



You may be the only Bible our neighbors ever read. You know and I know “there is no way to love Christ and not love his church.” But they don’t know that. We want people to love Christ. What Christ are they seeing in you and me? Christians are called to live “a life that needs God’s love to explain itself.” So be winsome to win some.

These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.

Group Ice-Breaker questions:

(1) Have you ever been offended? Discuss.

(2) Have you ever offended someone else? Discuss.

**HOW THEY VIEW US.** Pew Research (2014) claimed Americans rated Christians at a 60 (out of 100). However, Jews rated us at a 34, and atheists at a 28. A few years earlier, “young outsiders” to the Christian faith rated Christians at a 3. Why do you think this is? Discuss these numbers.

**A GOSPEL OF OFFENSE.** Read Gal 5:11 and 1 Peter 2:8. What does Paul mean by the “offense of the cross”? Follow up: Read 1 Peter 4:12-16, Matt 5:11-12, & Matt 10:22. Will Christians ever be hated? Why and in what context? Discuss.

**NO ADDITIONAL OFFENSE.** Nathan argues that Christians are called to give “no additional defense” beyond the offense of the cross. He gave 4 Biblical passages to support this claim:

- **Practical Reason:** It is hard to win over an offended person (Prov 18:19)
- **Following Christ’s Example** (Matt 17:27).
- **Following Paul’s Command** (1 Cor 10:31-33)
- **Following Paul’s Example** (Acts 25:8)

**BE HIGHLY FAVORED.** Read Luke 2:52. What are the two kinds of “favor” Jesus grew in? How is this a pattern for our lives? Follow up: Notice who Luke described as being highly favored by God (Lk 1:30; Acts 7:46), and highly favored by people (Acts 2:47; 7:10). How is the church of Acts 2:47 meant to be a mirror of Jesus in Luke 2:52? (Reminder: Luke wrote both books).

**THE YEAR OF THE LORD’S FAVOR.** Read Luke 4:16-30. Jesus came to proclaim “the year of the Lord’s favor.” But his examples showed that the year of the Lord’s favor would be God showing love and serving those considered outsiders (Samaritans, Gentiles, etc). Why is this significant?

**FAVORED BY OUTSIDERS.** Read 1 Cor 14:16-24; Col 4:5; 1 Thess 4:12. What does Paul say the church should do or be concerned about when it comes to outsiders? Follow up: Read 1 Tim 3:7. Why is Paul so concerned that Shepherds/overseers should have a good reputation among outsiders? Discuss.

**LIVING WITNESS.** You may be the only Bible some people ever read. Discuss.