

Small Group Guide: Standing Firm in Victory

Based on John 15:18-27



Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and help you apply God's Word to your lives.

Icebreaker Question

What's a time when you felt like you were losing, but ended up winning in the end? How did that experience shape your perspective?

Key Scripture

John 15:18-27 (Read aloud together)

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **We should not expect to be free from difficulty** - If Jesus faced persecution despite living perfectly, we will certainly face opposition as imperfect followers.
 2. **The world's hatred confirms we're on the right path** - When we face persecution for Jesus' name, it's evidence we're following Him faithfully.
 3. **The Trinity works together for our redemption** - The Father sends the Spirit through the Son, guiding us back to the Father.
 4. **The mission extends beyond any individual** - The church continues even when individual believers face setbacks or persecution.
 5. **We're on the winning team** - Death, the enemy's strongest weapon, has already been defeated by Christ.
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. In verses 18-19, Jesus says "the world hates you." What does Jesus mean by "the world" in this context? How is this different from the physical world God created?
2. Jesus quotes Psalm 69:4 - "They hated me without a cause." Why is it significant that Jesus was hated despite living perfectly? What does this tell us about the nature of opposition to truth?
3. What does verse 26 teach us about the role of the Holy Spirit? How does the Spirit testify about Jesus?

Personal Reflection

4. Have you ever experienced pushback or opposition for standing up for your faith? How did you respond? Looking back, what would you do differently?
5. The sermon mentioned "counting it all joy when you fall into various trials" (James 1:2). Is this your natural response to difficulty? Why or why not?
6. In what areas of your life are you tempted to compromise your faith to avoid conflict or persecution? What makes those areas particularly challenging?

Going Deeper

7. The sermon emphasized that "if you hate the Son, you hate the Father." How does this challenge the modern idea that you can love God while rejecting Jesus?
8. Jesus tells His disciples "you will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning" (v. 27). How does being with Jesus equip us to be witnesses? What does this look like practically in our daily lives?
9. The pastor used a football analogy about being on the winning team. How does remembering that Christ has already defeated death change the way you face opposition or cultural pressure?

Current Application

10. The sermon mentioned that over 7,000 Christians have been killed in Nigeria this year for their faith. How should awareness of global persecution affect:
 - Our prayers?
 - Our gratitude for religious freedom?
 - Our boldness in sharing the gospel?
 11. In what ways is the culture trying to "change the hearts of men and turn us away from the moral standards and principles of God"? Where do you see this most clearly?
 12. How can we "keep fighting, keep digging" when it looks like "all the chips are down"? What practical steps can we take to maintain spiritual endurance?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Stand for Truth Identify one area where you've been silent about your faith out of fear. Pray for courage and look for an opportunity to graciously share truth this week.

Option 2: Encourage the Persecuted Research organizations that support persecuted Christians globally. Commit to praying daily for believers facing opposition and consider supporting them financially.

Option 3: Strengthen Your Team Reach out to a fellow believer who may be facing opposition or discouragement. Remind them they're on the winning team and encourage them in their faith.

Option 4: Study the Trinity Spend time this week reading John 14-17. Journal about how understanding the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit working together) deepens your appreciation for redemption.

Reflection Questions for Personal Journaling

- Where am I most tempted to compromise my faith for acceptance?
 - How can I better remember that I'm on the "winning team" when facing daily challenges?
 - What does it mean practically for me to "bear witness" about Jesus?
 - Am I more concerned about the world's approval or God's approval?
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Prayer Focus

Praise: Thank God that He has already defeated death and secured our victory.

Confession: Confess areas where you've compromised truth or feared man more than God.

Intercession:

- Pray for persecuted Christians worldwide, especially in Nigeria and other hostile regions
- Pray for boldness to stand for truth in your workplace, family, and community
- Pray for unity in the global church despite theological differences

Petition: Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit, who testifies about Jesus and gives courage to witness.

Closing Thought

"We are part of the team that has Jesus on it. Our God defeated death. Death is the strongest weapon the enemy has against us, and it's already been defeated."

Remember: You're not fighting for victory—you're fighting from victory. Christ has already won.

Next Steps

- Memorize John 15:18-19 this week
 - Share one insight from this discussion with someone outside your group
 - Come prepared next week to share how God worked through your practical application choice
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Additional Resources

- **Book:** *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis (especially Book 4 on the Trinity)
- **Book:** *The Great Divorce* by C.S. Lewis
- **Video:** Look up testimonies of persecuted Christians to deepen your understanding and prayer life
- **Study:** Research the Council of Nicaea and the Nicene Creed for deeper understanding of Trinitarian theology

5-Day Bible Reading Plan: Standing Firm in Victory



Day 1: Chosen Out of the World

Reading: John 15:18-21

Devotional:

Jesus reminds us that we are chosen out of the world, not of it. This distinction comes with a cost—the world will hate us as it hated Him first. Yet this opposition confirms we're running in the right direction. When you face resistance for your faith, remember you're following in Christ's footsteps. He lived perfectly and still faced crucifixion; we who live imperfectly should expect no better treatment. But take heart: this persecution is not defeat—it's evidence you belong to the winning team. Consider it joy when trials come, for they prove you're advancing the kingdom. Stand firm today, knowing your identity is secure in Christ, not in the world's approval.

Day 2: The Spirit of Truth

Reading: John 15:26-27; Galatians 4:4-7

Devotional:

The Trinity works in perfect harmony for our redemption. The Father sends the Spirit through the Son, and the Spirit testifies of Jesus, leading us back to the Father. This divine choreography isn't just theological theory—it's the pathway of your salvation. The Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, points you to Jesus as the only way, and through Him you access the Father. Today, recognize the Spirit's work in your life. He's not distant or abstract; He dwells within you, crying "Abba, Father," affirming your adoption as God's child. You're no longer a slave but an heir. Let this truth transform how you pray, worship, and live, knowing the fullness of God pursues your heart.

Day 3: Bearing Witness from the Beginning

Reading: John 15:27; Acts 1:8

Devotional:

The mission didn't end with Christ's ascension—it extended through the apostles and continues through you. Jesus told His disciples, "You will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning." You may not have walked with Jesus physically, but through His Word and Spirit, you've been with Him too. The church advances not through one person's effort but through a team unified in purpose. When one player falls, others continue the advance. Your testimony matters. Someone needs to hear how Jesus transformed your life. Don't underestimate your role in God's kingdom expansion. Today, ask God for courage to share your faith, knowing you're part of a mission that cannot fail.

Day 4: Victory Over Death

Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:54-58

Devotional:

Death is the enemy's strongest weapon, and Christ has already defeated it. This truth changes everything. When culture opposes you, when persecution intensifies, when everything seems lost—remember the empty tomb. The resurrection isn't just historical fact; it's your future guarantee. Because Jesus rose, you will too. This hope isn't wishful thinking—it's settled reality. The second half of the game is already won. Whatever losses you experience now are temporary setbacks, not ultimate defeat. Stand firm and immovable today. Let nothing move you from this confidence. Your labor in the Lord is never in vain because you serve a risen Savior. Face today's challenges knowing death itself couldn't stop God's plan, and neither can anything else.

Day 5: The Team That Cannot Lose

Reading: Romans 8:31-39

Devotional:

You're on a team that has Jesus—the team that cannot lose. When it looks like all the chips are down, when the enemy seems to be winning, when culture appears to have taken over—keep fighting, keep digging. The mission extends beyond any individual. God's kingdom doesn't depend on your perfection or even your success; it depends on Christ's finished work. Nothing can separate you from His love. No persecution, hardship, or opposition can snatch victory from your hands because it's already secured in His. Today, stop measuring success by worldly standards. You're not called to win by the world's scoreboard but to remain faithful to the One who's already won. Stand courageously, love boldly, and speak truth, knowing eternal victory is yours.