



The Call to Joy and Pain: Embracing Suffering in Your Ministry

By Ajith Fernando

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2008 Christianity Today Book Award Winner

Joy and pain are both aspects of the call of God for the Christian. The Bible even presents pain as a trigger for joy. *The Call to Joy and Pain* explores how this is so, showing the connection between rejoicing and suffering, how suffering draws us nearer to God, and how suffering makes us more effective in service.

Ministerial veteran Ajith Fernando combines biblical exposition, keen pastoral insight, and cross-cultural wisdom in his writing. He opens readers' eyes to a truth they may already suspect: we in the West have much to learn about suffering.

By examining Paul's words on the subject of suffering for Christ from Colossians 1:24-29, Fernando thoughtfully explains how suffering can be a blessing to the individual Christian and to the church as a whole. His book will help Christians joyfully embrace the life of service and total devotion to Jesus, despite the pain it entails.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Ajith Fernando understands the pitfalls of pain, as well as the heavenly heights of Spirit-blessed joy. As one who is intimately acquainted with the hardships of a wheelchair, I am truly grateful for the insights he shares in this exceptional new book."

—**Joni Eareckson Tada**, founder and CEO, Joni and Friends International Disability Center; author, *A Spectacle of Glory* and *Beside Bethesda*

"Blending biblical faithfulness, gripping stories, and pastoral compassion, this book shows us how God uses pain for our good and his glory and reminds us that if we embrace our suffering, we will discover a contagious joy that makes Jesus beautiful in the eyes of a watching world. Written as a series of thirty short meditations, here is a book to be savored."

—**Ray Pritchard**, President, Keep Believing Ministries; author of *Credo, Discovering God's Will for Your Life*, *The Amazing Journey of Faith*

"Ajith Fernando demonstrates that the call to suffer is an invitation to joy. We do not find a dour or depressing vision of the Christian life here. Nor can Fernando's work be dismissed as unrealistic—he does not deny the pain we experience in suffering. The work is biblically grounded, refreshingly honest, and full of practical wisdom."

—**Thomas R. Schreiner**, James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Professor of Biblical Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky

"When I moved from the sterility of the academy to the real life of pastoring, I had no idea of the amount of conflict and pain that could come from within a church. I wish I had been prepared for the joy and pain of ministry and how I was being called to embrace that suffering. Thank you, Ajith, for putting my experience in biblical perspective. We are called to embrace joy in the midst of pain, to lean into the pain and become like Christ."

—**William D. Mounce**, President, BiblicalTraining.org

About the Author

Ajith Fernando (ThM, Fuller Theological Seminary) is the teaching director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka after serving as the ministry's national director for thirty-five years. He and his wife, Nelun, are active in a church ministering primarily to the urban poor, and his ministry includes counseling and mentoring younger staff and pastors. He is the author of seventeen books published in nineteen languages. Ajith lives in Colombo, Sri Lanka, with his wife, and they have two adult children and two grandchildren.

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Linda Barefoot:

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