

TENSIONS BETWEEN FAITH AND CULTURE

SESSION 1: EITHER/OR

In this session, we'll talk about some typical ways we react or respond when something in culture clashes with our faith.

BEFORE

Before your group discussion, we suggest reviewing *How Small Groups Can Be a Safe Place for Politics* on GroupLeaders.org. While this resource relates specifically to politics, the tips provided can be helpful for conversations on cultural tensions.

WIN

Grow in an understanding of how to navigate the tensions that exist between what we believe and the culture around us

CONNECT

Here's a way to have a little fun and get your group feeling "tension" at the start of your group meeting. Play a quick round of "Would You Rather?" by having every group member answer each of the five questions below:

- **Would you rather** give up brushing your hair or give up brushing your teeth?
- **Would you rather** have a pause or a rewind button in your life?
- **Would you rather** get a paper cut every time you turn a page or bite your tongue every time you eat?
- **Would you rather** only be able to listen to one song for the rest of your life or only be able to watch one movie for the rest of your life?
- **Would you rather** find a rat in your kitchen or a roach in your bed?

(Source <https://parade.com/964027/parade/would-you-rather-questions/>)

LEARN

Before watching the video together and discussing the questions below, we suggest taking a few moments to pray. Invite God into your conversation. Here's a prayer you can use to begin your time:

"Heavenly Father, Give us eyes to see those around us as you see them... even, or perhaps especially, those with whom we find it difficult to relate. Amen.

After praying, watch the video for Session 1.



APPLY

1. What's your initial reaction to the video? Share if any tensions surfaced for you as you watched it.
2. What is your natural way of handling tension with those around you? Do you run toward it or run from it?
3. Faith and culture are often viewed as enemies. Share ways you have viewed or experienced tension between the two.
4. What are some ways our culture and your faith worldview are in agreement? (For example: both would agree that it's not right to steal from someone.)
5. Which of the below is your typical response when you are confronted with something in culture that doesn't line up with your faith? If none of the below relate to you, how would you describe your typical response?
 - We **distance** ourselves from the aspect of culture we disagree with.
 - We **critique** the people who disagree with our point of view.
 - We **concede**, feeling that we can't really change culture anyway.
6. Read **John 8:1–11** aloud in your group. What do you think the woman was feeling? What are some things you notice about how Jesus approached her? What things did he say in front of the crowd and what did he say to only her? What principles can we apply from this encounter?

PRAY

It's not uncommon to feel uncomfortable praying in front of the group. A great first step is to offer a one-sentence prayer to God aloud. It could be as simple as "Heavenly Father, Please help me to see people as Jesus sees people."

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

—John 3:17