



ICEBREAKER & OPENING THOUGHT

The question is meant to get the group warmed up in discussing their own leaving home story and what they may now have wished they would have done differently. The opening thought will get the group thinking about the topic for the day. Encourage the group to answer honestly to this question. It is very likely that your group will have different opinions on this topic. Be respectful and curious about what your group members believe.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

The video argues that for a person to say all religions are the same is really a person saying, "I see the whole picture in a way that every other religion does not." How would a person ever gain a perspective where they could know that every religion is the same? Religions are all making very different claims about the nature of reality, the character of God, and how we relate to God. How does claiming "they're all saying the same thing," respect and give voice to every religion?

LIFE APPLICATION

It might be helpful to keep this phrase in mind, "Truth is narrow and grace is wide." Help the group see that just because we might hold exclusive beliefs, doesn't mean we can't be curious and respectful of people who think differently. Help the group think through the difference between narrow and narrow-mindedness. Narrow is to have singled out a bullseye, whereas narrow-mindedness would be to refuse to consider the claims of other people or to not recognize the freedom of others to hold different beliefs and practices. A good question might be, "How should our beliefs work themselves out in our public life?" How do we hold narrow ideas about life while also giving grace and room for other people with a different opinion? There is no easy and simple answer here, but it may be helpful for your group to wrestle with that question. Finally, help the group think about where the wideness of God's grace can be extended to the people in their lives.

CHALLENGE

The parable of the prodigal son or the lost son is a story that gives us insight into what a loving Father God is to us. His forgiveness and grace is available to everyone, everywhere, regardless of their sins and their condition in the world. Are there people in your life that you know need help finding their way back to God? As a small group, commit to purposefully praying for those individuals this week. Next week, share any ways in which you saw them move closer to God.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. After reading the parable, what is most notable to you?
2. Which of the three characters from the parable do you relate to most? The least?
3. Imagine you are the eldest son in this parable. In your own words, explain why you think he is so angry.
4. Share a time in which you or someone else extended forgiveness and grace that may not have been deserved.
5. "How should our beliefs work themselves out in our public life?" How do we hold narrow ideas about life while also giving grace and room for other people with a different opinion?
6. How would a person ever gain a perspective where they could know that every religion is the same? In what ways does saying, "all religions are saying the same thing" disrespect and silence individual religions?