

Almost Christianity - Week 5

Small Group Questions

1. Why is it important to make the distinction that God hates sin because of what it does to those he loves?
2. Why is it so dangerous if we get these wrong: Character of God, Devastation of Sin, Plight of our Neighbor, and the Potential of the Gospel?
3. Why is it much different to see someone as lost rather than someone as a problem?
4. How does the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son contradict the Pharisees' idea of God and even some of the ideas of God that circulate in the local church?
5. Sometimes our self-righteousness can make us angry. What are some examples of a time when your self righteousness make you angry?
6. How does other people's sin really make you feel? What now?
7. When the local church loves like Jesus, those who disagree with us most and have the least in common with us may want to be with us. Why is diversity important and a good thing?
8. What is your takeaway from this series?

1.

RECAP:
Almost Christianity believes the greatest need of culture is to behave. Authentic Christianity knows the greatest need of culture is to believe.

2.

RECAP:
How we behave makes what we believe more believable.

3.

RECAP:
Almost Christianity wants to prove itself right; Authentic Christianity wants to prove itself loving.

4.

RECAP:
Every time Christians have been, or believed themselves to be, the dominant culture, we end up acting more like Constantine than Jesus.

5.

RECAP:
If you have a practice of faith but not a practice of love, you do not have faith.

6.

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.
Matthew 9:35 NIV

7.

When he saw the crowds, he had **compassion** on them, because they were **harassed** and **helpless**, like sheep without a shepherd.
Matthew 9:36 NIV

8.

Then he said to his disciples,
“The **harvest is plentiful** but the
workers are **few**. Ask the Lord
of the harvest, therefore, to
send out workers into his
harvest field.”

Matthew 9:37-38 NIV

9.

The Character of God
The Devestation of Sin
The Plight of Our Neighbor
The Potential of the Gospel

10.

Now the **tax collectors** and
sinners were all gathering
around **to hear** Jesus.

Luke 15:2 NIV

11.

But the **Pharisees** and the
teachers of the law muttered,
“This man welcomes **sinners**
and eats with them.”

Luke 15:2 NIV

12.

Almost Christianity
seeks uniformity.
Authentic Christianity
creates diversity.

13.

Then Jesus told them this
parable:

Luke 15:3 NIV

14.

Jesus continued: “There was a
man who had **two sons**.”

Luke 15:11 NIV

15.

“When he came to his **senses**,
he said, ‘How many of my
father’s hired servants have
food to spare, and here I am
starving to death!’

Luke 15:17 NIV

16.

Sin makes promises
it can never keep.

17.

I will set out and go back to my
father and say to him: Father, I
have **sinned** against heaven
and against you.

Luke 15:18 NIV

18.

I am no longer worthy to be
called your son; make me like
one of your hired servants.'

Luke 15:19 NIV

19.

So he got up and went to his
father. "But while he was still a
long way off, his father saw him
and was filled with...

Luke 15:20 NIV

20.

So he got up and went to his
father. "But while he was still a
long way off, his father saw him
and was filled with **compassion**
for him;

Luke 15:20 NIV

21.

he **ran** to his son, threw his
arms around him and kissed
him.

Luke 15:20 NIV

22.

The son said to him, 'Father, I
have **sinned** against heaven
and against you. I am no longer
worthy to be called your son.'

Luke 15:21 NIV

23.

But the father said to his
servants, 'Quick! Bring the best
robe and put it on him. Put a
ring on his finger and sandals
on his feet.

Luke 15:22 NIV

24.

Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and **celebrate**. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

Luke 15:23-24 NIV

25.

Sin will cost you everything;
Repentance will cost
you something;
Grace will cost you nothing.

26.

Meanwhile, the **older son** was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard **music** and **dancing**.

Luke 15:25 NIV

27.

So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

Luke 15:26-27 NIV

28.

The older brother became **angry** and refused to go in. So his father went out and **pleaded** with him.

Luke 15:28 NIV

29.

The self-righteous are as bad as the un-righteous.

30.

But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.

Luke 15:29 NIV

31.

But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

Luke 15:30 NIV

32.

'My son,' the father said, 'you are always **with me**, and everything I have is yours.'

Luke 15:31 NIV

33.

The younger brother didn't think he was good enough for the party; the elder brother thought he was too good for the party.

34.

But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was **dead** and is alive again; he was **lost** and is found.'

Luke 15:32 NIV

35.

In the Father's house, failure may be unavoidable, but grace will always be inevitable.

36.

37.