

## Friends of Jesus in the World

John 15.12-16.4a

In preparing His followers for when He is gone, Jesus explained that we must abide in Him to bear fruit. But we must also be prepared for living in a hostile spiritual environment. Our message of love will be opposed with hatred from the world. Follow Christ...and don't stumble!

## Christians Should Love One Another (15.12-17)

*The model for our mutual love: Jesus*

*What it means to be a "friend" of Jesus*

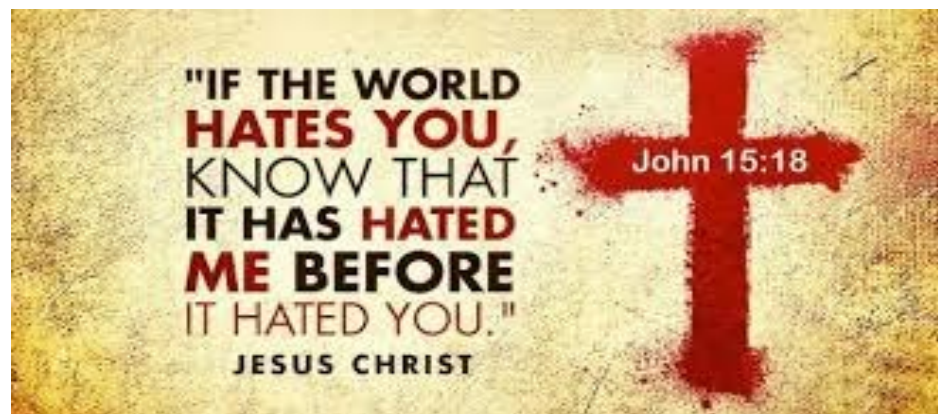
*What Jesus chose us to do*

## Christians Will Be Hated By the World (15.18-16.4a)

*The world hates Christians because it hates Christ (18-25)*

*The Spirit helps us endure the world's hatred (26-27; 14.16-17, 26)*

*Because of this we can avoid stumbling spiritually (16.1-4a)*



1. Jesus prefaces His prophecy of hatred and persecution that His disciples will face (15.18-16.4a) with a focus on love (15.12-17). Let's focus on love first! This section is 'book-ended' with virtually identical commands (vv12, 17). In the verses in-between, how does Jesus characterize His love for us? What shows that we are "friends" of Jesus? What shows that Jesus considers us His "friends"? What is the overall purpose of this 'love relationship'?
2. Verse 18 is an abrupt statement: "If the world hates you, know that it hated Me before it hated you." It's interesting to note that in Jesus' day (and just like today), people wanted to accept Jesus, but not His message: Crowds happily ate His miraculously produced food, but gagged on His teachings. For some examples of this hatred, see John 7.19-20, 32; 8.40; 10.32, 39; 11.53, 57; 12.10, 37.
3. Why did people of Jesus' day hate Him? Why do people hate Jesus today? What is the 'core issue' that people recoil at? See John 3.19-20 and 7.7. When does this 'hatred' show itself today? (What part of a gospel presentation do many people disagree with?)
4. John 15.22-25 has caused confusion. What did Jesus mean when He said that if He hadn't spoken or performed miracles, the Jews "would not have sin"? What sin is He talking about in this context? Although the Jews would have vehemently denied it, how did their hatred and rejection of Jesus show their hatred of the Father as well?
5. John 16.2 is a *specific* prophecy of persecution. In the near-term, the persecution would be religious (put out of the synagogue). But later, it would show itself in violence and killing. This form of persecution is prevalent in the world today. If you haven't exposed yourself to it, please do. Access *Voice of the Martyrs* online ([persecution.com](http://persecution.com)) and read first-hand accounts of Christians standing for Christ in spite of intense suffering. Why did Jesus tell the disciples about this coming persecution (16.1)? How can reading about it help us today?