

LEADER NOTES

Jesus and the Sinner

John 8:2-11

To Begin ...

Who was your first crush? Did you ask the person out on a date? If so, what happened? If not, why not?

Share one of the most embarrassing things that has ever happened to you.

Hey Life Group Leaders! You are now in Week 2 of our Life Group Video Series, “30 Minutes with Jesus” as we looking at several occurrences in the Gospels when people came in contact with Jesus for a short period of time and it changed their lives! We hope that this series will be uplifting, challenging, and help you find your next step in your journey with God!

This week, you have seven questions coming up based the video lesson this week! Remember that these Leader Notes are to serve as a guide for further and deepening conversation with your Life Group, not as the answers! Enjoy this week’s discussion and always remember to ask an extra question such as “Why do you believe that?” to draw out some more conversation from your group members!

To start off this lesson, you have two questions that everyone in your group should be able to answer. They are personal and a little silly, so have fun with them! Please make sure that your group feels the safety of sharing within the group. There is no right or wrong answer here. No snap judgments or quick fixes. And as always, be encouraging and show grace as your group members are working through their salvation with fear and trembling (**Philippians 2:12**).

Discussion Prompts

1. Why did the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law hate Jesus? How is grace a threat to legalism?

The answers to the first part of this question are not evident in this particular piece of scripture, but are very evident all throughout the Gospels and other parts of the New Testament. Some answers may include that there were a number of things about Jesus that infuriated the religious leaders. These included the claims that he made, and the deeds that He did. His message was a threat to their religious system and to their way of life. The people with whom he socialized was a big problem. And finally, the lack of respect he had for their religious traditions.

The religious leaders wanted Jesus dead for a number of reasons; none of the reasons were righteous. First, the claims that he made demonstrated that his authority was greater than theirs. The religious leaders could not accept this. The miraculous deeds that he, which demonstrated his superior authority, was also a reason they wanted him dead. Jesus was also a threat to their religious system. He went to the temple and condemned the practices. They also considered him a threat to their way of life and they were worried how the Romans would respond. The people with whom Jesus socialized offended the pride of the religious leaders. Above all, it was the lack of respect for their religious traditions that caused them to desire to kill him. This is particularly true of Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath. All of these things contributed to their evil desire to want Jesus dead. (For more information and the full article this information came from, go to https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_248.cfm)

Some answers regarding legalism and grace may include the definition of legalism as a strict adherence, or the principle of strict adherence to law or prescription, especially to the letter rather than the spirit. When looking at biblical commands from either the Old or New Testaments, this legalist perspective often leads people to believe that God is angry with humanity, and that the way to make God like us again is to obey his laws. It may even be thought that if everybody would just obey God's laws all at the same time, then God might love us and be happy with us again. Then, the blessings from heaven will flow down upon us once more. This legalism has some seriously faulty views about God, about sin, about the law, and about how people can get into a good relationship with God. All of these faulty views are what makes legalism dangerous and divisive.

Thankfully, God has provided an antidote to legalism through the free gift of eternal life which is received by grace along through faith alone in Christ alone.

Just as legalism breeds disunity, love and unity flourish where grace and faith multiply. The more we emphasize grace and faith, the greater our unity will be. For this reason, a strong stance on the simplicity and freeness of eternal life by grace alone through faith alone is essential.

2. According to Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22-24, both the man and the woman were to be held accountable for their sin. Why do you believe the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law only brought the woman to Jesus?

Leviticus 20:10 reads, *“If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death.”*

Deuteronomy 22:22-24 reads, *“If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel. If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death—the young woman because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man's wife. You must purge the evil from among you.”*

This is a question that everyone in your group should be able to answer because it is asking for your opinion. This may draw many different answers. Some answers may include that the Pharisees were attempting to set up a trap for Jesus and provision had been made for the man to escape. The woman's accusers must have been especially eager to humiliate her, since they could have kept her in private custody while they spoke to Jesus. What are some others that you and your group come up with?

3. How were the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law attempting to trap Jesus?

Some answers may include that the Jewish leaders had already disregarded the law by arresting the woman without the man. The law required that both parties to adultery be stoned (Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22). The leaders were using the woman as a trap so they could trick Jesus. If Jesus said the woman should not be stoned, they would accuse him of violating Moses' law. If he urged them to execute her, they would report him to the Romans, who did not permit the Jews to carry out their own executions.

4. Read Jeremiah 17:13. How might this be the answer to what Jesus was writing on the ground in John 8:6?

Jeremiah 17:13 reads, *"Lord, you are the hope of Israel; all who forsake you will be put to shame. Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the Lord, the spring of living water."*

John 8:6 reads, *"They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger."*

Some answers to this question may include that this is a plausible scripture reference/answer to this question, but there is really no evidence whatsoever as to what he wrote or drew in the dirt, so anything is simply a guess. However, it seems likely that those accusers did walk away in shame at their actions. It is interesting that the leaders slipped away quietly from oldest to youngest. Evidently the older men were more aware of their sins than the younger. Age and experience often tempter youthful self-righteousness.

5. According to what Caleb said in the video lesson, why did the people not throw any stones in John 8:7-9?

John 8:7-9 reads, *"When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there."*

According to Caleb, they had sin. If they threw a stone (claiming not to have sin) they'd be lying—breaking one of the 613 commandments. Also, only God is without sin, so if they threw a rock it would be blasphemy (them claiming to be God). And the punishment for blasphemy was the death penalty.

6. **According to John 8:11, Jesus accepts the woman but doesn't agree with her sin. What is the difference between acceptance and agreement? How might our understanding of "acceptance vs agreement" help us to minister to those who are struggling with sin?**

John 8:11 reads, *"No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."*

Some answers may include that Jesus didn't condemn the woman accused of adultery, but neither did he ignore or condone her sin. He told her to leave her life of sin. Jesus stands ready to forgive any sin in your life, but confession and repentance mean a change of heart. With God's help we can accept Christ's forgiveness and stop our wrongdoing. What does Jesus' treatment of the woman teach us about dealing with the sins of others?

7. **How is love the tension that we feel between grace and truth? Who is the messy person (or persons) in your life that you need to love "in the tension of grace and truth"?**

Some answers may include that the Pharisees were not looking to help anyone but themselves. That is included in Jesus' woes to them in Matthew 23. They simply tie up heavy loads on people and don't do a thing to help them move toward the Kingdom of Heaven. Truth can be stated in that same way if it is not shared with love and grace, with honest effort to help others on their journey with Jesus. It's not near as spectacular and it often takes a great amount of time. But the fruit of this process is freedom.

Remember to ask for prayer requests and close your group in prayer. Encourage one another to take steps, regardless of how small, toward Jesus and his kingdom.

Personal Reflection & Deeper Study for this Week:

1. Reflect on any questions that your group did not answer or that you want to process at a deeper level.
2. Each day this week, read John 8:2-11 in a different Bible version.
3. Read Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Ezekiel 16:37-39; 23:29; Jeremiah 3:8; 13:22-26; Hosea 2:2-5; and Nahum 3:5. According to these verses, what were some other consequences for adultery besides capital punishment?
4. John 1:14 & 17 refer to Jesus coming with both grace and truth. How do you see grace and truth in John 8:11? How do you see grace and truth in John 3 and John 4?
5. What can Jesus and this story teach you about helping friends who are struggling with sin? What can you learn about how Jesus feels about you when you are struggling with sin?