

2 TIMOTHY

EXPECT WHAT?



TEACH IT HIGH SCHOOL 2 SESSION 8

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- the 2 Timothy Scripture sheets
- the student journal page for Session 8
- his or her own Bible, pen, and notebook

You'll also need—

- a whiteboard and markers
- colored pencils (at least one color per student)
- optional: video shorts that you or students have prepared prior to the session for Digging Deeper: *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra*

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 8

As students experience this session, they will—

- discover life wasn't easy for Paul and Timothy as they followed Jesus in their day.
- discover life won't be easy as we follow Jesus in our day.
- be challenged not only to anticipate persecution for following Jesus, but to experience the benefits of suffering and persecution.

PRAYER

Pray together that the hearts of your students will be soft to what God wants to show them and to teach them in his Word.

OPEN

Whose Slogan Is It Anyway?

In the style of the TV show *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* (a comedy show in which performers come up with sketches and skits on the spot), ask students to make up a few recruiting slogans or ad campaigns that probably wouldn't work. They can write these down in the space provided on the journal pages. Here are some examples:

Fast Food: *Want to gain weight and clog your arteries? Eat here.*

Diet Soda: *Will melt a penny overnight. Think what it can do for your stomach.*

Snack Cakes: *Your favorite source of sugar and lard.*

Ask students to tell the group their favorite creations. To make a game out of it, allow students to vote for the best slogans (two votes per person and no one can vote for his or her own). Award one million “points that don't matter” (a catchphrase from *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*) to the winner, or give a prize to the student who gets the most votes, such as a free burger at McDonald's.

Transition into the study by saying something such as—

There are some things that are attractive about the Christian life—things you'd put in a recruiting slogan, such as eternal life, close friendship with Jesus, God's provision and blessing, and so on.

Those things will attract others. But there's one thing you probably *wouldn't* put in an advertising slogan—and it's that no one said the Christian life would always be easy. Swimming against the current never is easy, and it's what you do most of the time when living the Christian life.


3. Digging In

Heads-Up

Paul gave Timothy a heads-up on the fact that living for Jesus in a secular world wouldn't be easy.

Tell your students—

1. Read 2 Timothy 3:1-13 using your Scripture sheets and mark with colored pencil every mention of suffering or persecution.

2. Let's agree on a symbol to use—a wavy line to represent stormy seas  or a cloud with a lightning bolt  are two possibilities.

When most students have finished reading and marking, ask what they learned about suffering and record their responses on the whiteboard. Ask them to record this info on the journal pages as well.

Suffering

- There will be terrible times in the last days (v. 1).
- People will be abusive, unforgiving, slanderous, brutal, treacherous, rash, and more (v. 2-4).
- People with depraved minds will oppose the truth (v. 8).
- Paul was persecuted and suffered; he endured all kinds of difficulties (v. 11).
- Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted (v. 12).
- Evil men and impostors (fake Christians) will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived (v. 13).

After the facts of the passage are on the board, ask the following questions.

Based on what we've seen, if Paul had written a promotional brochure for Christianity, what might he have said?

Expect persecution. It's bound to come.

What are some ways Christians are persecuted today?

You might discuss other countries where it's not unusual for believers to be tortured or killed for professing Christianity. Be sure to touch on the day-to-day pressures Christians face in the United States as well.

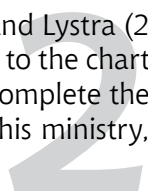
Why do you think persecution is so inevitable?

Remind the group of the picture of unbelievers painted in verses 2-5. According to Paul, unless such people are saved, their behavior will only get worse as time goes on. The next exercise will shed even more light on why persecution is inevitable.

4. Digging Deeper

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra

Your group members may have noticed Paul's mention of what happened to him in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra (2 Timothy 3:11). Divide the group into three subgroups, and assign one of these cities to each. (Refer them to the chart on the journal pages.) They should work as a group to read the passage that deals with their city and complete the part of the chart that applies. They'll be looking for the kind of suffering Paul endured, its impact on his ministry,



and how he was ultimately preserved and protected. Remind them of Paul’s statement in 2 Timothy 3:11: “Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them.”

City	Scripture	Ministry Impact	Suffering Endured	How Paul Was Preserved
Antioch	Acts 13:14, 42-50	<i>The whole city gathered to hear the Word of the Lord; the Gentiles were glad; many believed; the Word of the Lord spread.</i>	<i>Unbelieving Jews were jealous of the crowds and verbally abused Paul and Barnabas.</i>	<i>Paul and Barnabas were expelled from the region.</i>
Iconium	Acts 14:1-7	<i>A great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.</i>	<i>Unbelieving Jews stirred up the crowd and poisoned their minds against Paul; a plot was hatched to mistreat and stone Paul and Barnabas.</i>	<i>Paul and Barnabas found out about the plot and were able to flee.</i>
Lystra	Acts 14:8-20	<i>A man lame from birth was healed.</i>	<i>Paul was stoned, dragged outside the city, and left for dead.</i>	<i>Paul was protected; he got up and walked away from a stoning that should have killed him and went back into the city.</i>

While the groups are reading and discussing, draw the preceding chart on the whiteboard. Then ask each subgroup to give a report on their city. Fill in the chart on the board with the info they give you. Then ask—

Based on what we’ve just seen, do you see any connection between persecution and the impact of Paul’s ministry?

There seems to be a direct connection between ministry impact and persecution. Paul was three-for-three in these cities with regard to impact and persecution. Every place he experienced ministry impact, he also experienced stiff persecution.

What about your own Christian influence or ministry?

Try to encourage your students to think of times they’ve been persecuted. Some examples of persecution are being labeled a bigot or prude or teachers not respecting their beliefs.

Agree or disagree: If you’re not experiencing persecution in some way, then you must not be seeking to live a godly life.

This is pretty much what Paul said: If you seek to live a godly life, you will be persecuted. But bring up the fact God has also promised to protect us and keep us. Push students to think through whether it’s possible to live a godly life in our ungodly world without experiencing persecution.

VIDEO SHORTS OPTION

This is for the budding filmmakers in your group. One or two weeks prior to your session, divvy up these three scenes to three different students (one scene per student), and ask them to create a two-to-three-minute video of the action in the scene. Instruct them to be sure they highlight the information asked for in the chart above. They can recruit other students as cast or crew. Encourage creativity using tools such as stop action, illustration, or animation. Show these shorts rather than reading the passages. After viewing each video in your group session, list the information on the whiteboard about each scene.

5. Cross-Checking



The Puzzle of Persecution

Point out the fact that because suffering and persecution are inevitable (remember 2 Timothy 3:12), it might be smart to get a handle on how to deal with it.

Ask your group members to do this next exercise as a personal retreat with God. Explain—

- 1. Find quiet spots where you can get alone with God.**
- 2. Take your Bibles, pens, and journal pages.**
- 3. Read each Scripture passage listed under Cross-Checking on your journal pages and record as much information as possible in the chart. Remember that you'll be reading the very words of God, so keep your hearts soft.**

The possible observations are printed below for your reference:

Scripture	The Source of Suffering or Persecution	How Difficult Is It?	Who Said We Should Expect It?	Any Promises You Can Claim?
John 15:18-21	<i>the world</i>	<i>It could be as intense as what Jesus faced.</i>	<i>Jesus</i>	<i>Jesus has chosen us out of the world. The only reason they may hate us is that they hated him first.</i>
John 16:33	<i>the world</i>	<i>It's inevitable—we will have trouble.</i>	<i>Jesus</i>	<i>Have peace and take heart; Jesus has overcome the world.</i>
Ephesians 6:10-13	<i>the Devil and his dark forces</i>	<i>It's described as all the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.</i>	<i>Paul</i>	<i>After we've put on the full armor of God, we'll be able to stand our ground.</i>
1 Peter 4:12-16	<i>insults from the world</i>	<i>It's painful.</i>	<i>Peter</i>	<i>-We will be overjoyed when Jesus' glory is revealed. -We are blessed because God's Spirit rests on us.</i>
1 Peter 5:8-10	<i>the Devil</i>	<i>The Devil is prowling like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.</i>	<i>Peter</i>	<i>After a little while God will restore us and make us strong, firm, and steadfast.</i>

6. Taking It Inward

Personal Puzzle

Call the group back together. Ask students to look over their Puzzle of Persecution chart and circle the passage they found either the most helpful or the scariest. Then ask volunteers to share what they circled. Make sure you touch on each of the passages in this discussion.

Next prompt the discussion with the following questions.

What kind of suffering do you think these verses are referring to?

Draw out the fact these passages seem to be referring to a suffering that comes from trying to live a godly life in an ungodly world—suffering from temptation, sin, or persecution. Stress that persecution doesn't always mean being



thrown in jail for your beliefs; it can simply be oppressive treatment. This helps us understand why persecution is inevitable.

Describe a time when you suffered or faced persecution because of your beliefs.

Reiterate to your students that suffering comes in many forms, such as temptation, sin, or persecution.

Does this make anybody want to quit trying to live a godly life?

Use this question to draw students toward the promises they uncovered in their Puzzle of Persecution. Stress that this persecution comes because we love Christ more than we love the world.

Did you see anything in 2 Timothy 3 that could encourage you when you're suffering?

Highlight the fact Paul himself was facing persecution when he wrote this letter. Also, suffering and persecution are guaranteed, but God promises to rescue and restore.

7. Wrapping It Up

Praying the Promises

Ask students to share with the group any suffering or persecution they're anticipating this week (such as persecution from friends, coworkers, family, or even routine temptations).

After a few minutes of sharing, follow the Holy Spirit's lead in how you want to wrap up. Maybe you want to gather around and pray for one particular student or have students divide into small groups and pray for each other.

First read Psalm 34:17-22, and make the promises in this passage the launchpad for your prayers.

The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken. Evil will slay the wicked; the foes of the righteous will be condemned. The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him. (Psalm 34:17-22)