



# THE LORD'S FLOCK GROWTH DIGEST

## PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES

### “CRUSHED”

(Part 2 of PRESSURE Series)

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Persecution is a program or a campaign to drive away, exterminate, or subjugate people based on their membership in a religious, ethnic, social, or racial group. In terms of religious persecution, Christians are the most persecuted people in the world. As Christians, we should not be surprised by suffering but rather rejoice in God's glory (1 Peter 4:12-19).

- 1. Persecution is a strange thing.** It is strange that God allows His believers to suffer persecution. The Christian act is to stand up against persecution. We will always face the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, while we face people who scoff at our beliefs. However, God told us to pray for the conversion of our persecutors, similar to the life conversion of St. Paul.
- 2. Persecution is an attack on the innocent.** There is a difference in the suffering of persecution between the not guilty and the guilty. The former claims to be persecuted when they are attacked for doing God's work. On the other hand, the guilty party who feels persecution actually feels the pain of correction for the wrongful acts committed deliberately.
- 3. Christian's attitude toward persecution:**
  - 3.1.** Do not be surprised if we are persecuted and have suffered. God chose Job to undergo a series of trials with Satan, though with a limit (1 Cor. 10:13). God wants to build our character and belief in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:6-7).
  - 3.2.** Why does God allow persecution? God wants to test, try and prove us.
- 4. Why is persecution important?**

- 4.1.** Persecution measures our faith. Suffering persecution for Christ should make Christians stand firm in Christ's love.
- 4.2.** Persecution proves our faith and attracts others to Christ. Our strength against persecution makes others delight in our faith in God.
- 4.3.** The Holy Spirit uses our suffering to speak to the hearts of the persecutors and observers. God will speak to those people for the true conversion of their hearts, inspired by the way we handle persecution. Nevertheless, God reminds us to repay persecution with good.
- 4.4.** Our faith is proven to be true and it bears fruit. God is always on the side of the innocent and promises vengeance through Him and not by us. Let us ask for the grace from God and for the peace He promised.
- 4.5.** Persecution helps to form our character to be like Christ. Jesus Christ was ridiculed for His truth, and Jesus declares a reward to those who experience the same (Mt. 5:10-12).

### Conclusion

God did not promise an easy way of following Him. Jesus Himself as well as His apostles suffered for the sake of truth. God allows our suffering through persecution to build our faith and strength for the glory of God. His will is our salvation and in suffering, we save our souls and the souls of others.

### Reflection:

1. How do you deal with persecution in your life?
2. What are the ways you strengthen yourself in the face of persecution?
3. Why do you think God asks us to pray for our persecutors?

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