

## Hated by the world

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FOR READING & MEDITATION &ndash; ROMANS 12:1-8

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (V.2)

The verse of John 17 that now engages our attention is this: &lsquo;I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world&rsquo; (v.14).

Earlier we saw that one of the marks of a Christian is that he or she does not belong to this world. Our Lord refers to this fact several times in His prayer because it is a matter of supreme importance. We can&rsquo;t get very far in the Christian life unless we remember that we and the world are going in different directions. This is why we must make sure, as Paul reminds us in the text at the top of this page, that our thinking takes place in the context of Scripture rather than in the framework of worldly philosophies.

Another fact we must not fail to recognize is that once we come over on to the side of Christ then the world will hate us. Listen again to the words our Lord uses in His prayer: &lsquo;I have given them your word and the world has hated them.&rsquo; We should not be surprised about this for, as Jesus told the disciples in John 15:18-19, &lsquo;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.&rsquo; Does the world hate us as it hated our Lord? I think not. If we lived the way we ought to live then the world would be far more hostile to us than it is.

Should we then go out of our way to court opposition, to deliberately set out to antagonize people so that they might persecute us? No, for love of persecution reveals an unhealthy personality; it is masochism. The world did not hate Jesus because He was deliberately antagonistic. It hated Him because of his sheer purity and holiness. It must be the same with us also.

Father, can it be that we Your people reflect so little of Your purity and holiness that the world does not notice us? If so, forgive us. Make us more like You &ndash; whatever our circumstances. In Jesus&rsquo; name we ask it. Amen.