

## Bible study

# Facing Hostility for Christ

## John 15:18 – 16:4

This study looks at the same passage as the sermon outline (p11). It can be used before or after hearing the sermon, or separately. If it is used without the sermon, it may be helpful for the group leader to read through the sermon outline beforehand. The section at the end entitled “Digging deeper” is intended for those who would like to explore the passage in more depth and in its wider context.

### INTRODUCTION

1. Have you ever experienced hatred or discrimination because of your faith in Christ, and if so, how did it feel? How do you react to stories of anti-Christian hostility?

2. When Christians suffer persecution, what questions does this raise for us? How might we want to respond to such hostility?

### READ JOHN 15:18-21

3. What do you think “the world” means in verse 18? What reasons are given in these verses for its hatred of Jesus’ disciples?

4. How should we live as those who do not belong to the world? What twofold response should we expect?

### READ JOHN 15:22-25

5. How do these verses further explain the hostility experienced by Christians? Why is the world to blame for its attitude to Jesus and the Father?

6. Can you think of reasons why some people hate Jesus and the Father? (For ideas, look up Luke 6:22-23; 14:11-14; 16:13; John 3:20; 7:7; 12:25.) How does it help us to know that the world hates us because it hates Them?

### READ JOHN 15:26-27

7. How are Jesus’ disciples to respond to the world’s hatred? What help will they have from Him in doing this?

8. When might we have to testify about Jesus because of the world’s hostility? And in what ways could we do this?

### READ JOHN 16:1-4

9. According to these verses, why might the disciples “go astray”, and what do you think it might mean to do this? How will Jesus’ teaching help them not to do so?

10. Can you think of any kinds of persecution today that resemble those described in verse 2? Who might be responsible for them? What might be their motives?

### CONCLUSION

11. What forms of hostility do Christians suffer in your country? Do you think that you need to be “preparing for persecution”, and if so why?

12. Share one new perspective that this passage has given you on facing hostility for Christ, or one action that you will now take in response.

### DIGGING DEEPER

13. Look up some other references to “the world” in John’s Gospel (e.g. 1:9-10; 3:16-17; 12:25, 31; 17:6-19; 18:36). How might these relate to the teaching of this passage about the world’s hatred for Jesus’ disciples?

14. Consider how Jesus’ words and works in this Gospel cause others to be hostile (see e.g. 5:1-18; 6:35-71; 9:13-34; 10:22-39). How do these passages illuminate verses 22-25 of chapter 15?

15. What do you think are some of the key truths about Jesus to which His disciples are called to testify? See (e.g.) John 1:6-8, 34; 8:12-14; 18:37.

16. Look at some of the ways in which Christians suffer persecution in the New Testament. (See above, pp8-10.) What parallels to these are there in the contemporary world?

### FURTHER READING

For further explanation of this passage, please see the following:

C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 2nd edition. London: SPCK, 1978, pp478-485

George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (Word Biblical Commentary), 2nd edition. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999, pp275-278