



WWYD: Beliefs | October 17, 2018

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

What would you do if you found yourself in a country where your religion wasn't the majority, or maybe not even accepted? How would you like to be treated?

Key Verses

Luke 10:29-37 (NIV)

"But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'" In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' 'Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?' The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.'" Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Discussion

The reality, whether we like it or not, is that we live in a very "fear of other" world. We all hold to a set of beliefs that we're convinced are true. But regardless of how sound our argument is, that doesn't give us the right to think that those with differing beliefs are terrible and should cease to exist. We may disagree or fail to understand the way they carry out their beliefs, but the truth is, that person with beliefs we don't understand is still a human – with a name, story, and family of their own.

1. Do you agree that we live in a world where people fear the beliefs and opinions of others? Or that which is unknown to them? Why or why not?
2. What do you think it is about us that make us inclined to elevate our own beliefs in addition to putting others down if they believe differently than we do?

All too often, we get into theological debates about the "only way" to believe in God. And while being certain of your beliefs is a good thing in many cases, it can also limit us from interacting with those who have beliefs that are different than our own. In other parts of the world, the reality is that it can be much harder to practice your religion (or even outwardly express your beliefs). There are some places where going to church isn't even an option for people, so they're not exposed to the same beliefs as we are. Instead of simply standing our ground, what if we opened our eyes and our hearts to the idea of putting ourselves in these people's shoes and experiences?

3. Have you experienced a different part of the world where religion is experienced and expressed much differently? Explain.
4. What happens when we put ourselves in the shoes of other people who have different experiences or who have been exposed to different beliefs than us? What does it do to the posture of our heart?

In Luke 10:29-37, we read the well-known story of the good Samaritan. Jesus paints a picture of a man in trouble, attacked by robbers, who is passed by several religious people who fail to offer him any assistance. Finally, a Samaritan (who'd be considered a religious outsider or "heathen") offers help in addition to getting him to safety. He even spent his own money to help him recover. When Jesus asks who the "good neighbor" is, there is no doubt it's the good Samaritan.

5. What do you think Jesus wants to teach the "experts of the law" in this story?
6. What is significant about the fact that the good Samaritan ends up being the good neighbor? What does this teach or suggest to us?

What's Next?

There are people in this life that will have different beliefs than we do. Instead of giving them the cold shoulder, however, if we lean in with the posture of the good Samaritan, it might be possible to find common ground. People with different beliefs might even be more apt to listen or want to know more. Or, we could at least be respectful, and show the humility and grace that Jesus displays for us and that God has asked us to live out.

This week, as you live out your faith, put yourself in the shoes of someone who believes very differently than you. Maybe even ask them out to coffee and simply ask questions to get to know them better. Put your theology on hold and get to know another human that God has created in his image.