

WHAT WOULD JESUS SAY TO CAITLYN JENNER

WHAT WOULD JESUS SAY, PART 3: CAITLYN JENNER

The issue of sexual identity and Christianity is one of the biggest hot buttons for today's culture. Questions surface such as "What does the Bible have to say about same-sex issues?" and "How can we balance grace and truth?" Jesus is the definition of truth and grace, and He will never be found partial towards one person or another. You don't have to agree with someone's decisions in order to show love. Many people forget this, and this is the very reason that Christians are looked at as judgmental and hypocritical. Many don't know how to love people who are different from them. But isn't that what the great commission is all about?

BIG IDEA: *Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself" does not have an exception clause for a gay 'neighbor.'*



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Has there ever been a time when you had to share a tough truth with a friend? Describe how this happened.
2. Why do you think some Christians have had such a hard time building bridges with the LGBT community?
3. What are some things the Christian community can do to better dialogue with the LGBT community?
4. Have you ever known someone like Hector? Can you relate to him?
5. Do you have a difficult time relating with people who are different from you? Why or why not?"
6. Has there ever been a time when you were shown grace, meaning you didn't deserve the positive treatment you got? What was that like?
7. In John 8, Jesus has the same grace for the Pharisees that he does for the woman caught in adultery. Why is this?
8. How do you see grace and truth in this statement by Jesus in John 8:11: "Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin."
9. How and why is the grace of God so messy?
10. Name one person you need to reach out to and share God's messy grace. Why does this person need the grace of God?"
11. Research indicates that only 14 percent of 'born-again Christians' would be highly motivated to help HIV/AIDS orphans overseas. What are three reasons why that mentality toward this disease and those orphans is ignorant and pathetic? Where in Scripture do we find Jesus dealing much differently than that with people suffering from illnesses with attached stigmas in his day?

Billy Graham said, "I'm going to quote the Bible now, not myself, that it homosexuality is wrong—it's a sin. But there are other sins. Why do we jump on that sin as though it's the greatest sin? The greatest sin in the Bible is idolatry, worshipping other things besides the true and living God. Jealousy is a sin. Pride is a sin. All of these things are sins. But homosexuality is also a sin and needs to be dealt with and needs to be forgiven, and that's why Christ came and died on the cross."

12. What do you think of Graham's words? Do you find them helpful or unhelpful? Do you feel like his approach would be received well by people (Christians included) who sit at either extreme end of the Left-Right political spectrum?
13. How can both the mistreatment of other humans or an anything-goes approach to sexuality tamper with the Church's duty to be a light to the world? Is there a third way? A way of living out Christianity with obedience and conviction as well as a generous and gracious love for others?
14. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read John 1:14, 17-18.*

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

John 1:14, 17 (NIV)

15. Chris said, "Not the balance between, but the full embodiment of. Jesus did not come to strike a balance between grace and truth. He brought the full measure of both." Why is navigating the tension between grace and truth so hard?

16. With your Bible or YouVersion, read John 8:2-11.

At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” 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. 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. Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

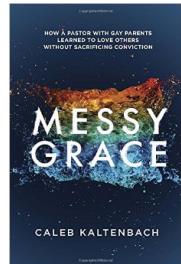
John 8:2-11 (NIV)

Chris said, “The story of John 8 is a call for us to live in the tension of grace and truth. I’ve often wondered what the best word is to describe this tension. While thinking through this story, I finally figured it out: **love is the tension of grace and truth.**” Here’s what I mean. When you have a person in your life involved in activities or life choices that aren’t healthy? You feel the tension. On the one hand, you feel extreme love for them, but on the other hand, you know that somehow you need to speak truth into their life. It’s the same feeling when someone you love makes decisions outside the bounds of Scripture—you have the desire to show them grace and help them understand the truth of the matter. If you have ever been in this circumstance before, then you understand. **Love is the tension of grace and truth.**

17. Suppose, for a moment, that the woman in the story wasn’t an adulteress. Suppose that she was a lesbian or a woman who had an abortion or a drunk driver or a prostitute. That can put the pharisaical shoe on the other foot, can’t it?
18. If one of those possibilities had been the scenario in John 8, would that change your attitude towards the Pharisees? Towards the woman? Towards Jesus? If so, why?
19. Why did the Pharisees resist God’s forgiveness? Why do we sometimes resist God’s forgiveness?
20. Imagine that you are this woman. What would you have *expected* to see in Jesus’ eyes? What is running through your mind?
21. Why do we so easily judge others? What does James 4:11-12 have to say about this tendency?
22. Does this passage in John 8 mean that Jesus doesn’t think sin is a big deal? Why or why not?
23. Jesus accepts you “as is.” Does that free you to change, or does it support your bad behavior? How so?

DIGGING DEEPER

A great book you can read on this subject is called *Messy Grace* written by Caleb Kaltenbach. Caleb was raised by LGBT parents and experienced the hatred and bitterness of some Christians toward his family. But then Caleb surprised everyone by becoming a Christian—and a pastor.



THINK ABOUT IT

Sometimes, with particular sins, we Christians are a little more reluctant to drop our stones, a little more ready to condemn, and a little less glad to hear Jesus say, “I don’t condemn you either.”

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

People all around you are watching you to see whether or not you really live what you say. To change people’s perception of Christians, we must be that change.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1:14, 17 (NIV)

