

Sample Discussion Guide for *If God Is Love, Don't Be a Jerk*




Full discussion guide is available in the back of the book.

1. Can you think of a specific time when you felt tension between your former religion and your current beliefs? What was the cause?
2. What are some of your earliest memories of God? How did your childhood shape your adult spirituality?
3. The Missouri pastor in chapter 3 was trying to keep their community intact while boldly engaging justice issues. Is this possible? How do spiritual communities balance serving those who are already there and standing with vulnerable people who are not?
4. Have you ever experienced peer pressure to believe, profess, or affirm something in order to remain part of a spiritual community? Is it difficult to express doubt or divergence in your community?
5. What are your thoughts on the idea that God is nonbinary and transcends gender? Is that a difficult concept to embrace?
6. Knowing what you know about Jesus' life and teachings, how are they compatible or not compatible with the American Dream? With democracy? With capitalism?
7. In chapter 7, the woman at the dog park tells a familiar Christian story of "deserving hell" but being rescued by God. What are your thoughts on this perspective? Has that been your story? Is it still? If not, what changed?
8. How do you respond to Christians who use the "love the sinner, hate the sin" justification for their treatment of LGBTQ people?
9. Is it possible to avoid imagining a God who resembles us? If so, how?
10. What image, verse, story, or idea from the Bible is particularly difficult for you to reconcile with your faith?
11. Do you think God causes or allows natural disasters, health crises, and acts of violence in order to teach people? Talk about the implications of your answer.
12. How do you balance the merits of staying in a faith community and changing it from within with the benefits of leaving it to live more authentically?
13. Where do you see pro-life Christians not practicing a "pro-humanity" theology?
14. How do you reconcile anger and spirituality? How are they compatible or not compatible?
15. The author describes looking back and noticing how his "set of assumptions about the world" was difficult to overcome, how he defended a story that he needed to be true even if it wasn't. Can you think of a difficult truth you've had to come to terms with and how it altered your theology or your expression of it?
16. Belonging is a huge part of feeling loved. Where have you experienced that sense of "found-ness" the author writes about?
17. How might you find a way to engage in "collaborative compassion" with a group of people or a community whose beliefs are different from yours?
18. How does the idea of a "Gospel according to You" inspire, encourage, or anger you?



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