

5 Skills to Surviving Christian Persecution Script

Some of your friends may not like what they learn about you. That you are a Jesus-follower, a disciple. And they begin to persecute you, tell lies about you, blackball you, and insult you.

But this day is different. You watched this video and are using 5 skills to survive Christian persecution. And you will do more than survive, you will thrive.

INTRO

The first skill is to define persecution.

Hard times happen. Those days when nothing seems to work. Who said Monday's only happen once a week? These kind of days come on everyone. Jesus told us, "Matthew 5:45 ... For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Anyone can have a flat tire in the rain on Monday morning.

But being the target of verbal abuse does not happen to everyone or just anyone. When you are discriminated against because you didn't party with the boss this past weekend, but instead were serving God, that is persecution. When former friends tell lies about you to hurt you because you do right, that is persecution. Persecution comes when you identify with God, his Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Because you are a follower of Jesus and do what is right, that is the difference.

The first skill is to define persecution.

A second skill is to distinguish between suffering for sins and suffering for righteousness sake.

An identified Follower of Jesus will not purposefully sin.

So, if a Christian sins (Ephesians 4:28) by robbing a bank and gets caught, his being sent to prison is God's justice and punishment for sin. It is not persecution. Or, (Galatians 5:20) if a Christian in a fit of anger beats his wife, he may be arrested for assault, or battery, and could do hard time in prison. That is justice, God's punishment for sin. It is not persecution.

But doing right, or being Righteous, means I will stand against what Jesus stood against. He preached that people should repent. Matthew 4:17 “From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Jesus opposed the sin of adultery, and it resulted in persecution. In John 8, a woman was caught red-handed in the very act of adultery. Jesus’ persecutors put the woman in front of him and challenged him to be the deciding vote as to stone her to death or not. Jesus made a statement, and the persecutors left. Then he told her, “John 8:11 ... “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

Jesus was persecuted because he battled the Hypocrisy of the Jewish leadership. He taught against all forms of Untruth. He was against all forms of sex outside the marriage relationship. And he was persecuted.

Being right with God also means i will stand with Jesus on the things he stood for. The Jews hated the Roman government. But Jesus complied with the government and paid his taxes. His apostle, Paul, wrote, Romans 13:1-4 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. (2) Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. (3) For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, (4) for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Your stand WITH Jesus could bring you persecution.

Again, the second skill is distinguishing between suffering for sins and suffering for righteousness.

Your 3rd skill should be to recognize the source of persecution.

It’s a fact. The world hates righteousness and Jesus. Jesus told us, John 3:19-21 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. (20) For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. (21) But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

This “Hatred” of Jesus and whatever is right leads to persecution. Because you are keeping your identity as a Jesus-follower, they will reject you just like they rejected him. Again, Jesus told us, “John 15:18-21 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. (19) If

you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (20) 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. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. (21) But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me."

The haters will pressure you to be un-ethical like they are. They will insult you every way they can. They may think you are condemning them because you don't identify with them any longer.

The apostle Peter wrote, 1 Peter 4:12-16 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. (13) But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. (14) If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. (15) But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. (16) Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

The 3rd skill: recognize the source of persecution

A 4th skill: Keep identifying yourself as a Christian.

Persecution improves Christians. That is worthy of repeating: Persecution improves Christians. Listen to James. James 1:2-4 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, (3) for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. (4) And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Your Persecution for continuing as a Christian produces patience and completeness. Our patience will not improve or increase when everything is easy and wonderful. The extent of completeness is only found when it is being tested.

That 4th skill: Keep identifying yourself as a Christian.

The 5th skill is to Follow The Bible's responses to persecution.

Don't be ashamed to be a disciple. Instead, glorify God. 1 Pet 4:15 (16) Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

Consider your defamation and persecution as an opportunity for joy. You are being recognized as a Jesus-follower. You are noted as being a successful follower. Remember John 15:18 that

we read moments ago. And James 1:2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,”

A Bible response is to Enjoy your improvements. Humble people will be exalted (James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6). Kindness is satisfying. Gentleness is admired. The fruit of the Spirit has no laws against it. “Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” Relish your non-adulterous ways. It leaves your heart intact, without hurt or damage. You don’t suffer physically or mentally because you don’t abuse medications. You can have friends in law enforcement, because you obey the laws, like Jesus did.

Following the Bible’s responses means you will pray for your persecutors. Matthew 5:43-44 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ (44) But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,” Jesus is right. They certainly need your help, and God is capable of changing them. There is a great video already on this subject. You will find the link in the description.

The 5th skill: Follow the Bible’s responses.

When it comes to persecution, Jesus said it best in the Sermon on the Mount, as part of the Beatitudes, “Matthew 5:10-12 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (11) “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. (12) Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

We want you to be recognized as a follower of Jesus. That comes with a substantial commitment to the identity of being like Jesus. And persecution will come. But with the persecution comes your opportunity to thrive. You can do this, with God’s grace, mercy, and help.

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