

4 Victorious Ways to Stand in the Face of Persecution

Are you in the midst of a great trial or moment of great persecution? Have you recently been mistreated and falsely accused? A 10-year fiery trial in my life has finally come to end where I experienced all of these things over and over again. Looking back, there were moments I felt like I was all alone and that the trial was never going to end. There were times I screamed, cried and whispered, "God, I am so tired and weary and cannot do this anymore!" However, God proved faithful time and time again.

Through my pain, fear and weakness endured for over a decade of persecution, I now see God's hand in every aspect and detail. With His help, I refused to give up believing the faithfulness and promises of God and would not give in to the lies of the enemy. If you are experiencing this type of pain in your or a loved one's life, here are four ways we can position ourselves for victory in the midst of persecution.

1. We must stand firm in the fight the right way.

When facing persecution, one of the common mistakes made is trying to figure things out on our own. We ask ourselves, "How am I going to handle and get through this? How am I going to defend ourselves and prove them wrong? What am I going to do?" We must immediately cast the situation to Jesus. The longer we hold on to it, the more painful our experiences will be. There is no room for self-sufficiency in the midst of persecution. It is time wasted and produces zero positive results. Standing firm cannot occur in our own strength. Jesus is the only one who can give us the strength to stand.

But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, most gladly

I will boast in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. So I take pleasure in weaknesses, in reproaches, in hardships, in persecutions, and in distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong (1 Cor. 12:9-10).

2. We must keep our focus on the only truth that matters.

Our circumstances may seem impossible. The situation may seem hopeless. The cases against us may seem to be closing. Our persecution may increase. It is easy to want to give up, especially when all of the odds are against us and it looks like we are losing the fight. However, we need to keep standing for the truth, even if we as followers of Christ are the minority, and even if we are mocked and mistreated by the world. The only truth that matters, the only truth that has the final say, is God's Word.

The preparations of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit. Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established ... A man's heart devises his way, but the Lord directs his steps ... The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole outcome is of the Lord (Prov. 16:1-3, 9, 33).

3. We are not alone. When we face persecution, remember that the great cloud of witnesses before us endured the same treatment, and the generation to follow ours will endure the same treatment. The same hope we found in God's Word through the words of Jesus is the same hope we must emulate in our current and future moments of persecution, because the testimonies that come from our trials will help win souls and encourage the body of Christ.

"You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into

God's kingdom.

"Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don't like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble" (Matt. 5:10-12, MSG).

4. We must keep our eyes on eternity. Those who have gone on before us had to have the same unwavering faith we need now to know God's promises were true, their pain would be momentary and eternal hope was before them. The saints before us endured persecution, and it is no different for us. They have entered into glory, and those of us who will stand until the end will return to our home in heaven forevermore: "Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he is tried, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (James 1:12, MEV).

Citizens of heaven, our seasons of pain and persecution will end. Stay strong in the fight, and do not give in to the enemy's tactics. We must encourage ourselves and one another to hold fast to the promises of God's Word, intentionally spend intimate time with Jesus in prayer and continually desiring the wisdom, discernment, peace and hope of the Holy Spirit dwelling among us. What we are facing and will overcome now will be a testimony of hope for future seasons of persecution in our lives, the lives of those we influence now and the generations to come. Hold on and stand firm, remnant. King Jesus is coming soon!

Look, I am coming quickly. Hold firmly what you have, so that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more.

I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My own new name (Rev. 3:11-12). {eo}

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