



Part 2 Discussion Guide

Face the Issue:

Read these descriptions of the activities of an infamous Christian church: Source is Wikipedia.

On January 26, 2008, church members traveled to Jacksonville, North Carolina, home of Camp Lejeune, to protest the United States Marine Corps in the wake of the murder of Maria Lauterbach. Five women protested, stomping on the American flag and shouting slogans such as "1,2,3,4, God Hates the Marine Corps".

On May 14, 2008, two days after the 2008 Sichuan earthquake which claimed the lives of at least 70,000 people, the church issued a press release thanking God for the heavy loss of life in China, and praying "for many more earthquakes to kill many more thousands of impudent and ungrateful Chinese".

Most anti-abortion activists avoided the funeral of OB/GYN Dr. George Tiller, assassinated on May 31, 2009. Held at the Wichita College Hill United Methodist Church, it was attended by 900 mourners. However, 17 members from the church picketed the funeral. The church members held signs that read "God sent the shooter", "Abortion is bloody murder", and "Baby Killer in Hell".

This week, Jeremy quoted Ephesians 4:31-32

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Do the behaviors described in the above account exemplify the scripture? Why do you think some Christians behave like this?

In what ways is the church's approach to sinners like walking a tightrope? In other words, why is a balance between grace and truth so important?

Why is it dangerous to attack the sins of others in the ways that are described?

Why is it dangerous to overlook or rationalize a sin in our efforts to try to reach the sinner?

Into the Word:

The described behaviors in the above are extreme to say the least and are DEFINITELY not representative of most Christians but there are still less obvious ways that we tear people down with our words.

Read John 8:1–11

Why did the Pharisees bring the woman before Jesus?

What do we know about the Pharisees? Read Matthew 23:1–7, 23–28 and Luke 18:10–14. What was wrong with their attitudes? Why did all their knowledge of Scripture fail to help them to do what was right?

How did Jesus deal with the woman's sin?

How might we apply this to the way we deal with those who are actively sinning?

What does it mean that everyone is made in God's image? How should that change the way we treat each other?

Read Matthew 9:9–13.

What does Jesus example tell us about dealing with those who's lifestyle we disagree with?

Read James 3:7–10.

What is the most hypocritical thing we can do?

Apply The Word

American poet and writer, Joy Davidman, used to say that Christians are not necessarily more "moral" than anyone else in the world, just more forgiven. What does her statement mean in light of the Scriptures you have just studied?

What does a forgiven person look like? Make a list of what you think should be the characteristics of a forgiven person. Look back at the verses in the Scripture section for some hints.