

Paul gives an important warning in 2 Timothy 3:12, "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" Note especially two words in this verse. "All" and "will" - ALL who desire to live a godly life... WILL be persecuted! In other words, if we truly want to follow Jesus Christ and live the Christian life the way He showed us in His Word, we WILL be persecuted.

There are some important things we must understand here. It tells us, "All who desire to live a godly life IN CHRIST JESUS". Many people claim to live godly lives, but they don't live according to the standard Jesus Christ set for us. "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24) The world and those around us don't really care if we claim to be "religious", it's when we seek to live a life separated from the world and focused completely and totally on Jesus Christ that they get angry with us, because they aren't the least bit interested in living that way, and when we do - it makes them feel guilty.

And then - the "persecution" comes. It might not always be physical harm. It can be losing their friendship. It can be people saying harmful things about us. There are all sort of ways in which people can persecute others. And according to this passage, if we seek to truly follow Jesus - we WILL receive persecution of one form or another from some people. The truth is - the more we seek to follow Him, the more it will cost us!

However, remember what Jesus told us, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:10-12)