

unchristian

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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WEEK 1

CHRISTIANS IN CULTURE: PERCEPTION IS REALITY

These questions are to be used in small groups or Bible studies as a follow-up to the sermon message each week. They will be most effective when discussion groups are also reading the book unChristian along with the series. This week's topic pertains to chapters 1 and 2 in unChristian.

1. Do you know any “outsiders”? Would you consider them to be friends? What do you think their perceptions are of Christianity?
2. When a young Christian interacts with the world, they are much more likely to live within a truly pluralistic generation . . . that is, many of his or her friends are not likely to be Christian. What should change, if anything, in the way we prepare young Christians to live in a pluralistic, diverse world?
3. One outsider in the research made the following comment (unChristian, p. 26): “. . . Christian means conservative, entrenched in their thinking, antigay, anti-choice, angry, violent, illogical, empire builders; they want to convert everyone, and they generally cannot live peacefully with anyone who doesn't believe what they believe.” What is your reaction to this comment? Why do people come to these conclusions?
4. When Christians talk about being persecuted by today's American culture, do you think they are accurate or not? How does Jesus teaching about being persecuted line up with what people experience today? What is the biblical response to being “hated” by the world? What does this mean for the way you live the Christian life?
5. Do outsiders' views matter to you? From the Perceptions of Christianity chart on page 28, discuss the unfavorable and favorable perceptions of Christianity and how they compare with your experiences engaging outsiders.
6. The book describes a movement of young Christians who are reluctant to admit they are Christians. They are not simply trying to be cool or popular, but they are concerned that the current way Christianity is expressed toward outsiders actually makes it more difficult to express what Jesus was about. Are you encouraged or troubled by this trend? In what situations are you more or less likely to say you are a Christian?
7. In what ways can your life help to redeem the term Christian? How can you be a Christian, rather than simply telling people you are one? What does a Christian who represents both truth and grace look and act like?