



They Hate Me

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you” (John 15:18).

Sarah climbed into the pickup truck and leaned her head against the headrest as a heavy sigh escaped her lips. Dad studied her for a long moment. “What happened?” he asked softly. “Did you fail a test? Did your baseball team lose at recess? Did someone say something mean to you?”

Sarah watched the students hurrying by, heading for the school buses. “No, no, and . . . yes,” she said.

“You want to talk about it?”

“I just want to be a good disciple.”

“I know.”

“I just want to share God’s love.”

“I know.”

“So how come when I told my classmate Peter that he shouldn’t cheat on the math test and instead I would help him learn how to multiply numbers by nine, he said, ‘Leave me

alone. Just go away! I don’t need your help!’ Then he called me a bad name.” Sarah paused. “He hates me. He just hates me.”

Dad blinked. “Wow. That had to hurt.”

“And some of the other kids said I was only trying to impress Peter with my math skills. Now they hate me, too.” Sarah shook her head. “Being a disciple is the pits!”

Sarah’s father steered the truck out of the parking lot and headed toward home. “May I share a Bible text with you?” he asked.

“Sure, why not,” Sarah said without emotion.

“John 15:18: ‘If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first’ [NIV].”²

Sarah frowned. “Who said that?”

“Jesus.”

“Really?”

“Yup. In the very next verse He said, ‘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’ [NIV]. Some people hated Jesus when He wanted to help them.”

“Why?”

“Well, some folk don’t trust God’s love. They think it’s like

earthly love, where you need to pay it back. They think that if you’re kind to them, then you must want something in return, and whatever it is, they don’t want to do it.”

“Oh, that’s silly,” Sarah breathed. “I just wanted to help Peter pass the test and not get into trouble.”

“That’s because you’re demonstrating God’s love, not earthly love. Jesus cared for others simply because He loved them and wanted them to do what was right. But some people didn’t want to do what was right, so they rejected Jesus. And they hated Him.”

Sarah closed her eyes. “I have so much to learn about being a disciple.”

“Oh, I don’t know,” her dad said with a grin. “Sounds like God is teaching you wonderful lessons already. He’s helping you grow and mature. We can thank Him for that.”

And they did.

GETTING READY TO GO

Choose one way that you want Jesus to help you grow to be a great disciple. Be honest.