

Small Group Questions | A Cautionary Tale | John 15:18-25



Growing up many of us were told "cautionary tales" like don't eat watermelon seeds or swallow bubble gum or go outside with wet hair. For the past couple of weeks in the Gospel of John, we've seen a recurring theme of love. Jesus commanded the disciples to love others. He instructed them to love each other. He instructed them to keep His commands as a way to show their love for Him. Today we have a turn in our passage. Jesus is going to tell his disciples that the world will hate them. It's a cautionary tale but one that will come true. Jesus is preparing them for what will happen to them for following Him. Jesus wants them to know that those who follow Him will endure persecution and be hated.

1. Think of some of the cautionary tales you were told as a kid. It might have been about food, facial features, swimming, what happens with food, or something else. Share one of your favorite examples with the group.
2. **Read John 15:18-19.** Jesus told the disciples they would be hated by the world for two reasons: first, they are not of the world and second, they identify with Jesus. As someone who identifies with Jesus, do you feel like the world hates you for following Him?
3. Think historically for this question. Much of Christianity has experienced persecution for following Jesus. Share some things that seem like persecution and then share things that are really examples of persecution.
4. Have everyone in the group take out their phone and do a quick research on global statistics for persecution and martyrdom against Christians. What does the research data show about persecution that is happening right now? As you think of these statistics, what surprises you most and what saddens you most?
5. **Read John 15:20-25.** Jesus was hated by the world for His words and His works. What are the works of Jesus that are so off-putting to those in the world? What do we like the least about our sin being brought into the light?
6. Most of the American church has yet to experience persecution. When you think of this passage, what are you most fearful about if persecution does come to the American church? How do you think you will respond when it comes?
7. Neal used an illustration of a ladder to explain how we try to straddle the things of the world while walking with Jesus. What are some *things* of the world that you want to let go of so you can cling more to Jesus this year?
8. Close your time in prayer. Pray for those who are enduring persecution.