

1. In what ways do Christians experience persecution today? Is there a difference between persecution and suffering? How can we tell? Share an experience where you faced persecution *because* of your witness for Jesus.
2. Read John 15:18–19. Why do you think Jesus tells the disciples that the world will hate them? What is the worldly rationale for this hatred?
3. Read John 15:20–21. Why should disciples of Jesus not be surprised when persecution comes? How does the world persecute Christians on account of Jesus name? What ignorance drives these actions?
4. Read John 15:22–25. How does Jesus' incarnation make the world guilty of sin? Why does the world no longer have any excuse? Why does hating Jesus mean also hating his Father?
5. Read Psalm 69:4. How does the hatred of the world for Jesus reflect David's experience with his enemies? How does it help to know that followers of God have always shared in the common experience of suffering and persecution?
6. Read John 15:26. What does this verse tell us about the Trinity? In what ways does the Spirit bear witness to the world?
7. Read John 15:27. What was the role of the disciples in bearing witness? Why was it important that they had been with Jesus from the beginning? How does that translate to us?
8. Read John 16:1–4a. Why has Jesus shared these things? What should Christians expect as they follow Jesus? How does knowing what to expect help us to stand firm when the time comes?
9. Ask God for courage to bear witness in the face of persecution and to stand firm. If you're not experiencing persecution, invite God to give you courage for when the time comes.