

# “Abide. John 15”

Week #4

## INTRODUCTION

In our study last week we found that abiding in Jesus enables us to share God’s love with others. But others do not always love us in return. In fact, in John 15:18-27 we see that just as Jesus was hated by the world, we too may be hated. In this study we will consider how are we to respond to the hatred we experience from the world.

### **Ice Breaker (Optional):**

Is there a food that you really dislike, in fact that you would say you “hate”?

## Study Questions (45 MIN)

### **Hated by the World**

#### **Q1. Read John 15:18-19; Luke 6:22**

What is Jesus’ stunning declaration in John 15:18? You probably didn’t consider this when you first decided to follow Christ. How does John explain the reason for this hatred (v. 19?) It is impossible to miss the daily displays of hatred in the world around us. What are some of the most recent events in the news that you feel exemplify a hate-filled attitude? In the beatitudes Jesus says blessed are you when people hate you on account of Him. (Luke 6:22) But we are not seeking to make ourselves hated for just any reason. What are some of the causes of hatred that might be confused with being hated for your faith?

This year Compassion International was expelled from India where it carried out aid to impoverished children in Christian Centers<sup>1</sup>. Are you aware of other instances of Christian persecution around the world? Pause with your group to pray for the persecuted church tonight.

<sup>1</sup>“India Update.” Christian Child Sponsorship - Compassion - Child Charity Organization. Accessed August 18, 2017. <https://www.compassion.com/india-update.htm>.

### **Reacting in Fear**

#### **Q2. Read John 16:33; 1 Peter 2:9-12**

As we become increasingly aware of the hostility directed at Christians, we might find ourselves reacting in fear. What promise in John 16:33 serves to counter that fear? Certainly the early Christian church experienced intense persecution. The book of 1 Peter explains that we are hated in part because we are different than the world. How are believers uniquely described in 1 Peter 2:9? Notice it doesn’t say you *will be*, but that you are now seen this way in God’s sight. To what purpose have you been called (1 Peter 2:9b)? If

you were to be asked to tell how you have seen God’s excellencies displayed in your life, that is His goodness or virtue, what is one thing you would share?

### **Abiding Makes the Difference**

#### **Q3. Read John 15:19-25; 1 John 15:26-27**

It is our abiding in Jesus, and He in us that both makes us the object of the world’s hate, and gives us the power to overcome it. It is natural to seek love and acceptance, but the world’s version of love and acceptance is no substitute for what God offers us. How does John 15:19 explain the two different outcomes of our choice to either abide in the world or abide in Jesus? In light of this reality we might chose to retreat and defend ourselves, or we might choose to conform to the world because we seek acceptance. Where will we find the power to stand for Jesus instead (John 15:26-27)?

### **How this Happens**

#### **Q4. Read 1 Peter 2:10-12**

How does God call us to be holy, separate and different from the world? (1 Peter 2:10-12) If we separate ourselves so completely that we are unseen by the world, then we miss God’s calling to allow our good deeds to be seen so that He is glorified, and to witness to God’s goodness. What does 1 Peter 2:10 tell us we have received from God? In his parable of the wicked servant (Matthew 18:33) we find what is expected of those who have received mercy. This will be especially difficult in the face of those who hate you for your faith. What is one thing we can do when we find it difficult to extend mercy, which by definition is undeserved forgiveness?

### **Wrap-Up**

The more we abide in Jesus, the more the world identifies us with Him. And because He was hated by the world, so will we be. But God has called us to be separate, holy and different from the world. He calls us to return hate with mercy and love, which we can only do because of the power of his Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We are blessed to be a blessing and to represent God and His love to the people of the world.

### **Memory Verse**

*"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.*

*John 15:18 ESV*

### **Prayer (20 MIN)**

*Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life:*

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**Challenge:** *Take time this week to write a list of the “excellencies” of God to remind yourself of how good God really is.*

