

## LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

**Message Series:** Guest Speaker  
**Message Title:** Jesus & Islam  
**Speaker:** Carl Medearis  
**Date:** September 24, 2017

### UP NEXT

- **LIFE GROUP TAILGATE & CHILI COOK OFF** - Go ahead and mark your calendars! Join us as a Life Group on **Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup>** in the parking lot for a Life Group Tailgating Day. Immediately following the 10:45am service. Bring your chairs, fire pits, hot dogs, big screens, etc. and cheer on your favorite team! We will also be hosting a Chili Cook Off for you aspiring chefs out there. **Email [robert.conn@reality.church](mailto:robert.conn@reality.church) to enter into the Chili Cook-off.**
- **50 & OVER BBQ AT THE LAKE (OCT 7<sup>TH</sup>)** - If you're over 50, you are invited to a BBQ hosted by Mike & Cindy Zimmerman. Meat and drinks will be provided. Please bring a side dish to share. If the weather is nice, there will be boating and a bonfire. If the Husker game conflicts, it will be shown. Time: 5:00pm - 10:00pm. Location: 7911 Kona Circle, Papillion. RSVP by October 6<sup>th</sup> to [zimmerwoman@cox.net](mailto:zimmerwoman@cox.net) or by calling (402) 578-1642.

### DISCUSSION .....

- Would you agree or disagree with this statement? "I am convinced that the majority of Muslims are far more concerned with obeying the commandments of God than waging holy war against infidels."
  - Please explain your answer.
- The centuries-long history of conflict between Christianity and Islam has led to negative perceptions, fears, and emotionally charged interactions between people of both faiths today. Even the words we use to talk about these religions and their respective beliefs or practices can incite a spontaneous, powerful response.
  - For example, what do you think and feel when you read or hear words such as: *infidel, Crusades, Islam, jihad, Sharia, Christian*?
  - What do you think a Muslim might think and feel regarding these same words?
- In what ways have various influences (such as culture, news media, church teaching, your family, where you have lived, personal relationships, and your formal education) shaped your perceptions of Islam and Muslims?
  - To what extent have your perceptions affected your willingness to learn more about Islam and its followers?
- What kind of relationship do you think Jesus wants his followers to have with Muslims?
- What is holding you back from doing things such as sitting down with a Muslim and beginning a conversation about Jesus?
- When God calls his people to follow and obey him, fear is a natural response. We do not know what threats may be ahead of us. We do not know what will be required of us or how great the personal cost may be. But God is the God of salvation, not of fear, and throughout the Bible he promises to be with his people when they do his work.
- When followers of Jesus consider what it means to obey his clear command to "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16: 15), we often wonder if it is "safe" to do so. But that may be the wrong question.

- Everyone understands wanting to be safe. However, when does our desire for safety supersede our Savior's command to go and share the good news.
- Carl had a lot to say about praying for safety as Americans. Did you agree or disagree with him?
- Each of us has opinions about Islam and Muslims. The events of September 11, 2001 that made terrorism nearly synonymous with Islam have made it easy to cement our stereotypes of Muslims. But fear, anger, bitterness, and/ or a lack of forgiveness can quickly cause us to forget how much God loves all people (including Muslims). If our deepest desire is to respond in faith with God's love and to share the good news about Jesus, we need to learn how to reach out and connect heart-to-heart with Muslims and other people who adhere to different spiritual beliefs.
- How do you respond to the idea that friendship is more important than theological debate when getting to know a Muslim?
  - How well do you listen without comment as another person shares his or her beliefs,
  - How well do you respond when you do not know how to answer a question?
  - How well do you refrain from sharing your theological expertise when it might incite controversy?
- Have someone read [\(1 Corinthians 2:1-5\)](#)
  - What is Paul saying here?
  - If you have attempted to tell people about Jesus through eloquence, human wisdom, or persuasive words, what was the result, and would you try that approach again? Why or why not?
- Carl encouraged us not to defend Christianity. What did he mean by that? Why could sharing Christianity be offensive? Why is it more important to share Jesus?
- Carl said that God was not a Christian, and that Jesus was not a Christian. What then did he mean by saying that Jesus was the exact representation of God?

## APPLY IT .....

- Which of the following options are you open to exploring?
  - 1) Do you know any Muslims in your workplace, your school, or your community? (If you haven't already, perhaps it would be a good idea to introduce yourself!) 2) Would you consider inviting a Muslim (or family) to join you at a community event or invite them into your home for a meal? If not, what do you think would be a good first get-together? 3) If you don't know any Muslims, where is the nearest mosque or university? A mosque may host local community events, and groups for Muslim students may welcome your interest and hospitality.
- Do you have anyone in your life who considers themselves Muslim? How could you begin a conversation?

## ADDITIONAL & FURTHER STUDY .....

### What Is Islam?

Like Christianity, Islam teaches that God has sent prophets to speak to his people. These prophets were sent to encourage, rebuke, and teach people the words and will of God. According to Islam, this same God sent Adam, Noah, Daniel, and eventually Jesus to communicate that there is only one God, and this same God desires that his followers pursue good and turn away from evil. Islam teaches that Christians and Jews were "People of the Book" (Torah) but that they've been corrupted by the twisting and misinterpretation of God's holy ways.

## Similarities and Differences Between Islam and Christianity

Muslims believe there is only one God, and they teach about the prophets, heaven, hell, angels, sin, and a day of judgment. They understand the importance of giving, prayer, and fasting as mentioned in the Bible. Where you begin to see theological differences between Christianity and Islam is when you discuss core issues of who God is. Islam doesn't believe in the Trinity, or the teaching that Jesus is the redeemer of humanity. Islam doesn't teach that Jesus was divine, nor does it validate the possibility of anyone dying on a cross to take away the sins of the world. Islam does affirm that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, had a sinless nature, performed miracles, and is coming once again.

## The Five Pillars of Islam

The most prominent works of Islam are summarized by the Five Pillars of Islam:

- Creed – Claim that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. Believing this is the first duty of every Muslim.
- Prayer – Submit to a daily regimen of praying five times a day. There are prescribed prayers prayed together. All Muslims face toward Mecca to perform this daily prayer ritual. All adult male Muslims are to gather each Friday at noon for community prayer and to hear a weekly sermon.
- Almsgiving – Muhammad himself was an orphan, and his teachings shine a great light on the need to give to the poor. Muslims are required to give 2.5 percent of their income to charitable purposes and also give in free-will offerings that are above and beyond the legal almsgiving.
- Fasting – During the month of Ramadan all healthy adult Muslims (except travelers, pregnant women, or nursing mothers) are required to abstain from food, liquids, and sexual intercourse during daylight hours. This month of fasting lands on the ninth lunar month of the Islamic year, and Islamic tradition states that Muhammad received the first revelations from God during this month.
- Pilgrimage – Every Muslim is expected to take the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once. The pilgrimage is designed to solidify Islamic faith, display one's commitment to Islam, and promote the idea of worldwide unity among Muslims.

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## RECOMMENDED FREE RESOURCE

**JESUS AMONG OTHER GODS** - by Ravi Zacharias

No such thing as absolute truth? Christian apologist Ravi Zacharias' work is a brilliant defense of the unique truth of the Christian message. Exposing the futility of Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, he also highlights his own journey from despair and meaninglessness to the discovery that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

