

PART 1:
God loves you but...

STUFF JESUS NEVER SAID



Note to Leaders: Every Link is Different. Don't feel like you have to answer every question. Pick questions that will stir up conversation and action among your group

INTRODUCTION

The words of Jesus revealed a God that is radically different to the one portrayed by religion. In fact, Christ's words were so shocking, so scandalous, that religious people tried to kill him. The disciples had never heard anything like them. Maybe you haven't either, that's why we do this series. If the stuff Jesus never said is the stuff you thought he said, then the stuff he did say may surprise you.

We often hear that God loves us, but this is what a lot of Christians hear in their own head.. God loves you BUT... and you or even the church go crazy filling in the blank with all kinds of limitations to God's love: God loves you but not as much as he loves other people, God loves you but he loves you more if you obey Him, God loves you but he also sends earthquakes and famines, God loves you but He can also be violent.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your earliest understanding of what God is like? How did you get that understanding?
2. Read the following verses below. What do you think Jesus is saying about the relationship between him and his father?
 - a. "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." Colossians 2:9 (NIV)
 - b. "I and the Father are one.... John 10:30 (NIV)
 - c. If you see me, you see the Father." John 14:9 (NIV)

Based on the above verses, Ps. Daniel said "Jesus Christ trumps any other revelations we may have about God." which means if the God that you believe doesn't look like Jesus, it is not the true picture of God." Do you agree with this statement?

3. What is your current image of God? So important is this question, it must be asked time and time again. Is your image of God as beautiful as revealed in Jesus Christ? Or is your image of God one of anger, disappointment and violence. Take an honest assessment of your image.
4. What is your personal experience of God's love toward you? It is easy to say the right words, "God is love. God is full of grace. God loves me." Often we can say these things, but deep down we may feel something very different. Are their past wounds or false teachings that inhibit your capacity to experience God's infinite love for you?

MOVING FORWARD

Ask the Spirit to reveal to you anything that is blocking your ability to fully experience the God who says to you, "So great is my love for you!" (John 3:16) And if/when a past experience comes up, ask God, "Where were you in this experience". God is always longing to redeem us, and this redemption includes our past stories and experiences.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"¹ In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word." Hebrews 1:1-3 (NIV)