



Study Guide

Tensions Study Guide

1-Race / Ethnicity	1
2-Role of the Bible	3
3-Career vs. Family	5
4-Modern Sexuality	7

Series Overview

Tensions. We all experience tensions as we navigate our lives. Sometimes, tensions occur when cultural norms conflict with what we know to be the Truth.

Using This Guide

You may choose to use this guide:

- for personal study and reflection
- as a discussion guide with any group of people interested in what the Bible says about these topics

last update = 10Jun2017

1-Race / Ethnicity

Icebreaker: A Different Flower

Draw a large daisy-shaped flower with an over-sized center. Think about non-physical things to describe people in your group. In the center, put words that describe everyone in the group. On the petals, put words that describe unique things about some group members.

Questions for Study or Discussion

- According to **1Samuel 16:7** and **Acts 17:26** how does God view the **biological** races?
- There are two **spiritual** races: the redeemed and the unredeemed [**1Pet 2:9**]. All humans share a spiritual origin [**1Cor 15:22**]. What does it take to become part of the redeemed race [**Rom 5:18**]?
- According to **Matthew 23:32-33** and **Luke 3:17**, how does God view the spiritual races?
- What role does ethnicity play in your standing with God [**Gal 3:28**, **Col 3:8-11**, **Rom 10:12-13**]?
- What is God's plan for the people groups within the redeemed race [**Rev 5:9**]?

Dig a Little Deeper: Bad News, Good News

<i>Bad News</i>	<i>Good News</i>
We are all sinners (Rom 3:23). We tend to put our own standard of right and wrong above God's standard. Racism is a form of pride that exalts people of one racial category over another. Racism is a sin.	The good news is that the power of the cross took away the power of sin to enslave redeemed people. Christ-followers can move from racism to love and compassion (Php 2:3-4).

Application Exercise: Differences and Likenesses

Make two lists:

1. Ways that you are different from some of your fellow believers
2. Ways that you are alike your fellow believers

<i>Differences</i>	<i>Likenesses</i>

2-Role of the Bible

Icebreaker: Bible Finds You

What do you think Lincoln meant by the Bible finding him where he was?

I am busily engaged in the study of the Bible. I believe it is God's Word because it finds me where I am. -Abraham Lincoln

Questions for Study or Discussion

- God has spoken to us in His Word. It is His letter to us. How can a person say that they love God but throw His "letter" aside in favor of things that don't matter (**Luke 10:25-28**)? Make a list of activities that are less important than God.
- The purpose of Scripture is to help you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Once you believe, Scripture helps you have life in His name (**John 20:31**). What have you done to deepen your understanding of God's Word (**2Tim 2:15**)?
- The Bible is living and powerful. It can force us to face what is happening in our minds and hearts (**Heb 4:12-13** and **2Tim 3:14-17**). What are some times in your life when God's Word has confronted you?
- What does it take to become more Christ-like (**2Cor 3:18**)?

Dig a Little Deeper: Teaching, Reproof, Correction, Training

All Scripture is useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness (**2Tim 3:16**). Consider the First Commandment: "You shall have no other gods before me." (**Exo 20:3**).

Scripture:

- **teaches** us truth. There is only one true God who rules us as we glorify Him. Scripture teaches us truth by saying, "This is right."
- **reproves** us. When we are not putting God first by giving Him his due worship, His Word rebukes our sin by saying, "That is wrong."
- **corrects** us. It points us back to what is right. It corrects us by saying, "Repent and serve the one true God."
- **trains** us. It shows us how to live with God as our God. It trains us by saying, "This is how to please God by the way you live."

Application Exercise: Confess and Commit

If you find yourself not reading your Bible, confess that to God. Ask Him to help you replace the trivial things on your schedule with time in His Word. Make a commitment that you will cooperate with His Word. Let it teach, reprove, correct, and train you.

3-Career vs. Family

Icebreaker: Define Success

- How does our culture define success?
- In what ways do you agree or disagree with this definition of success?

Questions for Study or Discussion: Repentance

- What is the top priority for a Christ-follower ([Deu 6:6](#), [Exo 20:2-3](#), [Mat 6:33](#))?
- What is the second priority for a married Christ-follower ([Eph 5:25](#) and [Eph 5:22](#))?
- What is the greatest gift you can give your child ([John 17:1-5](#) and [Eph 5:33](#))?
- How can you be sure your family hears God's Word ([Deu 6:4](#))?
- How have you used the principle of repetition to plant a key teaching ([Deu 6:7](#))?
- What can you use as physical reminders of God's Word ([Deu 6:8-9](#))?

Dig a Little Deeper: Make a Decision

Here are some tips for making good decisions.

Pray about the decision.	1The 5:16-18, Jas 1:5
Obey God's Word.	Deu 11:26-28, Psa 119:105
Apply biblical principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● When in doubt about appropriateness, don't do it [Rom 14:21-23].● Abstain from anything that appears evil [1The 5:22].
Seek godly counsel.	Pro 15:22, Pro 24:6
Delight in the Lord.	Psa 37:4-5, Psa 147:11

Application Exercise: Help or Hinder

In what ways does your job help or hinder your relationship with God and your family?

<i>Helps</i>	<i>Hinders</i>

What changes can you make to reduce the ways your job hinders your relationship with God or your family? Before you decide on a change, consider the tips for making a decision.

4-Modern Sexuality

Icebreaker: Factors

In your opinion, what are the factors that are changing our society's attitudes toward sexuality?

Questions for Study or Discussion

- How does our culture view the purpose of the human body [[1Cor 6:13](#)]?
 - How does God view the purpose of the human body [[1Cor 6:14-20](#)]?
 - ▶ In what ways can sin that involves your body harm you?
 - ▶ In what ways can sin that involves your body hinder your ability to be effective in fulfilling God's plans?

- In God's design, what type of bond is marriage supposed to be [[Mat 19:5-6](#) and [Gen 2:24](#)]?

- According to [Matthew 19:7-9](#), when is divorce permissible?

- What is the reward of sexual purity [[Rom 12:1](#) and [1The 4:3-5](#)]?

Dig a Little Deeper: Intimacy is More Than Physical

Emotional	One heart and soul	Acts 4:32 , Eze 11:19
Mental	One mind	Rom 15:6 , Php 2:2
Spiritual	One Spirit, one God	1Cor 6:17 , Php 1:27
Physical	One flesh, one body	Mat 19:5-6 , Eph 5:31-33

Application Exercise: Relationship Check

For each question, answer yes or no related to your relationship with God and your spouse.

Question	God?	your spouse?
Do you express your love in words to		
Do you actively listen to		
Are you genuinely transparent with		
Do you share your deepest longings and struggles with		
Do you use your body to honor		
Do you know what pleases		