

# Life Group Discussion Guide

No Greater Love – Part 2: Remaining in Jesus  
Week 3: The World's Hatred • John 15:8–27

During World War I an estimated 1.5 million Armenians were killed by the Ottoman empire. Just decades later, about 6 million Jews were exterminated by Nazi Germany. Fast forward to the 1970s and nearly 2 million political enemies died under Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia. And the list continues: September 11, 2001 in America. October 7, 2023 in Israel. What's next?

What can we say in the face of humanity's violence and hatred? How do we explain this evil that—for all our wealth, development, and education—we can't get rid of?

Scripture places the origin of humanity's struggle somewhere you might not expect: heaven. Revelation 12 tells of how the dragon, known as the devil or Satan, waged war against God's angels. In defeat, it was hurled to the earth where it now, filled with fury, rules the world. And you and I live with the result.

As we turn to this week's passage, Jesus, who is not confused about the true, supernatural source of the world's hatred, prepares His disciples to face it in His name.

- How does it challenge you to consider the source of human conflict as being supernatural? In what ways does it change your perspective of how to address evil and hatred?

## 1. The Reason for the World's Hatred

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me."  
John 15:18–21

In the course of John's Gospel, he has much to say about "the world." His more than 70 references to it could be (very simply) summed up this way: The world does not know the Father, it has the devil as its prince, and it hates Jesus because He testifies to its evil works.

Understanding this, we're ready to follow Jesus' logic in this passage:

- a. First, the world hates Jesus. The reason? He is the Light who testifies against the world's darkness.
- b. Second, because the world hates Jesus, it hates His people. Why? The world is only capable to love its own and, according to Jesus, His disciples have been "chosen out of the world." They no longer belong to it, but to Him.

*“This is really important. We belonged to the world at one point, but then Jesus chose us out of the world. He has the power to remove us from the world, not by taking us out of the world, but by bringing us into His family. And as He brings us into the family, we have defected from the world.”*

- Does your lifestyle reflect that you belong to the world, or to Jesus? Why do you answer that way?
- Have you shown a willingness to face persecution for the name of Jesus? How would your lifestyle change if you were content being hated by the world because of your love for Him?
- Take time now to praise Jesus for delivering you from the brokenness of the world into the wholeness of His family. Express your willingness to be hated by the world because you love Him.

## **2. The Guilt in the World’s Hatred**

*“If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father.”* John 15:22–24

Here, Jesus points to two things to show the world’s guilt in their position of hatred toward Him: His words and His deeds. The world has never heard such wisdom or witnessed such miraculous acts as those of Jesus. When God Himself came to the world, He left it with no excuse. And yet, Jesus laments, “they have hated both me and my Father.”

He continues, “But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: They hated me without reason.” (15:25) In quoting from Psalm 69, Jesus is demonstrating how the Jewish scriptures themselves condemned those who hated Him. There was no reason for the hatred they showed Jesus. But, as Pastor Jon put it, “The world is not driven by reason, but by its love of darkness.”

- Explain how Jesus’ words and deeds reveal the world’s guilt in hating Him.
- Take time now to marvel at God Himself coming to the earth, declaring His wisdom, and demonstrating His power—all out of His great love for us. What a wonder!

## **3. The Witness Despite the World’s Hatred**

*“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.”* John 15:26–27

Here, Jesus’ message to His disciples turns from a somber warning to a reason for hope:

*“Here’s why I love this. He’s saying, ‘Yes, the world will hate you. That’s never going to stop. But do you know what else is never going to stop? The Spirit’s testifying about me.’ And because the Spirit comes and testifies about Jesus, He says, ‘You also must testify.’”*

Jesus' words point us to this week's **Big Idea: Spirit-led Christians don't crack under the world's pressure.**

What does it look like to live an overcoming life—one that doesn't crack under the world's pressure? Pastor Jon shared three ways we fight back against the dragon's rule:

a. Treasure the Blood and the Word

How do we triumph over the ruler of this hateful world? According to Revelation 12:11, "They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."

- Do you cling to the blood and word of Christ like they're your life? Like they're more precious than your life? What would it look like if you did?

b. Rule Your Desires

We must declare war against our worldly desires. Spirit-led Christians don't let the world mold us. We've broken free from that mold by the blood of the Lamb.

- Where is the Spirit convicting you of sin? Are you turning from it? Talk about it.

c. Serve the World

As Christians, we do not retreat from the world. Neither do we return the world's hate with hate. We serve the world, because the world that hates Jesus is the world that God so loved that He gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

- Have you retreated from the world, or returned its hate with hate? Talk about it.
- What would change if, instead, you sought to serve the world in Jesus' name? What would that look like for you, practically?