participating in suffering is central to the mission of Jesus." For you:
 - a. Has hardship or suffering had a growing or deepening effect on your faith journey?
 - b. A distancing effect?
 - c. Why do you think God allows suffering? Can you say that you have 'rejoiced' in participating in the sufferings of Christ? (1 Peter 4:13)
5. What place should hope of heaven play in our giving?

Brian listed three reasons why would we encourage everyone to give to the mission of the local church.

- Remind us that all of this world is temporary. We are temporary stewards of what God has given us. It will all go away. God has given us a job of taking care of some resources for a time.
- Release us from an illusion of control. The illusion is that we **alone** have created the wealth we have accumulated. You had no part in where you were born or the family you were born into. I release the idea that I am in charge or control.
- Release God's resources for the good of the world. God provides through his people. Resources are released locally and to the ends of the earth.

1. Are any of these new ideas to you? How do you respond?
2. Are there other reasons to give?
3. What motivates you to share your resources? Which of the three reasons resonate most with you?