



The Perspective of Persecution

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Matthew 5:10-12 (NIV)

Today's Be Attitude: It's not just about what we're willing to die for, but what we're willing to live for.

"You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom." Matthew 5:10 (MSG)

Q—What does your faith provoke?

Putting Persecution in Perspective...

⇒ **It's all relative.**

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

2 Corinthians 4:8-12 (NIV)

⇒ **It's not forever.**

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 1 Peter 1:6 (NIV)

⇒ **We can't take it personally.**

"What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable." Matthew 5:11b (MSG)

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first." John 15:18 (NIV)

⇒ **Not everybody gets it.**

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV)

⇒ **It's worth it.**

Matthew 5:12 (MSG)

⇒ **We are not alone.**

Hebrews 12:1(NIV)

This Week's Spiritual Practice: Arrange a time to meet with a person you don't know well and hear their story.

Hebrews 12:2-3 (NIV)

Q—Are you growing weary and losing heart?



Study & Discussion for Your Next Small Group

Theme: Running Free in the Faith Race

Share Together: What are you thinking and feeling with everything happening currently in our world?

Reflect Together: From Sunday's Online Experience: What impacted you the most from

the message and how were you able to take steps in doing the Spiritual Practice this week?

Read Together: Hebrew 12:1-3

Discuss Together

- Who is in the “great cloud of witnesses”? (Look at all who are listed in Hebrews 11 for help if needed)
- In what ways is their example an encouragement to us? See Hebrews 11:39-40.
- What can hinder us running the faith race? How can sin slow us down and entangle our lives?
- Knowing the word “fix” means to gaze with deep intent, how does looking to Jesus help us run unhindered?
- Why does it matter you personally that Jesus is the pioneer and perfecter of your faith?
- In what ways has your faith been perfected through perseverance?
- What was Jesus' joy, and how could this be? What does it mean to you personally?
- How does Jesus sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God speak of completion, which gives us confidence in Him?
- How can a person become weary in the faith and lose heart? How does what Jesus endured strengthen and encourage us?
- How are you weary and losing heart, for which you could use prayer to help you fix your eyes on Jesus again?

Pray Together: Take time to share what God is doing in answering prayer and also pray over needs in your group.