

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS | WEEK 3—JAN. 21/22, 2012 (JASON ANDERSON)

INTRODUCTION

We are in the middle of a series that compares our beliefs to other denominations and faiths. This weekend we learned about the similarities and differences between Muslims and Christians. The goal in this series is to help us have a basic understanding of other predominant faiths so that when God gives us an opportunity to have a conversation with a person of a different faith background, we'll be prepared and equipped to respond to them with confidence and love. Let the questions and Scripture below help guide your discussion on this week's message.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever had a disagreement with someone? When you disagree with someone else, how do you respond? Are you open to what they have to say or do you try to convince them that you are the one who is right? Do you remain calm or get angry and irritated? What sometimes stops us from being open, understanding and loving with people when we disagree with them? How can we get better at showing love, patience, and kindness?
2. Have you had conversations with a relative, friend, or acquaintance that is Muslim? How did that conversation go? Did you talk about the similarities and differences of your faith? How did they react to your beliefs? What did you learn about each other? What are you showing others about your faith when you react in anger? What do you show others when you respond in love and grace?
3. We learned that Muslims and Christians have significant differences in our beliefs about God, Jesus and salvation. As Christians, we believe that our Heavenly Father desires a personal relationship with us. He's described as our comforter, guide, shield, provider, Savior and love. Talk about a time when God has shown his comfort in your life? His guidance? What does your relationship with God look like right now? Are you close to Him? Do you feel far from Him? What are some ways you can improve your relationship with our Heavenly Father?
4. **Read Ephesians 2:8-9.** According to Islam doctrine, the way to heaven is to live by the five Pillars. It tells us in Ephesians that we are saved through faith, not by works. Do you feel like God's grace is enough or do you sometimes feel like you have to "do things" to earn his love? Why do we sometimes feel that way? How can we better understand God's grace?
5. **Read 1 Timothy 1:7.** Jesus tells us to pray for our enemies and to show love for those who persecute us. Who in your life believes something different than you and needs prayer? How can you develop better friendships with people who believe something different than you? Are you open to opportunities when they come your way? What can you say to them, in love, to point them toward the real Jesus? Share ways with each other of how your next conversation could go.

THINK ABOUT IT

The way you handle yourself in your conversations, your friendships, and your interactions will show others what you really believe in. To point others toward a relationship with Jesus means to talk about our differences in love, kindness and patience.

COMMIT TO MEMORY

"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and self-control." 1 Timothy 1:7

