

60-Day New Testament Journey

Why Are Christians Sometimes So Judgmental (& Nauseating)?

January 26/27, 2013

Memorize

When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." – John 8:7, NIV

Connect With Others (choose one)

- 1. Describe a time in your childhood when someone tattled on you. How did it feel? What was the outcome?**

Just like the Pharisees tattled on this woman, how have the members of your group been tattled upon? Help make the connection to the story after you have shared your stories.

- 2. Share a situation where you have felt trapped between what appeared to be two very bad options. What did you do? How did it turn out?**

Just as Pharisees were looking to trap Jesus, we often find ourselves trapped between a rock and a hard spot. Help people connect their own uneasiness to what Jesus encountered.

Commit to Growth

Read John 8:1-11

- 1. What were the Pharisees and teachers hoping to accomplish in this passage? What do you think was their goal? Were they successful? Why or why not?**

They were using the woman as a political pawn to serve their own purposes. They thought they had Jesus in a trap, yet Jesus in all his wisdom avoids their trap, neither invalidating the Law or his teaching. Jesus' response to their questioning is found in 8:7 and in this simple phrase, Jesus helps them to see their own hypocrisy.

- 2. Compare John's words concerning "the Word" in John 1:14 to the story in John 8. How does Jesus show "grace and truth" to the religious leaders? How does he show "grace and truth" to the woman caught in adultery?**

“The Word” is John’s reference to Jesus, who is full of “grace and truth”! Jesus demonstrates these qualities to both the religious leaders and to the woman. He could have been harsh and judgmental to both, but instead defuses the tension by asking a question. Discuss what you think Jesus might have been doing as he bent down on the ground before and after his question. What do you think he wrote in the sand? Was Jesus pausing for effect? Biting his tongue? Praying to God for grace to handle this matter? How would you have felt as the religious leader? How would you have felt as the woman?

3. Read Leviticus 20:10 & Deuteronomy 22:22. What does Moses really say about this law that the Pharisees quoted in John 8:5. What does this reveal about the human condition?

This erroneous understanding of God’s Law alone, could have given Jesus enough ammunition for him to lambast the Pharisees. However, he doesn’t go there. Like the Pharisees, we tend to either take things out of context, or obey only parts of the Bible. The Pharisees did not bring the man, who was also caught in adultery before Jesus! Therefore, the Pharisees weren’t obedient to the whole law and showed the hypocrisy of their ways.

4. How are we sometimes like Pharisees? How should we respond when we find ourselves being like them?

Refer to the sermon notes on this question. Like the Pharisees: 1) we fail to notice the needs of others when pursuing our own agendas; 2) are quick to find the faults of others; 3) find it hard to see our own blind spots, prejudices and favoritisms; and 4) find it difficult to extend grace. If we find ourselves being self-righteous, we need to stop comparing ourselves to others and compare ourselves to Jesus. That’s the solution to a judgmental heart.

5. What does this story teach us about Jesus? How can we be more like Jesus in this story?

Jesus is full of grace and truth. Both righteous and forgiving. Both loving and holy. He doesn’t excuse our sin, but makes a way for us! Like Jesus, we need to be full of grace and truth! Discuss what that might look like.

6. Read Ephesians 1:18. What prevents you from praying, “God, open the eyes of my heart so that I will see my blind spots”? How does the way Jesus treated this woman help you to face them?

We fear taking an honest look into our lives, because we are afraid to face what we might see. However, God’s grace can give us the courage, knowing we won’t be condemned, which also gives us the grace to go on and sin no more. Use this as springboard for prayer requests.