

# hated by the world

*selections from Matthew and John*

**Nobody likes being hated.** Hatred from the world, however, is to be expected by the Christian. The teaching of Jesus about this was not intended to make us comfortable, but to present truths that we should prepare for and understand.

## ▶ Read Matthew 10:34-39

- ▶ Christians often talk about the peace Jesus brings. Yet in verse 34, He says that He came to bring conflict rather than peace. What kind of division could Jesus bring?
- ▶ Verses 35 and 36 talk about the sad fact that a person's faith may cause conflict in his or her home. What specific relationships are mentioned? Why do you think this happens?
- ▶ What could happen if a Christian made one of his relationships a greater priority than his or her relationship with Jesus?
- ▶ There are many types of crosses that Jesus' followers must carry. Name a few.
- ▶ A paradox is a statement that seems contradictory but carries the possibility of getting resolved. How would you resolve Jesus' paradoxical statement in verse 39?

## ▶ Read John 15:18-21

- ▶ In these verses, Jesus talks about the treatment His disciples may expect from "the world."
  - a. Who is "the world"?
  - b. How does "the world" feel and act toward Christians?
  - c. Why?

## ▶ Read John 16:33

- ▶ Read John 16. Jesus gives His disciples a lengthy discussion about the things that were going to happen to them. (Jesus is never fuzzy about expectations.) First of all, why did Jesus tell them these things? Secondly, what difference does it make that Jesus has overcome the opposition when it's still giving us trouble?

### Matthew 10:34-39

<sup>34</sup> "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— <sup>36</sup> a man's enemies will be the members of his own household."

<sup>37</sup> "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. <sup>38</sup> Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup> Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it."

### John 15:18-21

<sup>18</sup> "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me."

### John 16:33

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

»mon

Take a moment and read John 15:9-25. In this passage Jesus assures His disciples of His great love for them. Today, thank God for choosing you and showing you His wonderful love.

»tues

Jesus warns His disciples of the rejection He and His followers will experience. Ask God to give you the courage and power to stand up for Christ.

»wed

Think of a recent time when you were rejected because of Christ. Perhaps someone made fun of you because you refused to go along with the crowd. Pray for the people who put you down or excluded you.

»thurs

God has given us the Bible to help us know how to please Him. Ask God for the discipline to study His Word each day and the strength to do what it says.

»fri

Often we see our friends and even family members making immoral decisions. Pray that you will be a godly example and not give in to the temptation to make the same kinds of choices.

»sat

It's painful to be rejected by your friends and family for standing up for Christ. Bring this hurt to Jesus and ask Him to comfort you.

“A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.”  
—John 15:20b

# PERSECUTION of the Early Church

From Fox's Book of Martyrs, written in 1553.

The first persecution of the church took place in the year AD 67, under Nero, the sixth emperor of Rome. This monarch reigned for the space of five years, with tolerable credit to himself, but then gave way to the greatest extravagancy of temper, and to the most atrocious barbarities. Among other diabolical whims, he ordered that the city of Rome should be set on fire. This order was executed by his officers, guards and servants. While the imperial city was in flames, he went up to the tower of Macaenas, played upon his harp, sang the song of the burning of Troy, and openly declared that “he wished the ruin of all things before his death.” Several thousands perished in the flames, were smothered in the smoke, or buried beneath the ruins.

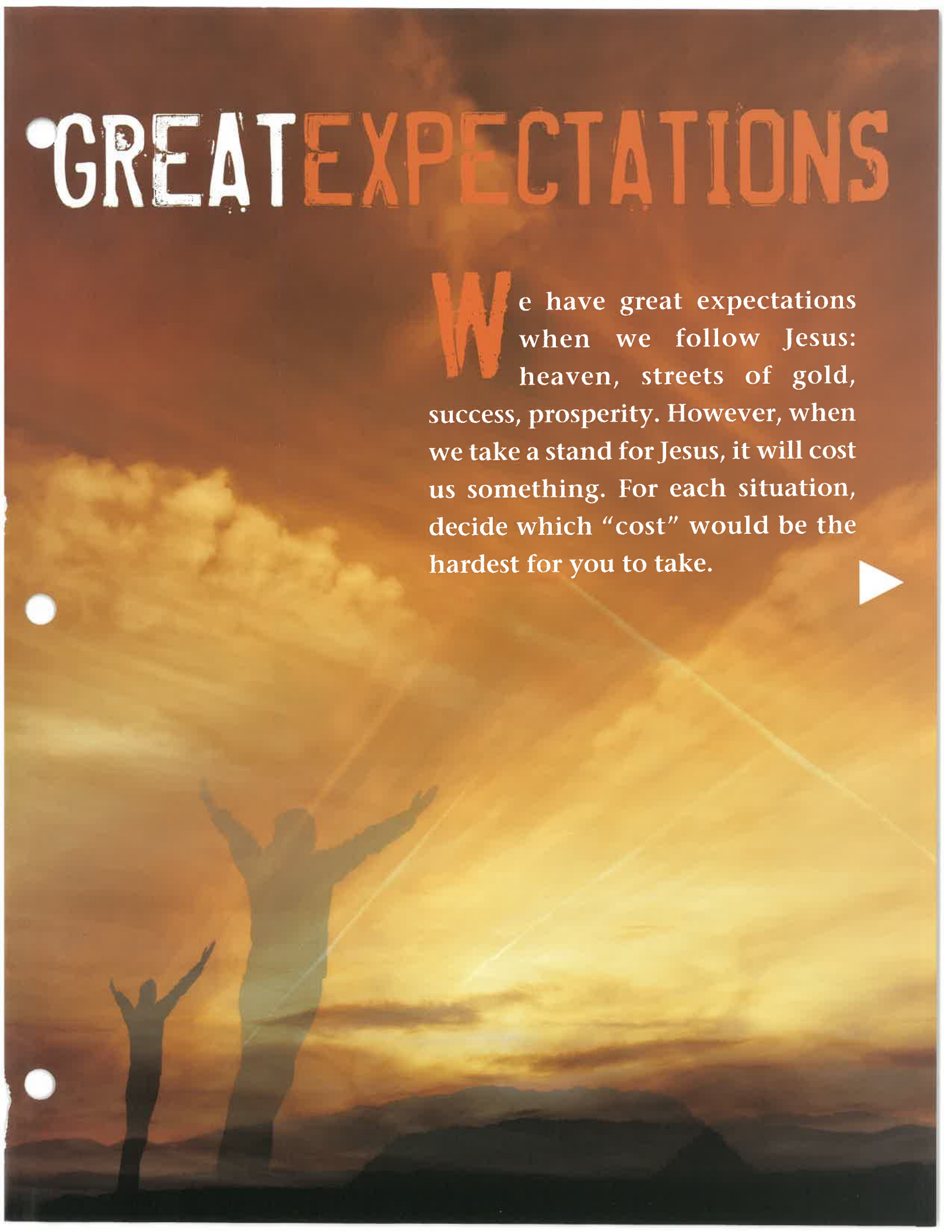
This dreadful fire continued for nine days; when Nero, finding that his conduct was greatly blamed,

determined to lay the whole upon the Christians, at once to excuse himself, and have an opportunity of glutting his sight with new cruelties. This was the occasion of the first persecution. Nero even refined upon cruelty and contrived all manner of punishments for the Christians that the most infernal imagination could design. In particular, he had some sewed up in skins of wild beasts and then torn apart by dogs until they died; others dressed in shirts made stiff with wax, fixed to trees, and set on fire in his gardens, in order to illuminate them. This persecution was general throughout the whole Roman Empire, but it increased rather than diminished the spirit of Christianity.

When the Christians received martyrdom, they were ornamented and crowned with garlands of flowers; in heaven, they received eternal crowns of glory.

# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

**W**e have great expectations when we follow Jesus: heaven, streets of gold, success, prosperity. However, when we take a stand for Jesus, it will cost us something. For each situation, decide which “cost” would be the hardest for you to take.



# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Write a 1 if it would be the least difficult for you, a 2 if it would be somewhat difficult for you, and a 3 if it would be the most difficult.

- At nine o'clock Sunday night you get a desperate call from a friend. He hasn't read *Jane Eyre* and the assignment is due Monday, first period. He asks you to tell him what the book is about so he can write the report. You say no because it wouldn't be fair and it sounds like cheating.

## COSTS

- a. Your friend says, "You call yourself a Christian, and you won't even help me." \_\_\_\_
- b. Your friend hangs up, angry with you. \_\_\_\_
- c. Your friend tells you that he'll get back at you for this. \_\_\_\_

- A co-worker wants the day off, so he asks you to lie and say he's sick. He says the boss won't know the difference. You refuse to lie.

## COSTS

- a. The co-worker does everything possible to make your shift miserable. \_\_\_\_
- b. The co-worker spreads rumors about how you lie to get extra days off. \_\_\_\_
- c. The co-worker calls you names, none of them too flattering. \_\_\_\_

- You work with another Christian whom you like a lot, especially the way she tells others about the Lord. But people resent her "preaching" when she doesn't get her work done. On one of your breaks, you casually mention that maybe she should concentrate more on her work.

## COSTS

- a. She says that you're ashamed of the Lord and she'll pray for you. \_\_\_\_
- b. She refuses to talk to you anymore. \_\_\_\_
- c. She accuses you of judging her, and that's a sin. \_\_\_\_

- As a Christian, you decide to obey God's Word and not have sex before you're married. The guy you've been dating agreed with you. Six months later, however, he wants you to have sex with him—especially if you love him. You stick with your decision.

## COSTS

- a. Your boyfriend breaks up with you. \_\_\_\_
- b. Your boyfriend tells other guys never to go out with you. \_\_\_\_
- c. Your best friend teases you about being a virgin. \_\_\_\_

- Your boss schedules you to work more hours than are legal for a kid your age. He says no one cares enough to report it; besides, you pick up extra hours. You don't work the extra hours and then tell your parents, who decide to report it.

## COSTS

- a. You're fired. \_\_\_\_
- b. Your boss schedules you to work less than anyone else works. \_\_\_\_
- c. Eventually your boss is fined, and as a result of the fines, your boss lays off all the part-time employees. \_\_\_\_

- Your friends are gossiping about a classmate. Instead of joining in, you say something really kind about the person. In fact, you know that the gossip is totally untrue.

## COSTS

- a. Your friends laugh at you and continue gossiping. \_\_\_\_
- b. There's dead silence after your comments. \_\_\_\_
- c. You find out later that you weren't invited to a party because of what you said. \_\_\_\_

