

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP, CLASS AND FAMILY REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

MARKED AND DRIVEN OUT FOR FOLLOWING JESUS CHRIST

MOSUL, IRAQ — JUNE 2014

Ten years ago, the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) began marking Christian homes and churches with the Arabic letter “n,” or ن, as its fighters overran parts of Iraq. The symbol (“n” for “Nazarene”) claimed buildings belonging to Christians as the property of the Islamic State and served as a threat to all believers in the area.

Those marked with the ن had a decision to make: Convert to Islam, flee or die.

More than 100,000 Christians were forced to flee in extreme heat. Most escaped with only the clothes they wore; many died on the road or were captured by ISIS.

Separated from their loved ones, whereabouts known only to God, these bold Christians refused to deny Christ. They willingly gave everything for the Savior who had given his life for them.

PLEASE VISIT VOM.ORG/MARTYR TO WATCH THE FREE SHORT VIDEO REMEMBERING THE SACRIFICE OF CHRISTIANS LIVING IN MOSUL, IRAQ, IN JUNE 2014.

What were your initial thoughts, feelings and questions as you watched the video?
What about this story inspires or challenges you?

What behaviors of those living in Mosul would have obviously identified them within their community as “followers of Jesus of Nazareth”?

Do you think our Christian brothers and sisters considered the risk of publicly living for Christ? Why or why not? Did they expect persecution? Why or why not?



“All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12).

READ 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-12.

“You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

What does Paul write to Timothy regarding the reality of persecution? Paul referred to enduring his own persecution (v. 11) — what encouragement do other members of the body of Christ gain from Paul’s testimony? When Christians who live godly lives know that persecution is to be expected, how might that better prepare them for experiencing persecution?

Why do you think our brothers and sisters in Christ in Mosul made the decision to follow Christ faithfully in the face of persecution? Was it an easy decision? Why or why not?

When others in your community watch your life and behavior, would they first describe you as a follower of Jesus? Why or why not? What competing identities have you allowed to overtake your primary identity as “follower of Jesus of Nazareth”?

As you strive to live a more godly life in Christ, what behaviors and activities will you continue to pursue, no matter the opposition you face?

WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE? ARE YOU “N”?

Heavenly Father,

I have been inspired by my persecuted Christian brothers and sisters, and I ask that you empower me to take active steps so I can grow in

SACRIFICE: I will count the cost of discipleship and willingly pay the price because you are worth it.

COURAGE: I will not be paralyzed by fear because you empower me as I take risks to witness for you.

JOY: I will rejoice in the midst of my struggles and suffering in this world because of the eternal hope I have in you.

PERSEVERANCE: I will stand firm, resisting any opposition. By your strength, I will endure and overcome.

FORGIVENESS: I will allow you to work in my heart as I obey you by loving my enemies and forgiving others as you have forgiven me.

FAITHFULNESS: I will not allow adversity to cause me to be unfaithful to your Word or disobedient to your purposes.

Lord, help me be mindful of my Christian brothers and sisters so I will never let them suffer in silence, nor will I let them serve alone. I will let their testimonies inspire me to follow you. *I am n.*

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

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