

**Instructions:**

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.

**Series: There's Got to be a Better Way??!**

It is no secret we live in polarizing and divisive times. Our world labels, judges, cancels, and dismisses others, all in the name of being on the "right" side. And all too often, Christians play right along, acting no better than anyone else. Even worse, the Christian faith has been used, reduced, and manipulated to justify hateful behaviors and particular worldviews. As we live through another election cycle, people of faith must ask; is this really how Jesus called us to live? Is this really what Jesus wanted for the church? What is at stake if American Christians continue in this way? Is a third way of living and loving even possible?

**Message Description:**

Throughout this series we have explored how to be unified as a body of Christ even when we think and vote differently. But what about when followers of Christ are causing harm with their words or actions? Where is the line? When can we call them out in love? **How can we hold the body of Christ accountable?**

When engaging with friends, family, and other believers in Christ that we know and desire to maintain a relationship, we must return again and again to the Word of God together to check how our beliefs, worldviews, or approaches are in line with the actual teachings of Christ. If the posture, tone, and approach of the one you are engaging is not gracious and compassionate, and if they are causing further harm by their failure to hear you, boundaries may be necessary. **Boundaries are not bad things that restrict relationships, they are good things that make relationships possible.**

For those followers of Jesus whom we do not know but seem to use God's name in vain (that is, when the Christian religion is used for personal, political, and economic gain, or when it's weaponized to oppress others) we must speak up and name the perversion of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In our social context today, it is the rise of Christian nationalism, a modern-day political movement, that is antithetical to the gospel of Jesus Christ. ***To learn more about Christian nationalism, consider the resources below.***

**Key Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 and 1 Corinthians 13; John 8:31-36

**Questions based on this week's teaching:**

1. Re-read John 8:31-36. What does it mean to "abide in my word"?
2. Share about a time when you engaging with a fellow believer to hold them accountable for harmful words or actions. How did it go? Did you find it easy or difficult to return to the word of God together?
3. What do you find most troubling about the rise of Christian nationalism today? What questions do you still have?

**Consider the following resources to learn more:**

- Story and interview by NPR: <https://www.npr.org/2024/10/24/1211597179/1a-10-24-2024>
- Holy Roast podcast with Rev. Dr. Amanda Henderson: <https://holyroastpodcast.podbean.com/e/holy-roast-s2e3-amanda-henderson-on-christian-nationalism/>
- Complexified podcast, answering lingering questions on Christian nationalism: <https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/complexified/answering-those-lingering-eJBulEOP4Rz/>
- Documentary, *Bad Faith*, streaming now on Netflix and Apple TV: <https://www.badfaithdocumentary.com>