

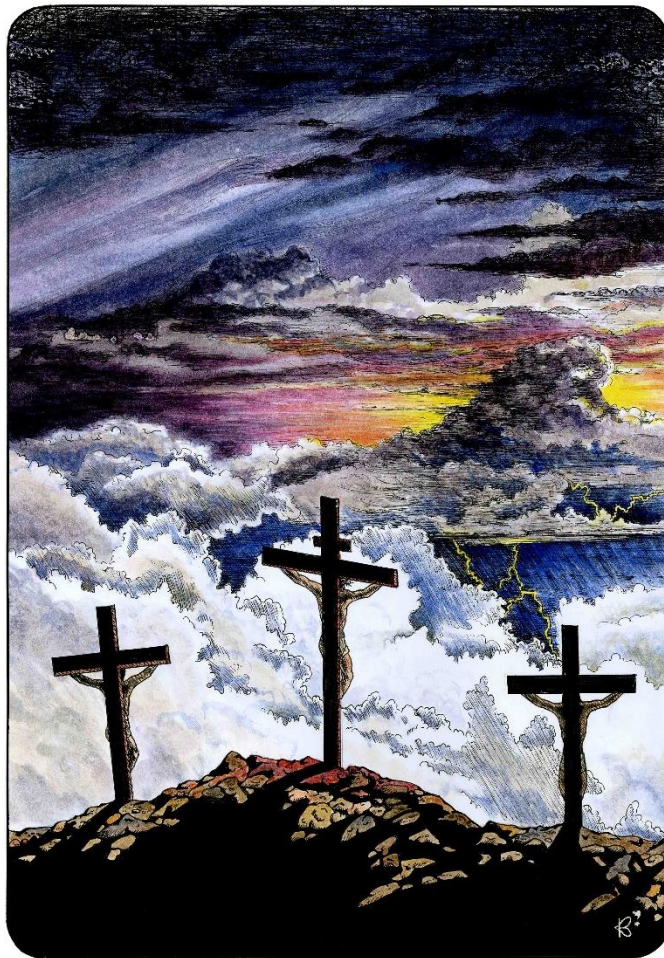
PROGRESSING TOGETHER



COURSE 105

PERSECUTION

Group Leader Version with Notes and Answer Key



Remember the word that I said to you,
'A servant is not greater than his master.'
If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.

John 15:20a

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COURSE 105: Persecution

Course Objectives

1. Understand that persecution for one's faith in Christ is to be expected as part of God's good plan for our lives.
2. To commit to do what is right and share the gospel even to those who want to harm us.
3. To rejoice for the privilege of suffering for the name of Christ.
4. To trust in the justice and loving care of our Father in all circumstances.

Lessons

1	Nothing Can Separate Us from God's Love!
2	The Certainty of Persecution
3	Our Priority: Christ above All
4	A Response to Persecution: The Apostles
5	Jesus, Our Example in Persecution

Introduction

Jesus tells us: "... I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you" (John 15:19b). For those who follow the Lord Jesus, persecution comes in many forms: from being ridiculed or insulted for our faith, to being shunned or refused employment, to being physically beaten or tortured. But all have their source in the hatred that this world has for the Lord Jesus and those who love Him.

This course is intended to help us understand why believers in Jesus Christ are persecuted, what our attitude should be toward persecution, and how the Lord wants us to live when we are persecuted.

Testimony

Note for the group leader:

For each Course in the Progressing Together Level 1 program, a story has been provided that illustrates the impact of the Biblical teaching on the life of the disciple. The stories are based on real-life testimonies. They can be used to encourage faith and raise interest in the importance of studying what God's Word has to say on the topic at hand. You can use them in your church fellowship to invite other participants to the Course, or as part of the introduction to the first lesson. Alternatively, you may read the story below to your students:

My name is Hajar. Let me tell you how the love of God and the love of His church have enabled me to stand in Christ today.

During my prayer time, as I was reading the Word of God, I came upon this verse: 'Remember what I have told you. The slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you, if they kept my word, they will keep yours.'

In my heart, I felt that something was going to happen, but I did not know what. It was as if God was guiding me to expect something and I prayed that I would be able to bear it. It was as if a voice were saying to me, 'You will know me through my Word and you will see my sufferings and experience my resurrection.' The words ran through my being. They were new to my thinking, my experience and my understanding. A wonderful peace came over me and a great desire to continue my reading in a spirit of love. I learnt from the gospel that the Lord endured tremendous suffering for me and that the church and the disciples also suffered much at the hands of their persecutors. They understood that the cause of all this suffering was the hatred of the world and of the evil one for Christ and his followers.

At that time, full of zeal, I told my family about my faith in Jesus. That is when my journey of suffering and persecution began. It started with blows and insults and hitting. My father felt that my faith was an insult to the family and that I was a disgrace in our society. My mother was also very harsh with me. But I endured because my heart was full of peace. I always remembered Christ's warning and his encouragement to be faithful and keep his covenant. Then, they burnt my New Testament, but they did not know that it had become part of my mind and heart.

The cruel treatment continued every time I declared my firmness in my faith. They were afraid that this disgrace would become known in our community, so they decided to shut me up and deprive me of all means of rest and relaxation. In their eyes, I became lower than an animal. However, at every stage of this persecution, Christ was glorified in me through the consolations of his love. They took turns in humiliating and hurting me, but every time I would smile at them and show them I loved them. They could not understand the depths of the love of Christ and the power of his sufferings for me and that nothing could separate me from his love until death.

I went through very hard days and I can say that they still behave towards me coldly, showing no affection. They have accepted the reality of my faith in order to prevent it becoming known in the community, out of fear of people asking questions, whether it be neighbours or family or my work colleagues. I keep in touch with the church and, from time to time, I can communicate with my believing sisters there through social media. They encourage me by their prayers.



Lesson 1: Nothing Can Separate Us from God's Love!

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. To understand that nothing can separate us from the love of God.
2. To embrace God's goal for believers to be conformed to His image.
3. To rejoice that God uses evil for good.



Read Romans 8:14-39 carefully.



In verses 35-39, Paul lists several things that some people might think capable of separating us from the love of Christ.



List and explain each one in your own words in the chart below.

Potential Threat	Explanation
Trouble or tribulation	Torment, distress, affliction
<i>Hardship or distress</i>	<i>Physical and/or psychological suffering</i>
Persecution	<i>Unjust and cruel treatment dealt out by those who hate and lack tolerance</i>
<i>Famine</i>	Lack of food
<i>Nakedness</i>	<i>Lack of clothing, misery</i>
Danger or peril	<i>Lack of security</i>
<i>Sword</i>	Threat of execution (usually by government agents, see Romans 13:4) or violent death more generally
<i>Death</i>	<i>All other means of physical death</i>
Angels and demons or principalities and powers	<i>Fallen angels, enemies of God and of His people.</i>
<i>The present and the future</i>	<i>Everything that can happen in life, good and evil, whatever the future may bring.</i>
<i>Powers</i>	Likely angelic and demonic beings which also influence earthly powers and authorities
<i>Height, depth</i>	<i>All that is above and below, including spirits and evil powers.</i>
<i>Any other created thing</i>	<i>Absolutely everything that exists</i>

Note for the group leader:

As you review their answers you could help participants appreciate the power of God's love by asking to them to share which threat they dread most. Insist that nothing can separate us from God's love.



Which ones have you experienced in your own life? Describe briefly what happened.

Open answer



What future blessings does God have for us?

- *An inheritance (verse 17), glory (verse 18), liberation from bondage to decay (verse 21)*
 - *Bringing us to glorious freedom (verse 21), adoption, redemption of the body (verse 23);*
 - *We shall be conformed to the likeness of Christ (verse 29), justified and glorified (verse 30).*
-



Why do you think the Apostle Paul used the word 'glorious' to describe these blessings? (verses 17 to 23)

Because this word expresses the splendour of the perfection that we will share when Christ establishes his kingdom on the new earth. Having been delivered from decay, we will see him as he really is.



For whom does God work all things together for good? (Verse 28)

For true believers, the chosen ones--all those who are children of God.



Do you belong to this group of people? If you say "yes", how does that happen according to verses 28-30?

(I am his child) because, in His love, he called me according to his purpose and he justified me. I am now a brother or a sister in his family, with Christ being the firstborn.*

**Note for the group leader:*

This is an opportunity to help the student to examine himself and be sure of his place and his relationship with God. We know that we are amongst his chosen ones because:

- 1) The presence of the Holy Spirit in us gives us hope as we wait for the return of Christ and the redemption of our bodies (verses 14-16, 23 and 24).*
- 2) We love God and desire to do his will (verse 28).*

We could also quote other key verses on salvation by faith in Jesus such as Romans 10:9, John 3:16 and 5:24. For a deeper study on this subject, refer to our course 102 "Walk in the light", lessons 1 and 2.



To what has God predestined us? (verse 29)

To be conformed to the likeness of his Son.



How does this verse (8:29) help us to understand the fact that "all things work together for the good" of the elect in verse 28?

Our greatest good is to be like Christ and to be counted as one of His brothers or sisters. We know that God uses "all things" in our lives, even things that are hard to bear, in order to transform us and make us like Christ who died for us.



What assurance or comfort does this passage give you personally when confronted by the difficulties of this world?

Open answer

Here are some possible answers based on this passage:

- *We have the assurance of our salvation.*
- *We will be glorified with Him.*
- *His glory will be revealed in us.*
- *We are adopted as sons.*
- *Our bodies will one day be redeemed.*
- *We have hope.*
- *The Spirit helps us in our weakness.*
- *The Spirit intercedes for us.*
- *All things will work out for good.*
- *We will be more Christ-like.*
- *We are going through the process of being called, justified, and glorified.*
- *God is for us.*
- *God will give us all things we need to stand as a believer.*
- *There is no one who can condemn us in Christ.*
- *Jesus is interceding for us.*
- *Nothing can separate us from God's love.*
- *We are conquerors through Christ.*

Note for the group leader:

Help the group members themselves to find, from the passage, as many as possible in the time you have.



The life of Joseph, the son of Jacob, is a real-life example of Romans 8:28 from the Old Testament. You can read the parallel verse in: Genesis 50:20.



Fill in the blanks. The following words of Joseph, based on his own experience of injustice and suffering, amplify Romans 8:28 by telling us that:

God even uses evil for good for those who love Him.



You can read the story of Joseph in Genesis chapters 37 and 39-50.

Note for the group leader:

To go further, refer to our course BIBL 202 Genesis, lesson 9.



Optional activities

1. Sing a worship song about God's steadfast love for us and His wonderful blessings. Praise Him that nothing can separate us from His love. You can choose your own song or one from the list below:
 - [Nothing Could Ever Separate Us](#), by Citizen Way
Modern worship song, 4 minutes

- [Nothing Can Separate](#), by Lucy Grimble
Modern worship song, 4 minutes
- [He Will Hold Me Fast](#), by Keith & Kristyn Getty
Modern rendering of a traditional hymn, 5 minutes
- [O Deep, Deep Love of Jesus](#), words by S T Francis, tune by T J Williams
Traditional hymn with choir and orchestra, 5 minutes

2. Listen to the story of Joseph or watch a movie telling the story. (Make sure it is biblically accurate.) Then, discuss as a group what we learn about God through this story and what we can learn from Joseph's attitude throughout difficult times.



Applications

1. Rejoice together!!! Share an example of how God turned evil in your life into good. Then praise God together for His power and love manifest in our difficulties.
2. A key verse of this passage is Romans 8:28. Learn this verse by heart for spiritual support in times of trial. In the coming days, repeat this verse regularly.
3. If someone in the group is presently being persecuted, have them share about the persecution that they face. (If no one is being persecuted, share about brothers and sisters who are.) Pray together for them and ask God to fill them with the assurance of his promises in Romans 8:38-39. In the coming days, keep praying for those who are being persecuted. If you can help them in practical ways, do so.

Note for the group leader:

Tell the students that there will be a revision activity at the end of this course. They will be asked to choose one verse that has particularly strengthened them and to learn it by heart. They will also prepare a 3-5 minutes message about this verse to encourage the others in the group with what they have learned through this course. They will include testimonies of how it has impacted their lives. Ask them to start thinking about this.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



Lesson ②: The Certainty of Persecution

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. To understand why the world will hate and persecute Christians.
2. To appreciate the blessings that persecution can bring.
3. Commit to loving and praying for those who persecute them.



How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



Read John 15:18 to 16:4 and Matthew 5:10-12, and 43-45 carefully.



Give three reasons why this world hates those who follow Jesus. Base your answer on what Jesus said in John 15:18-21.

- *Because it hated Jesus first.*
- *Because those who follow Jesus are not of this world.*
- *Because they do not know the One who sent Jesus.*



In John 15:21, who is the One who sent Jesus? Tick the right answer.



God the Father



The Holy Spirit



The angel Gabriel



Jesus said: "They will treat you this way because of my name." Explain how this is true in your personal experience.

Open answer



How is it possible that people can kill followers of Jesus and in so doing think that they are offering a service to God? Base your answer on John 16:1-4.

These people know neither the Father nor Jesus. They are opposed to the name of Jesus and consider his disciples to be heretics who have strayed from the true religion. They think they are doing good by defending the honour of God. This is the very worst religious bigotry.

(To see the example of this bigotry in the life of Saul, who became the apostle Paul, read Acts 26:9-11 and Galatians 1:13,14.)



God promises blessing when we are persecuted for what reasons? (Matthew 5:10-12 – See also 1 Peter 3:13-15.)

If we endure persecution as a result of our righteous living and our representing Christ to a fallen world.



Can you give some examples of persecution God blesses?

Open response.

Note for the group leader:

Encourage students to give personal examples and to determine if they meet the standard of being unjustly treated for Christ's name?



What kinds of blessing is He promising?

He promises us a great reward that is stored in heaven for us. This is about spiritual blessing (of the Kingdom). It could include, that people believe through our testimony, even our persecutors!



According to Matthew 5:44-45, what should we do to those who persecute us?

We must love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.



Why?

Because God loves the unrighteous as much as He loves the righteous. It is easy to love those who love us. Jesus wants his followers to learn to love unconditionally, just as God does.



Optional activities

1. Listen again to the two passages from Matthew 5. Discuss as a group what practical implications Jesus' teaching should have on your life. Pray that you would be able to put this into practice in the coming days.
2. Learn these two passages by heart. Then, play a drama where you are encouraging someone who is going through persecution by reminding him or her of this teaching.



Applications

1. Reflect together on the wonderful privilege we have of knowing Christ, his salvation and the Father who sent him. Praise and thank God for these blessings. Tell him, He is worth whatever hardship we must bear in His name.
2. Make a list of those who have persecuted you (and describe briefly what they have done). Ask God to show you how He wants you to pray for them and then do it.
3. This week, memorize a key verse of your choice that will encourage you and/or others with regard to persecution. In the following days, repeat this verse regularly.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



Lesson ③: Our Priority: Christ above All

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. To be able to explain the promises of God to persecuted believers.
2. To commit to being a witness for Jesus whatever the cost.
3. To commit to loving Jesus more than anything else.



How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



Read Mark 8:31-38 and Matthew 10:16-39 carefully.



Tick the best answer. In Mark 8:34-38, Jesus says that we must take up our cross and follow Him. According to the context, this means:



that I must die as a martyr crucified like Jesus was.



that I must die to my own interests and plans and live for Jesus and the gospel.



that I must carry a wooden cross around with me in life or wear a cross round my neck.



What does it mean to be “ashamed of Jesus and His words” (Mark 8:38)?

Deny that we believe in Him and in the Bible. Refuse to acknowledge (confess) our faith.



Give a practical example.

Open answer.

Here is a possible answer: To deliberately pretend that we are not followers of Christ but that we remain faithful to the religion of the society in which we live.



Explain Matthew 10:16 in your own words.

Jesus speaks of animals in symbolic terms. He sends us as vulnerable (sheep) witnesses amongst those who are dangerous and hostile (wolves) to our faith. We must be shrewd or crafty (crafty is the word used for the serpent in Genesis 3:1 but shrewd is a more positive term). We must be innocent (doves) and uncompromising as we witness; we must know how to seize the occasion.



According to Matthew 10:17-20, for what reason does God allow us to be brought before government officials?

In order to be a witness to Christ. We also learn to trust in our sovereign God in all situations.



About what are we not to worry?

About what to say or how to say it.

Note for the group leader:

This does not mean that we don't need to bother preparing in advance but it is an exhortation not to worry, for God promises to help and inspire us in the hour of need.



Reread Matthew 10:28-39.



According to verses 28 to 31, whom are we not to be afraid of and why?

We are not to be afraid of those who kill the body because God is sovereign in all things. Nobody can harm us without His permission. Any suffering that men can inflict upon us is nothing compared to the suffering in hell that awaits those who remain under the wrath of God. God watches over us even more than He cares for the sparrows.



Give an example of how we can 'acknowledge' Jesus before men (verse 32).

Open answer.

Here is a possible answer: Say that we are Christians before those that ask us what we believe and above all at the moment of a tribunal.



Give an example of how we can of how we can 'disown' Jesus before men (verse 33).

Open answer.

Here are possible answers: Deny insistently, as Peter did, that we know Jesus. Fail to speak up when Jesus is being ridiculed or even pretend to join in.



Matthew 10:37-39 is the key to understanding the preceding verses 34-36. We are to love Jesus more than anything else, including our own family and even our own life. This doesn't mean that we stop loving them, but we are to love Jesus more.



If we live this way, what might the result be? (verse 36)

Members of our own family could become our enemies.



Optional activities

1. As a group, play a drama showing two people facing persecution with different attitudes: the first one has put other people or things before God (spouse, family, job, honour in society, future, finances, his life, etc.). The other one puts God first. Show the consequences of both attitudes. Then, pray individually for God to forgive you if you did not put him first and ask him to help you gain victory in this area.
2. Sing a song of worship proclaiming Jesus as the highest priority in our lives. You can choose your own song or one from the list below:
 - [Jesus, Only You](#), by Kathryn Scott
Modern worship song, 7 minutes
 - [Goodness of God](#), by Bethel
Modern worship song, 5 minutes

- [All I Once Held Dear](#)
Modern rendering of a traditional hymns, 4 minutes
 - [Stand Together](#), from Kingdom Rock
Short modern worship song, 2 minutes, easy to memorise. – Once the group knows the song, you can have them add [the actions](#).
 - [People of the Cross](#), by Selah
Modern worship song, 4 minutes
3. Watch [this video retelling the story](#) behind the song 'I have decided to follow Jesus'. Pray and ask God to help you commit to following Jesus, whatever the cost. Then, sing [the song](#) prayerfully.
- Video – 5 minutes*
Song – 5 minutes



Applications

1. Think of occasions where you have had to choose to follow Christ's teaching rather than conform to the expectations of members of your family. Share these with the group. What was the outcome of your decision? Then, pray for one another.
2. Pray and ask God to show you if you are afraid to do something or if you fear someone because of persecution. In groups of two, share what God has shown you and pray that you would be delivered from this fear. Throughout the week, if you become fearful recite Matthew 10: 28a and 31: "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



Lesson 4: A Response to Persecution: the Apostles

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. To understand the response of the apostles and the early church to persecution by authorities.
2. To be ready to appear before authorities to testify to one's faith.
3. To consider how to wisely give testimony to Christ without fear of authorities.



How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



Read Acts 5:12-42 carefully.



Why did the religious leaders arrest the apostles and put them in prison? (verse 17)

Because they were filled with jealousy.



The High Priest and his associates had given the apostles strict orders not to teach in Jesus' name. (4:18). But they did anyway and were arrested and put in prison. That night the Lord sent an angel to release them from prison.



What did the apostles do immediately the next morning? (verse 21)

They entered the temple courts and began to teach the people.



Why? (verses 5:20 and 4:19-20)

An angel of the Lord had told them to do so and they were to obey God rather than men. They had to witness to what they had seen and heard.



What does 'We must obey God rather than men' mean? (verse 29)

In normal circumstances we are called to obey the authorities that God has established to govern us (Romans 13.1). But when there is conflict between the law of men and that of God, we must obey the law of God, for His law is above that of men.



Give a possible real-life situation for which a believer in your country would have to follow this principle.

Open answer.

Here is a possible answer: When the law of the land forbids buying or reading the Bible.



When men fight against us because we teach about Jesus, who are they really fighting against? (verse 39)

Against God.



Why did the apostles rejoice after leaving the presence of the Sanhedrin?

Because God had counted them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus.



What did they continue doing? (verse 42)

They continued to teach and to proclaim the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.



Optional activities

1. Watch the [Book of Acts movie](#), in particular the section covering Acts 5:12 to Acts 8:4. As you listen, note the outcomes of persecution for different disciples. Discuss as a group how they glorified God whether through their lives or their death.
The episode suggested above is 21 minutes long.
2. Pray for those who are presently persecuted. Ask that they would glorify God whatever the outcome or their trials. Keep praying for them during the week.
3. In times of persecution, disciples who seemed strong will sometimes become afraid and divided. Recall how Peter ended up denying Christ three times (see Luke 22:54-62). How can the church stay close to Christ during persecution? What are some things that a church can do to avoid division and lies? Discuss this as a group.



Applications

1. For which activities is it worth taking the risk of provoking a negative reaction within our family, among our neighbours or from the authorities? Discuss this as a group. Then, pray entrusting yourselves to God's care with confidence that he will give you the grace you need when the time comes.
2. Meditate on the following verse: "The **king's heart is in the hand of the LORD**, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes." (Proverbs 21:1) Then, pray for God to move in the hearts of those who are in authority in your family, your town or your country. This week, continue to pray for the authorities.
3. If someone in the group is presently being persecuted, pray together for them and ask God to remove any fear from their hearts and to help them testify wisely in front of their persecutors. (If no one is being persecuted in the group, pray in the same way for brothers and sisters who are.) In the coming days, keep praying for those who are being persecuted.
4. Discuss as a group how you could encourage and give practical support, either individually or as a group, to those who are being persecuted. Ask God to guide you in this. Decide which steps you need to take to implement this initiative and decide who is going to do what. Then, pray that you would be real encouragers for those who face trials.

Note for the group leader:

In many countries that stand against Christ and his Church, intelligence agencies try to 'divide and conquer' believers. Using rumours and threats, they convince Christians to work with them to weaken the church.

Here are some things that the church can do:

- Expose Christians to stories of believers who have stood firm under persecution and honoured Jesus despite all pressure.*
- Make believers aware of the tactics being used by the enemies of the church.*
- Teach biblical standards of always thinking the best of each other and refuse to believe or spread gossip.*
- Forgive those who have fallen to the temptation of betraying the church and give them a way back into fellowship.*
- Remember how Jesus restored Peter despite his failures.*
- Stand together in prayer and ask for the Lord to bring to repentance those who have been unfaithful and enabled the persecutors.*



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



Lesson 5: Jesus, Our Example in Suffering

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. More fully understand the attitude of Jesus in the face of unjust persecution and torture unto death.
2. Accept to follow his example with patience, joy and hope.
3. Trust God to help and strengthen us through every trial and preserve us unto eternal life.



How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



Read 1 Peter 2:19-25, 4:12-19 and 5:5-11 carefully.



Not all suffering is commendable to God.



Explain what this means according to 1 Peter 2:19-21.

It is only commendable to God if a Christian suffers because of his righteous deeds. But he who suffers because of wrongdoing is not commendable to God, he deserves to be punished.



In 2:21, Peter says that we are to follow in Christ's footsteps regarding unjust suffering.



According to verses 22-23, how did Christ respond to his tormentors?

He committed no sin, did not lie (no deceit), did not retaliate against his torturers, made no threats. He was calm, confident, humble, honest, firm, patient.



What was Jesus' mindset which sustained him while being tortured? (23b-25)

He entrusted himself to God who judges justly. He had a firm hope that his sufferings would bring great blessing of salvation to many.



Re-read verses 4:12-19. Then, tick the correct answers below. A person who suffers for being a believer in Jesus Christ...



can rejoice.



should be surprised.



is blessed by the Spirit of God.



should praise God for the privilege of bearing the name of Jesus Christ.



should not be ashamed.



should stop doing good.



cannot be suffering according to God's will.



How does our 'judgment' now compare with the coming judgment of those who oppose the Gospel of Christ? (4:17-18)

Our time of 'judgment' is now, for a short period. We are persecuted in a world that rejects Christ and all those who follow Him.

The judgement of our persecutors will be eternal and much more severe by the hand of a righteous God.

Note for the group leader:

Peter lays out in detail this judgment in his second letter. See 2 Peter 2. You could refer to it and read part of it together.

We should never hate or envy those who persecute us, but rather have pity on them as they soon face eternal judgment.



This present life is the only opportunity we will have to glorify God through suffering for his sake!



Re-read 1 Peter 5:6-11.

Note for the group leader:

This same text was used in lesson 5 of course 104 on church relationships. It likewise has much to say about hope and victory through suffering. If you have completed 104 you may want to review together what you have already learnt about the passage and build on that with the following questions.



What should we do with all our anxieties? (Verse 7).

We should hand over all our anxiety to God.



What does this mean?

It means telling God in prayer just how we feel, then leave Him to deal with our worries, entrusting them to Him for the future.



How is this possible? Take time right now and put this verse into practice!!!

This is possible because God takes care of us. Compare with Matthieu 11.28,29.



According to 1 Peter 5:9, choose the correct statements from among the following:



I am the only one who is going through this kind of suffering for Christ.



There are many brothers throughout the world who suffer just as I do for Christ.



While I am suffering for Christ, I am to resist the devil and stand firm in the faith.



The suffering that we endure is for a “little while”. What things will the Lord do for us after we have suffered? (Verse 10)

- *Restore us.*
- *Make us strong.*
- *Make us firm.*
- *Make us steadfast.*



In his first epistle, Peter has a lot to say about suffering as a believer in Christ. If you have time, read the whole epistle and note the passages that teach directly about suffering.

Note for the group leader:

For a thorough inductive study of 1 Peter, see the course BIBL 201, Bible Study Methods: 1 Peter, in the next level of the Progressing Together program.



Optional activity

1. Watch the [‘Jesus’ movie](#), in particular the episodes about the trial and the crucifixion of Jesus (Luke 22:39 to 23:49). As you watch, note the different persecutions that Jesus endured and how he reacted. Then, pray that you would become more like Jesus as you face trials and persecutions.

The episode suggested above is 26 minutes long. Start at 1:28:36.

2. Sing a song of worship thanking Jesus for enduring the cross for your salvation. You can choose your own song or one from the list below:

- [From Heaven You Came](#), by Graham Kendrick
Modern worship song, 5 minutes.
- [Thank You for the Cross, Lord](#), by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir
Modern worship song, 6 minutes.
- [When I Survey the Wondrous Cross](#), by Spring Harvest group worship
Modern worship song, 7 minutes.
- [This the Power of the Cross](#), by Stuart Townend
Modern worship song, 5 minutes
- [Above All](#), by Michael W Smith
Modern worship song, 4 minutes



Applications

1. How is God changing your attitude toward persecution to be more conformed to Christ’s perspective? Discuss this as a group. Then, pray together that you would become more like Jesus in the face of opposition. Ask the same thing for believers who are being persecuted presently. In the coming days, keep praying for this.
2. In Acts 9:25, we see the local church helping the future Apostle Paul to escape death. They lowered him in a basket over the wall. How should we work together to help those facing persecution going forward? Discuss this as a group and ask God to show you if there is anything he wants you to do, individually, as a group or through your local

church to help a persecuted brother or sister in danger. If so, decide which steps to take to implement this and, if applicable, who is going to do what. Then, commit this action to the Lord in prayer.

Note for the group leader:

You could refer back to those mentioned in Application questions 3 and 4 of the previous lesson. Have the group discuss whether it is important to consult with the local church leaders before they implement their initiative and how the local church could get involved.



Review of Course 105

Review the five lessons of this Course. What is the most helpful thing you have learned? Share your discoveries with the group.

Ask the students to present the 3-5-minute messages they have prepared based on a verse that has particularly strengthened them and that they have learned by heart. Their message should encourage the others in the group with what they have learned through this course and include testimonies of how it has impacted their lives.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



End of Course Evaluation

Please note:

This End of Course Evaluation is there to help you improve your skills as a group leader.

Put a check next to the issues that you need to work on.

You may want to discuss some of these with your mentor/coordinator.

Number of the Course that you finished teaching:

Title of the Course:

Think about the following questions:

A. This course

☐ Is there something that was not covered sufficiently or that you need to cover again in this course? What are you going to do about it?

B. Your role as a group leader

- ☐ Is there anything you should change in the way you prepare your lessons?
- ☐ Is there anything you should change in your teaching method? (Are you leading the students to discover the answers for themselves?)
- ☐ Is there anything you should change in your attitude as a group leader? (Are you dominating or moderating the group?)

C. Preparation and participation

- ☐ Are the students attending the meetings regularly? If this is not the case, why not? Is there anything that can be done to enable them to do so?
- ☐ Are the students preparing their answers thoughtfully before coming and eager to share what they've learned? What can you do to encourage and further motivate them?

D. Group dynamics

- ☐ Are there students who do not participate or do not feel free to share at a deeper level in the group? If this is the case, why?
- ☐ Are there some who cause problems in the group? In what way? How can you deal with that?
- ☐ Are the students taking responsibilities within the group and serving others using their gifts? If not, what can you do to encourage this?

E. Review & progress evaluation

Are you ensuring students can understand and express what they have studied? If so, how?

- ☐ Answers in class ☐ Review questions ☐ Oral exam ☐ Written exam

Are you keeping a record of the students' progress? If so, how?

- ☐ Attendance ☐ Students' workbooks ☐ Exams ☐ Course register ☐ Student register

☐ Are students achieving in their evaluations? If not, why not? How can you help them improve?

F. Application

- ☐ Are your students putting the biblical truths into practice? If not, why not?
- ☐ What difficulties are your students facing on their spiritual journey? How could you help them overcome these difficulties?
- ☐ Does anyone need personal follow-up? If you cannot do this, whom could you ask?

G. Multiplication

- ☐ Are the participants sharing with others about what they learned? If not, how could you help them to do this?
- ☐ Are others seeking to join a study group? If so, how can you best integrate the newcomers?
- ☐ Have you identified any participants who could become future group leaders? How are you going to equip them?

H. Further group leader training & equipping

- ☐ Note any areas you would like to receive further training in.
- ☐ What else would you like to discuss with your mentor/coordinator?

What next?

- ✓ Praise God and intercede for each of your students.
- ✓ Pray for your own ministry as a discipleship group leader.
- ✓ Look at each of the issues that you want to work on. Decide what you have to do to address these issues. Then start implementing the necessary changes.
- ✓ If you want to discuss something, make an appointment with your mentor/coordinator.

We would love to hear about your experiences as you taught this Course.
Please contact the Progressing Together team: info@progressingtogether.com