

Major Tests of Our Faith – Lesson 8 ***Persecution***

Persecution because of our faith is something that we really haven't faced ... at least not in the way we think about it from the Bible. When the New Testament speaks about trials of our faith, we see the suffering of the early saints; ridicule, threats and genuine fear for their lives. Think about these passages: Luke 22:28; Acts 20:19; James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:6. I think we get the point.

Persecution is common with serving the Lord. The country and time in which we live has spared most of us from fear of this kind of persecution, but that is not to say there is nothing that tries our faith. Maybe we have not experienced physical threats or harm, but Satan is still making every effort to discourage us, and he is very effective in his effort to cause us to turn away from the Lord.

1. Look at **Hebrews 10:32-34** and list some of the afflictions suffered by the Hebrews in their early days as Christians. What enabled them to endure this trial of their faith? (**v. 34**)

2. Read **1 Corinthians 4:9-13** and summarize the abuses suffered by the apostles.

3. **John 15:18-21** records the words of Jesus to His apostles.
What reasons are given as to why abuses would be heaped upon them?

4. Can you think of some examples of persecution in the Bible?

5. What is said about persecution in **2 Timothy 3:12**?

6. **Making it real:** What are some persecutions faced by Christians in our day?

7. Think about this ... is there emotional and mental persecution that in some ways is as severe a trial of faith as bodily persecution?

8. There are reasons to believe that Christians who stand for truth will face greater persecution in days ahead. What would lead to this conclusion? (Consider your answer on question # 3)

9. Read **Matthew 5:10-12** and **1 Peter 4:12-13, 16, 19** and summarize the attitude a Christian should maintain when faced with persecution.

10. What makes this possible in persecution?

SOUL SEARCHER... Think fairly & honestly

What assurance can we find in scripture that will help us when we face persecution?
(Consider Roman 8:18 and 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 in your answer)