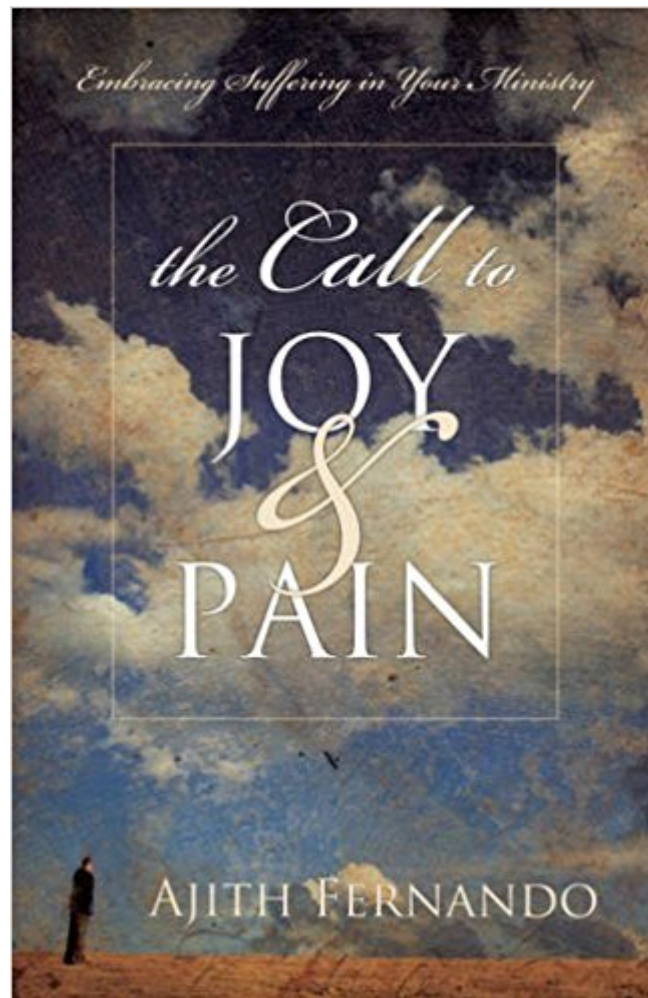




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The Call To Joy And Pain: Embracing Suffering In Your Ministry



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"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

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.

Ajith Fernando knows about suffering. He has seen horrendous suffering during his ministry as national director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka. Since the 1980s that island nation has been torn and ravished by civil war and political corruption. Over 60,000 Sri Lankans have died in sectarian violence, and another 20,000, mostly rebel Tamils, "disappeared" after their arrest. Just when a tentative peace between warring factions was taking shape, the Indian Ocean Tsunami struck, leaving more than 31,100 dead, 4,100 missing, and 519,000 homeless. Despite the suffering all around him, Ajith Fernando has found a transcending joy, a joy that transforms pain and suffering into a closer walk with Jesus Christ. This book is greatly needed, especially in America, where much of Christianity has become shallow, self-centered, and materialistic. Fernando contends that Christians are not only not exempt from suffering and pain, but they are called to suffer for the Lord's sake and for the good of others. Yet through that sanctified suffering—even because of it—the

Christian finds true, lasting joy. Though specifically written for those in the ministry, the book's truth, which draws heavily upon Scripture, applies to every Christian. The book's thirty short but rich chapters take us to a higher plateau in our Christian life, and to greater service for the Master.

Reading this book, it was a very complete read that allowed me to experience a range of things consisting from: being intrigued, enlightened, and intellectually stimulated; feeling content and having many thoughts of "oh! So I wasn't being crazy!"

What a great book for Pastors! Fernando's work is an excellent, practical work that invites the church to understand its calling to be incarnational in its ministry to the world.

Did you ever ask a question wondering why a loving God allows so many seemingly bad things to happen to us? The title of this book made me curious about how we could embrace suffering. All of us at one time or another, usually during a troubled time in our lives, have asked that question. This book proves that there is a wise God in control of all things, who knows the end from the beginning. This book gives valuable insight into many of the questions we all have. It is a life changing insight. The Scripture tells us that Jesus willingly suffered on the cross for the joy that was set before Him. I recommend this book to help you understand what and why that joy was in the midst of the suffering of the Savior. The book is an easy read and very well done. Do yourself a lot of good and order the book now.

Biblically sound, and easy to read, this is a great book for all believers, especially anyone needing a deeper discussion about the meaning and role of suffering in the Christian life. I read it in the context of a small group study over a couple months, and all of us were edified by the book and the discussions and sharing we had around the content. It's remarkably well balanced between the two topics (joy and pain), and is the best single resource I've personally read yet for dealing with suffering. Also, because it's written in such an easy-to-read style, it's great for anyone from teens to seniors. Highly recommended!

This a great book for those who want to understand why life is sometimes hard. What great lessons!

Good read.

Every Christian needs to read this book!

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