

1. Persecuted as a follower of Jesus

- a) Peter's first letter begins and ends with the theme of suffering. 1 Peter 1:6; 1 Peter 5:10
- b) Why should we not be surprised when fiery trials come our way?
- c) What types of persecution did Jesus predict?
 - i) Matthew 5:10–11
 - ii) John 15:18–20
 - iii) John 16:2
- d) Peter's counsel regarding persecution
 - i) 1 Peter 2:12
 - ii) 1 Peter 3:13–14
 - iii) 1 Peter 4:12–16
- e) What is the relationship between our suffering and the suffering of Christ?
- f) If we have never suffered persecution, should we be concerned? Is there something wrong with us?
- g) Who is the ultimate enemy behind all persecution of Christians? 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 2:10, 12:12.
- h) Share a time when you were persecuted as a follower of Jesus.
- i) How can we encourage a fellow Christian who is experiencing a fiery trial?

2. Persecution and the promise of judgment

- a) 1 Peter 4:17–19

- b) Why does the promise of judgment bring hope to the followers of Jesus rather than anxiety?
 - i) John 5:22–24
 - ii) 1 John 4:17–19
- c) How has your attitude about the judgment changed as you have grown in your relationship with Jesus?

3. Persecution: an opportunity to give our testimony

- a) 1 Peter 3:15. How can we always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks us to share our testimony?
- b) What does it mean to give our defense “with meekness and fear”?
- c) How does the word of our testimony overcome the enemy? Revelation 12:11
- d) If you were asked to give a 60-second defense for the hope that is in you, what would you say?

4. Examples of persecution in the early Christian church

- a) Stephen the deacon, Acts 7:54–60
- b) Paul and Silas, Acts 16:23–30
- c) Others?
- d) What encouraging promises does Jesus give to all who are called to give a defense for the hope that is in them? Matthew 10:16–20; Matthew 28:18–20
- e) Share other encouraging Bible promises.

