



Reality Check: God's Love | April 26, 2017

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

The odd thing about grace is that when we are on the outside, we want it to include us. But when we are on the inside, we start to draw lines to exclude others who aren't like us.

Key Verse

Romans 3:23-24 (NLT)

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.

Discussion

For some reason we tend to group people based on the ways they are different than us. We naturally create an "us" vs "them" worldview. It doesn't matter if it's the Millennials or the Boomers, the Liberals or the Conservatives, the Gay or the Straight, we typically see the differences first.

1. What groups of people would you say you are most different from? With what types of people do you find it hard to relate?
2. If you think about one of those groups, what might be some things you have in common?

An odd psychological concept plays out when thinking about or interacting with others called the Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE). The FAE essentially says that when another person acts we interpret it based on internal reasons, but when you/I act we interpret it with an understanding that external reasons could have influenced us. It boils down to SELF = GRACE and OTHERS = NO GRACE.

3. In what situations have you felt the Fundamental Attribution Error play out in your life?
4. How do you think this concept impacts our faith journeys?

When it comes to ultimate grace, the Bible is clear—All have sinned and fallen short, but God sent Jesus to die for ALL of us. The biggest similarity between "us" and "them" is that we all fall short and we all have been invited to the party...nothing excludes anyone from being invited. What would this world look like if we looked for similarities above differences?

5. With whom do you struggle to accept that they are invited to the same "salvation party" as you?
6. Picture an individual or a group of people in your life that you see as "them," and think of 3 similarities you have.

What's Next?

Bob Goff says, "We shouldn't say everyone is invited if when they show up we are going to act like they are not welcome. Love everybody always." We typically want to say everyone is invited until we get the invitation. Then we start creating rules to limit the guest list.

This week as you wrestle with the names of people who are not like you and with whom you struggle to see them as deserving of grace, consider engaging that person or group with an open mind. Read an article from a different perspective. Have a conversation, share a drink, or share a meal with someone who is different from you and don't try to be right...be present.