
PERSECUTION

(A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE)

INTRODUCTION:

Too often we address the issue of persecution as a reactionary manner. Persecution against the disciples and the church is inevitable. By studying the Bible and preparing yourself for persecution, you will be better equipped for spiritual success.

John 15:18 -21 / 1 Thessalonians 3:4 / 2 Timothy 3:12

- Persecution is predicted and to be expected.
- Persecution is a validating mark of God's presence; however, all that are persecuted are not always of God.
- How do you see persecution come into your life?

Mark 3:20-22 / 2 Timothy 3:14-17

- Sources of persecution
 - Family & close friends
 - Religious people & other churches
 - Fallen away Christians

Note: Persecution often takes the form of nice sounding but false claims and accusations from sincere and genuine people. This makes us give these claims more validity than they are entitled. Despite the emotional pull we must stick to the scriptures above the sincerity of people.

- Reasons for persecution
 - Competitive jealousy - from churches or individuals not growing.
 - Religious pride - hardened toward truly seeing the scriptures.
 - Misinformation - rumors run wild from unknowing sources.
 - Disciples' mistakes - genuinely, in pride or insensitively they happen.
 - Purification of the church - God uses it to drive out the false disciples.
- Responses to persecution
 - Matthew 5:10-12 Consider yourself blessed and rejoice.
 - Romans 12:14-19 Don't retaliate or return an insult, but a blessing.
 - Matthew 5:43-48 Pray for those who persecute you.
 - 1 Peter 4:12-19 Focus on Jesus and your heavenly rewards.

CHALLENGE:

Read Nehemiah 1-6. Record the number of times Nehemiah was opposed for what he was doing for God.