

When Persecuted

Matthew 5:10-12

If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 1 Corinthians 12:26

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:10-12

How Are Christians Persecuted Today? Escalating forms of Christian Persecution

1. Being _____ for your faith

The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. John 1:5

2. When Christian views are _____

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, Romans 1:18

3. Ostracized from society

4. H _____

5. F _____ pressure

6. Arrest

7. Physical abuse and m _____

Acts 5 – Apostles thrown in jail and beaten

Acts 7 – Stephen is stoned to death

Acts 12 – James is beheaded

*Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. **Hebrews 11:36-38***

Christianity Is the World’s Most Persecuted Religion, Ten Worst Countries for Believers

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. North Korea | 6. Nigeria |
| 2. Somalia | 7. Pakistan |
| 3. Libya | 8. Sudan |
| 4. Eritrea | 9. Iran |
| 5. Yemen | 10. Afghanistan |

Why is the world persecuting Christians today?

*Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. **Hebrews 12:3-4***

*Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! 9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead **Acts 4:8-10***

*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. **1 Peter 3:15-16***

Why are Christians persecuted today?

1. Christians are seen as a threat to _____
2. Christians are opposed because of _____

Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. Acts 5:17-18

3. Most persecution stems from _____

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. John 3:19-20

The world hates Christianity because the world loves _____.
The Christian is a reminder that we are all accountable to God.

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. John 15:18-19

What should the Christian’s response be when persecuted?

1. Do not be surprised—Do _____ some opposition.

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 1 Peter 4:12-14

Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. John 15:20

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 2 Timothy 3:12

2. Do not be paranoid—Do be objective.

What should the Christian’s response be when persecuted?

If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. 1 Peter 4:15-16

3. Do not complain—Do rejoice.

What should the Christian's response be when persecuted?

4. Do not cower—Do become more _____.

What should the Christian's response be when persecuted?

Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Acts 4:29

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. Acts 4:31

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. Acts 5:42

5. Do not retaliate—Do show _____ to the persecutor.

What should the Christian's response be when persecuted?

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:44

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Luke 23:34

And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" Mark 15:39

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Matthew 16:24

Key: ridiculed, suppressed, Harassment, Financial, martyrdom, freedom, jealousy, guilt, sin, anticipate, bold, love