

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) Jesus Christ makes every compassionate attempt to inform His disciples, and us too, that being a Christian translates into facing persecution (John 16:33). His encouragement to us is not mere cheerleading, but so that we would be protected from stumbling when we face persecution. I sometimes feel foolish when I consider the persecution faced by other Christians in the world compared to my own! How do we, in the United States of America, face persecution and relate verses such as John 15:18-16:4 to our own life context?
- B) Have you ever found that you do not face any persecution? Can a Christian go through life without facing persecution? What would you say to someone who tells you they have never faced any real persecution for their faith in Jesus Christ?
- C) Since Christians are supposed to be facing persecution, is there ever a context for a Christian to seek out situations where persecution is possible? Why would a person want to suffer and face persecution? What would be the motivation or drive for putting your comfort, safety and well being aside?
- D) If you are a parent of a child still living at home (or if you are that child), is there ever a context where you should choose to put your child into a life situation where they might face some sort of persecution? What would this accomplish?
- E) We live in a day-n-age when some people in the world would kill a Christian simply for what they believe! This may seem ridiculous to most of here in the United States, where we don't advocate killing others because of their religion, race or nationality. How can your group genuinely reach out to those who hate us (and first, remember, hate Jesus Christ -- John 15:18-20)? Have your group take time to genuinely pray for those who oppose, hate and even wish to kill Christians.

The World Hates Jesus

Long Beach Alliance Church • August 21st, 2005 • Pastor Chris Lankford

THESE THINGS I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU SO THAT YOU MAY BE KEPT FROM STUMBLING. THEY WILL MAKE YOU OUTCASTS FROM THE SYNAGOGUE, BUT AN HOUR IS COMING FOR EVERYONE WHO KILLS YOU TO THINK THAT HE IS OFFERING SERVICE TO GOD. THESE THINGS THEY WILL DO BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN THE FATHER OR ME.

~JOHN 15:15 (NASB)

1) Why Should We Love One Another?

- A) The disciples, fresh from being reminded that true fruitfulness is found in loving Jesus and one another (John 15:17), are faced with another reason why authentic love will be necessary -- they will be hated by the world (15:18).
- B) Jesus lists three reasons the disciples will be hated:
- i) You are guilty by association. The world hates Jesus, and in turn, it will hate you (15:18, 20).
 - ii) Jesus chose you for different priorities and plans than the world. You will be hated accordingly (15:19).
 - iii) The world has rejected God's self-revelation, Jesus Christ. Since they do not "know" (15:21) God, they do

not "know" Me (Jesus), and they will not "know" you. Just remember, they hate you because of Me!

- C) Since these things are true (association, chosenness, willful ignorance) -- you will be persecuted (15:20). However, some will respond (15:20).
- D) Don't neglect My command! Love one another (15:12-17)!

2) This Is All Part Of The Plan!

- A) Jesus Christ's reference to "the One" (God) in 15:21 is a clear encouragement to the disciples that God is in control of this situation, nothing has escaped His notice or His plan.
- B) At first blush, John 15:22 & 24 seem to theoretically exonerate the Jews ("they" of v. 22 and "them" of v. 24) from any "sin" (NASB) or "guilt" (NIV). Jesus makes two clear points here which bear observation and are instructive:
 - i) These verses indicate that the Jews were following the Law to the best of their ability, which left them guilty of what had been revealed already, but not for what had not been revealed (15:22)
 - ii) Now, however, God has revealed Himself (15:22, 24) in the clearest Light (John 3:19-21; 9:39-41) through Jesus Christ (John 1:1 & 14).
 - iii) The Jews (and the world, cf. 15:18-19) have rejected Christ's words (15:22) and His works (15:24), and therefore this incurs the most deeply stained guilt.
- C) The central reason for these rejections of Jesus Christ's words (15:22) and works (15:24) is that, ultimately, the world hates

Jesus Christ and God (15:23). Note the most personal and intimate reference of "My Father" (15:23). The rejection is a personal and individual guilt which the world bears!

- D) All of this, once again, is not outside of God's plan and design! This has been set out since the beginning, and is a fulfillment of God's plan that the world would "hate" Him without cause (15:25).

3) The Triune Revelation Of God

- A) Along with God & Christ, the "Helper" or "Spirit of truth" (the Holy Spirit -- 15:26) also testifies to the truth of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, and will assist all disciples of Christ in "testifying" of their relationship with Jesus Christ (15:27).

4) WARNING LABEL: READ BEFORE RELATIONSHIPPING!

- A) Jesus reveals his undying love for His disciples in revealing this information to them to keep them from stumbling (16:1).
- B) Jesus assures the disciples they will be persecuted to the point of death for their relationship with Him (16:2). While not applicable to every national conflict/war, it is an interesting/insightful prophecy considering our current Middle East religious tensions and terrorist conflicts.
- C) It is a hatred and rebellion against God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ which ultimately motivates persecution (16:3).
- A) The "hour" (16:2) is now revealed as "their hour," a time where the enemy will kill Jesus and persecute the new church, when Jesus will be departed (16:4).