

For the week ahead:

- Have you been holding a grudge against or severed your relationship with anyone who didn't come to up to snuff in your book. Who sinned or did something that you've hung onto? How might you show mercy to this person? What might you do to restore the relationship?
- Forgive a debt someone owes you. Call them and let them know they are no longer bound by the original agreement. In so doing, you will be identifying with what Christ does for you all the time. What feelings does this bring to you?

My thoughts /ideas about following the sacrilegious ways
of Jesus...this week:

**Next week's chapter in Sacrilege =
Chapter 9 - Jesus on a John Deere**

Adventures in *Missional* Living

Week #5 - Sin in the Periphery

Chapter 8 in Sacrilege



“Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy”

(Matt. 5:7 NIV)

God leads with mercy. For you, for everyone...God always leads with mercy. While our sin keeps the relationship between God and us from being whole, it does not drive God away from us. In fact because of God's mercy we are able to stand in the presence of our perfect God. He made the way possible in Jesus. It's not that we don't sin anymore, it's just that's not what's most important to God. Rather our being able to be in relationship with Him and He with us is what's important.

Mercy over judgment every time. God does it for us and that's what we're called to do for others. Be generous in loving, in forgiving, in letting mercy lead. When we allow mercy to lead, it is unexpected and encouraging to others. Let go of judgment and see others as God sees them: imperfect but beloved. Just as you are.

Getting started:

- What kind of judgments do you make each day? Don't qualify them good or bad - just make a list of the people/places/circumstances you find yourself judging on a daily basis.
- Do you see yourself as a judgmental person? What might others in your life say? What makes you say what you say?
- If you could pick, would you rather have a world where mercy always wins or where justice always wins? What brings you to the choice you made?

Going further

Have you ever experienced being shunned, overlooked, or judged because of a particular struggle, choice, behavior, or belief? Share the experience.

Have you ever judged, looked away from, discounted, or ridiculed another for a particular struggle, choice, behavior, or belief? Share about that experience. What kept you from showing mercy?

What qualifiers do you use for the people around you? Do you say things like, "I met this homeless guy," "this trashy girl at work," "this rich guy," "that Democrat," "he must have been a Republican," "my rich friend," and so on? The qualifiers we use often indicate where and how we judge someone. People's issues become their identity as opposed to their story or their being. Talk about this concept.

What do you think? Do you have people in your life who you see as issues instead of people?

Split your group into two groups. (If you're going through these alone, answer part 1, and then complete part 2 either later in the day or the next day.)

- (1) Have one group write down the sin struggles of those within the church.
- (2) Have the other group (or you later in the day) write down the sin struggles of those outside the church.
- (3) Get together (if alone, journal this question) and discuss the two lists, comparing and contrasting them.

What do you see? What stands out? Talk about it.

Keep track...

As you read through the *Sacrilegious* book, mark those things that sound shocking to you in some way. Maybe highlight them, write them in your journal or circle them, but keep track. Collect your thoughts as you go, and each time you gather with friends or a discussion group, share those things that just may just change the way you think, live, or relate to Jesus or other people.

Quotable Quotes

Look at the following quotes from the book "*Sacrilege*"...what in them do you agree with? What makes you go "hmmmm"? What do you question... and what makes you ask those questions? What makes you uncomfortable? And what is it about that which makes you uncomfortable?

"So why do you think Jesus overlooks so much sin and sin byproducts? It's simple but profound: he took care of sin for us. Done, finished! And what remains? Relationship." pg 147

"So what are we to do with sinners? It is common to hear, "judge the sin, not the sinner." I believe that because mercy trumps judgment, Jesus would say, "Don't judge the sin or the sinner," Just overlook the sin until Jesus has their hearts; he'll take care of the sinner and the sin." pg 150

Think about the last quote. Do you think you could actually live that out? Letting Jesus take care of the sin and the sinner? What sins might you find it hard to overlook or not judge?

What makes you choose the way you've chosen? Try putting yourself in the place of someone who had committed one of the sins you find hard to let go. What would you long for - mercy or judgment?