

TENSIONS BETWEEN FAITH AND CULTURE

SESSION 2: BOTH/AND

There's a psychological reason we move away from people who have different worldviews and lifestyles than us. We'll talk about that reason and what it looks like to get past it.

WIN

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

CONNECT

Ask your group if they had any insights from the four-day reading plan.

LEARN

Before watching the video, take a moment to pray for your time together.

Heavenly Father, help us to live in the reality of the mercy we've been given and to offer that mercy to those around us. Amen.

After praying, watch the video for Session 2.

APPLY

1. What's your initial reaction to the video? Did any tensions surface for you?
2. How did you feel when "disgust" was the word used to describe avoiding people who think differently than you?
3. Read **Matthew 9:9–13**.
 - What stands out to you from this encounter? Consider the account from both Matthew and the Pharisees' perspective. What would you imagine both are feeling?
 - In the context of this study, we'll call **sacrifice** removing something (such as yourself or someone else from a situation) in order to make things better or more comfortable for you. **Mercy** is embracing and intentionally moving toward someone in spite of who they are or what they've done.



- If someone looked at your social media posts or listened to you express your opinions, would they conclude you desire “sacrifice” or “mercy”? Where do you think you land on the scale?



4. What do we risk when we move toward mercy?
5. Think of that group or category of people with whom you see things differently. Consider your natural response to a tension related to this group—distance yourself, critique them, or concede. What’s something you can do to begin thinking about them as a group of individuals instead of simply “they”? What could it look like to move toward mercy?
6. In Jesus’s day, Jewish people looked down on Samaritans who they viewed as a mixed race who did not share their faith. Read aloud in your group the parable of the good Samaritan in **Luke 10:25–37**.
 - What stands out to you about how each person encountered the man in need?
 - When you think of the group or category of people with whom you experience tension, consider what needs they have.
 - What step can you take in order to “go and do likewise”?

PRAY

We suggest ending your group time with a prayer. Something simple to pray would be, “Heavenly Father, Help me try to understand other people’s perspectives and move more toward a mindset of mercy. Amen.”

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

—Jesus (Acts 1:8)