

OUTLINE & QUESTIONS

IS THE BIBLE MORALLY BACKWARD?

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DEUTERONOMY 4:5-9

7 Questions to Ask About Morally Troubling Parts of the Bible:

1. How does this fit into _____?
2. Is this _____ or _____?
3. How does this work in _____?
4. How does the Bible _____ from within _____?
5. What if we're _____?
6. How has this _____ when _____?
7. What do I know about _____?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY, FRIENDS & GROUPS

Icebreaker: If smartphones were suddenly banned tomorrow, what would be the first thing you'd struggle with?

1. Read Deuteronomy 4:1-9 out loud. Give your group a few minutes to make observations on their own. Then go around the group and share the things you noticed and discuss them.
2. Deuteronomy 4:8 claims God gave "righteous decrees and laws." What are some aspects of the Bible that don't feel righteous to our modern sensibilities?
3. The sermon gave seven questions to ask when encountering troubling Bible passages. Which of these seven questions is most helpful to you personally, and why? What other topics besides slavery could you apply the seven questions to?
4. How does the distinction between "descriptive" and "prescriptive" change the way you read stories about biblical characters doing morally questionable things?
5. Israel's national identity was rooted in being freed from slavery. How should this shape our reading of their laws about slavery?
6. Paul says in Galatians 3:28 that in Christ there is no "slave nor free," but in Ephesians 6:5, he says, "Slaves, obey your earthly masters." Why do you think Paul didn't just command all Christian slave owners to immediately free their slaves?
7. The sermon distinguished between different types of slavery. What are they? How is slavery in the Bible different from slavery in American history? How is this helpful to understand what the Bible is saying about slavery?
8. The sermon argued that Jesus and Paul planted "subversive seeds" rather than directly commanding the end of slavery. What are some of those seeds? Do you find this approach satisfying? Why or why not?
9. The sermon asks, "What if we're the ones who are wrong?" about our moral intuitions. What's one area where you think modern Western culture might be morally blind—where future generations will ask, "How could they think that was okay?"
10. The sermon's final question is "What do I know about the character of Jesus?" When you're confused or troubled by a Bible passage, how does looking at Jesus help you navigate it? Can you give a specific example?
11. If someone said to you, "The Bible endorses slavery," how would you respond after hearing this sermon? What would you say first?