

the good life

CONVERSATION GUIDE

Week 7 (Chapter 8)

When Jesus was with His disciples, He told them, "Remember the word I spoke to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours." (John 15:20) Persecution is promised to followers of Christ, something for which many of us would not willingly sign up. Yet, Jesus says, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs." (Matthew 5:10) Is it truly possible to experience happiness when being persecuted? Jesus goes on to say, "You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me." (Matthew 5:11) In his book, Pastor Derwin writes, "Persecution is like holy fertilizer that sinks into the soil of our hearts and minds, producing Christlikeness as we respond to Jesus in faith. Even persecution is redeemable in God's society." (page 193) Whether or not you have experienced persecution, you can prepare your heart and mind by remembering that Jesus is your defense against lies, security when you feel insecure, and strength when you are weak.

Create a meaningful conversation. Feel free to adjust the questions as needed.

- ◆ Have you ever experienced a backlash for your faith? How did that make you feel? How can you choose to walk with Jesus through this kind of painful experience?
- ◆ What is the difference between persecution/hostility and persecution for righteousness? Why is it important to make this distinction?
- ◆ Read **2 Corinthians 12:8-10**. Do you find yourself taking pleasure in persecution or does this concept sound outrageous to you? How can persecution produce endurance in your life?
- ◆ As you experience persecution, be happy! You have a reward coming. Read **Matthew 5:12**. What is the reward?
- ◆ Read **Psalms 84:11-12**. How does this verse bring you comfort? Do you know someone who is currently struggling in their faith? Share this verse with them and encourage them.

Soul-tattoo: Read this prayer daily.

Lord Jesus,

I do not want to suffer or experience persecution. But I also know that you said, "You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven."

Holy Spirit,

Give me the grace to trust Jesus, even when I do not understand.

Give me the grace to obey King Jesus when it's hard and hurtful.