

FOCUS

Biblical Worldview

TITLE

Doing What Is Right, Even when It Costs You

REFERENCE

1 Peter 3:8–17

• brown merit •

1 Peter

... LESSON 4

• FOR THE LEADER

• PREP



FOR THE LEADER

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT:

Persecution has existed since the beginning of the church. At many points in history the church grew as a result of it. As godly men, we should face persecution boldly with the promise that Christ has overcome the world.

THINK ABOUT IT:

- What is persecution?
- Does persecution exist in the United States?
- Are we supposed to avoid persecution?



PREP

- Bring a story of someone persecuted for their faith in Jesus. For stories and information on the persecution of Christians today, visit www.persecution.org.

• Notes •

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... LESSON 4

· READ



· REFLECT



· RESPOND



READ

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 1 Peter 3:8–17

What comes to mind when you think of people suffering for Jesus? Maybe you think of people

who were killed for their faith. Maybe you have read books or heard stories about Christians throughout history who have been persecuted for their beliefs. Have you ever suffered for your beliefs? Has anyone made fun of you for being a Christian, or put you down because you refused to participate in an activity you knew was wrong?

Take a minute and think about a time in your life when you may have suffered because of your faith in Jesus. If you feel comfortable, share that account with the group. Do you know a story of someone who has suffered for their faith in Jesus? Share it with your group.

Suffering persecution for your faith may be unfamiliar to you. Perhaps you have never suffered physically or even emotionally because of your faith in Jesus. However, suffering can be a part of being a Christian. The apostle Peter wrote that we are “blessed” if we suffer because we were doing what was right.

Some believe that once they become a Christian their problems will go away, but Jesus didn’t promise that. In fact, Jesus said in John 16:33, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” You will likely encounter situations when you have to choose either to follow Christ and suffer or to disobey Him. That’s just part of being a Christian. The good news is that Jesus has overcome the world and we are overcomers through Him!

For some, suffering with Christ may mean being called names rather than cheating on a test. For others, it may mean not making the starting team for football because you refuse to use illegal performance-enhancing drugs. Some may be persecuted for sharing their faith with a friend or someone at school. As you continue your growth as a godly man, you will face decisions that will test your faith, character, integrity, and morality. How you react will be determined by the closeness of your walk with Jesus and your willingness to suffer for doing what is right.

Persecution is something Christians have dealt with for two thousand years and it's not going to go away until Jesus comes back. But we can find peace in knowing that the Holy Spirit is with us, God is aware of what is going on, and Jesus has overcome any power the world tries to have over us. No matter what is done to us, we are still truly free!

PRAYER: God, I pray that You will help me to make right decisions every day. I pray that I would not fear suffering and persecution for those decisions or my faith in You. Help my life to be an example to those around me of how to be a follower of Jesus. In Jesus' name. Amen.

7-DAY BIBLE READING PLAN
Sunday ·
Monday ·
Tuesday ·
Wednesday ·
Thursday ·
Friday ·
Saturday ·



REFLECT

As a group, listen to or read a story about someone who was persecuted as a result of faith in Christ. Such stories can be found in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, *Jesus Freaks*, or online at www.persecution.com. How does the suffering that others have experienced encourage you to keep living for Christ even when it costs you something? How could your suffering be an encouragement to others?



RESPOND

Make a point this week to spend time each day in prayer for fellow Christians around the world who are being persecuted. Pray that God would keep them safe, and that they would be strengthened to continue to share the good news of Jesus in their communities.

The *Fire Bible: Student Edition* provides a reading plan that follows a two-year design for reading the entire Bible. Follow that reading plan in order to earn the green Bible Reading merit.

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