

PHYSICAL OPPOSITION: PETER, JOHN, AND THE SANHEDRIN



Acts 4:1–12

Hebrews 10:30

For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” Hebrews 10:30

BIBLICAL PASSAGE

MEMORY VERSE

Few American Christians face physical persecution. You probably have not gone to jail or been beaten because you follow Christ. Certainly you have encountered opposition to your faith, but your life is probably free of physical persecution. Our Christian brothers and sisters around the world can't say the same.

Read Acts 4:1–12. This passage shows one type of opposition the early Church experienced. They knew the risks of living out their faith in an environment hostile to Christianity. Yet these early believers stood firm for Christ.

How about you? Think of the last time you were ridiculed or scoffed at because of your beliefs. Maybe you have been marginalized in your career because you took a

faith-driven stand. And maybe you have experienced physical persecution similar to that of the New Testament believers. Regardless of how you have been persecuted, you can learn from the example in Scripture.

In Matthew 5, Jesus says that we are blessed when we are insulted or persecuted because of our faith in Him. Jesus said we are to rejoice in our suffering not only because we will be rewarded in heaven but also because we are united in our trials with the saints who went before us.

It may be helpful to consider the quality of your Christian life. Does your family live in such a way as to be so identified with Jesus that you experience persecution?

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL TIME

Connect . . .

Have one person volunteer to be “the defender.” Let the volunteer choose something to defend. This should be something fun like a favorite soft drink, musical group, sports team, or TV show. Take turns asking the volunteer lighthearted questions that make him or her stand up for the item in question. (Ex: “The only reason you like that show is because the lead actor is cute, right?”) When everyone has asked a few questions, have the volunteer state how he or she felt when asked questions.

Explore . . .

Choose someone to read aloud Acts 4:1–12. Read: **The members of the New Testament church stood firm for Christ even though they knew they would be persecuted. Their example gives us a pattern for responding to the opposition we face as 21st-century believers.**

Transform . . .

Discuss: **When have you experienced trouble because of your beliefs?**

Discuss: **Does our family live in a way that tells the world we are Christians? What changes can we make that will help our witness grow stronger?**

Pray together that God will give you confidence in the moments when your faith is tested or challenged.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will prompt you with the right thing to do and that you will hear His voice in your ear.