



"Low" & Behold: Low | December 19, 2018

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

Sometimes things are not as they seem. But we never know, because we only judge them as we see them. What if our faith calls us to look a little deeper and a little further instead?

Key Verses

Matthew 9:11-13 (NIV)

"When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'"

Discussion

It's very easy to make assumptions about homeless people from afar, but have you ever really gotten to know one? You may actually be surprised by their story and circumstances. Some homeless people have cell phones, others have full time jobs. Not exactly the picture you think of when you find out they are homeless. Most of the time, we see things the way we want to see them, through our own realities and experiences. But more often than not, things are not as they seem.

1. Have you ever gotten to know a homeless person? What surprised you about him or her?
2. When is a time you saw something through your own filter, only to realize it wasn't really as it seemed?

Most of us, if we're really being honest, can say that we are prone to judge the relationships of others. In the same way we might look at a homeless person and assume we have a better work ethic or make wiser decisions, we also look at people we interact with every day and have a natural propensity to judge based on their family life, the clothes they are wearing, and the decisions they make. We do the very thing that the Bible challenges us not to do.

3. Why do you think that we are prone to judge others?
4. When is a time you "judged a book by its cover," only to realize that your judgment was very far off the reality?

In Matthew 9:11-13, we read about the Pharisees reaction to Jesus hanging out with sinners. They had a fit once they found out, and were confused as to why Jesus would do such a thing with nonreligious people. He responds by telling them to go look again at the scriptures, to read and try to understand what they really mean, not just apply them to fit themselves. Jesus came to save sinners, not the self-righteous. He came to extend mercy, not to receive pointless sacrifice.

5. Is this the picture you have when you think of Jesus? Someone who eats with sinners? Why or why not?
6. Why is this good news for all of us?

What's Next?

The story of Christmas is actually the story of the crooks and the riff raff. God invaded our world as the lowest of the low, with an unmarried and scared couple. He announced his birth to the shepherds, and then made Jesus the shepherd of all people. This is good news, for all of us, because Jesus came even when we didn't deserve it. He came for the crooks and the riff raff, to save us all. But it's not our job to hold onto that story and judge those who don't. Jesus came to Earth so that we could share his message with all people.

This week, as you live out your faith, Jesus is asking you to help tell His story. Ask God for opportunities to share His story with others. Explain to someone this week that Jesus came for him or her, even when they didn't deserve it. Consider which story you're telling as you engage your faith in the Christmas season.