

## Why are we not more hated?

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FOR READING AND MEDITATION &ndash; 1 JOHN 3:11-24

&lsquo;Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.&rsquo; (v.13)

We continue with the point we made yesterday, namely that the closer our relationship to Christ the more likely it is that the world will hate us. The world never hates the imitation of Christianity, the spurious and the false, but it hates the real thing &ndash; inevitably.

Many years ago I used to wonder why the men and women of the world do not hate the non-Christians who are ethical and moral but they hate those who live the kind of life the New Testament instructs us to live. Then I read this by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones: &lsquo;The world, in a sense, likes the moral man. It never hates him because it realizes that he is acting in his own strength, and in that way he is paying a compliment to fallen human nature. The world hates the true Christian because Christ Himself and the true Christian condemn the natural man in a way that nobody else does.&rsquo;

In a strange way non-Christians detect that a true Christian is not depending on their own strength and ability but on the strength and ability of Another &ndash; and that runs counter to their pride. The ultimate problem with the human heart, we must remember, is that of pride, and this is why moral people are the ones who so often hate Christ most of all. A poor sinner who is &lsquo;down and out&rsquo; never hates Christ as much as the one who is &lsquo;up and out&rsquo;. Self-centred moral people who rest on their own laurels hate Christ because they sense that He is going to condemn their prideful self-effort and call them to trust in Him. When they see a Christian drawing on Christ for their life, and depending on Him to make their life work, they end up hating that Christian just as much as they hate Christ.

O God, if being for You means the world is against me then I accept that, for I belong to You and I am on Your side, Help me to be more like Jesus and less like the world. In his name I ask it. Amen