



## With: I'm With Them | October 2, 2019

### Discussion Guide

#### The Scoop

Words carry a lot of meaning. The word “them” evokes emotion. If you want to know how your faith asks you to engage with the “thems” of the world, read more below.

#### Key Verses

##### Matthew 5:13-16 (NIV)

*“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.” “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither*

*do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

### Discussion

If you’ve ever been to a pride parade, especially in a large city like New York City, you know that it’s a pretty moving experience. It’s a day full of joyful people, celebrating with one another. There are strangers hugging each other, telling others that they have value, and affirming that they are loved. And while some of us may disagree theologically, experiences like this can be very poignant no matter what side you’re on. Because the truth is, based on things like their skin color, sexuality, ethnicity, and where they were born, some people have been told repeatedly – both by individuals as well as society at large – that they have less value.

1. What is your gut reaction to something like a pride parade? Where does this reaction come from?
2. Do you know or have a relationship with someone who’s been told – because of their sexuality, skin color, etc. – that they have less value? How do you think this has affected or wounded this person?

For far too long, people who call themselves Christians have both intentionally as well as unintentionally told some people that they don’t have value. In this series, we’ve been exploring relationships. And this week, we are thinking specifically about the word “them.” The word “them” has a lot of power and meaning. Some of us hear “them” and think “those are my people, I’m with *them*.” But others of us, when we hear the word “them,” think about all the people in our life that don’t think, act, or believe the same things we do. The unique part about the Christian faith, however, is that Jesus came to express his love, and to tell the “thems” of the world, that they all have value.

3. What do you think of when you hear the word “them?”
4. How do you think Jesus feels about the way we, as Christians, treat the “thems” of the world?

In Matthew 5:13-16, we read about what it looks like to live this out in the world. It says that as Jesus followers, we are light. We bring out the God colors of the world. God is not a secret to be kept, but something to be shared, like the light from a city on a hill. And as his light bearers, he puts us on display, so that others can see his grace and goodness. As Christians, we are called to invite people into a relationship with a relationally loving God. We are meant to affirm everyone’s inherent value as God’s creation.

5. In what ways do you think Christian people can be and bring “light” to issues like sexuality, race, etc.?
6. How does being in a relationship with a relationally loving God change the way we should view other people – especially those who aren’t like us?

### What’s Next?

When we think about “them,” we should remember the lesson that Jesus teaches us about the marginalized. Jesus loves the “thems” of the world. They are God’s creation, just like you and me. For far too long, people have known the Christian church by the boundaries we’ve set up – who is “in” and who is “out.” The goal is that the local church would provide hope, value, and show love to all. But right now, the world needs Christians who will advocate for others, not tear them down and push them out.

This week, as you live out and engage your faith, think about the way you view marginalized people in our world. What is one way you can engage with someone this week to affirm their value, and to share a relationally loving God with them?