



Christianity has a 2,000-year track record. For some people, Christian history is riddled with scandal, war, abuse, and other injustices. We must recognize these truths. At the same time, the fuller story is remarkably powerful. Will you consider it?

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-Breakers:

(1) Tell your favorite Paul Harvey "the Rest of the Story" story.

(2) Imagine if people only knew you for your worst moments. How accurate would that portrait be?

CONSIDERING SECULAR CLAIMS.

Discuss the following claims:

"Christians are hypocrites."

"Historically, the church is responsible for so much injustice."

"The church has practiced abuse, used violence, and lusted for power."

AFFIRMING THE CHARGE. Does Christianity have a bad track record? Answer #1: "Yes."

Hypocrisy is wrong. Read Psalm 26:4; Matt 6:2-16; 23:13-29. How has church history (or even we ourselves) shown hypocrisy?

Injustice is wrong. Read Deut 16:20; Amos 5:24; Micah 6:8. How has church history (and even we ourselves) participated in injustice?

Abuse is wrong. Read Psalm 72:14; 140:1-2; Matt 18:6. How has church history (and even we ourselves) been party to abuse, lust for power, and the use of violence? How does this hurt our witness?

RECONSIDERING ASSUMPTIONS.

Does Christianity have a bad track record? Answer #2: "No."

There is good news for hypocrites. Read Matt 9:12-13. Why would we expect the church to be full of sinners with character flaws?

God gives us the standard of right and wrong to judge abuse and violence. Read Prov 13:5. We can determine Christian injustice because we know what justice is. How is this a testament to God and Christianity?

Christianity fares well when you compare histories. How has secularism fared historically? What has Christianity contributed to the world?

THE CHRISTIAN CHALLENGE. Celebrate that the church is a place for sinners but follow God's Spirit to reform. Celebrate our good history, but acknowledge church hurt. Celebrate God as the standard of justice, but live according to that standard. Discuss.