

Holy Shift Discussion Questions

Grace + peace to you, and welcome to the HOLY SHIFT Discussion Guide.

When we first thought about filming the live show, we hoped it would move beyond an individual viewing experience, and spill out into real life conversations. The best way to do that is to watch the film together, and carve out some time afterwards to chew on it.

Holy Shift is the first word, not the last word. It's a kick-off to a much longer journey; one that you will go on with others.

These questions can help you bring Holy Shift down to earth, and give you a sense of what practical shifts you need to make in your own life.

Don't try to use all these questions (there's too many!), and don't worry about going in order. Just pick a few questions you think are interesting and start talking.

This guide is just the kick off!

At the beginning of the show, Kevin talked about translating the word “God” if it makes “the source of loves that created all things, holds all things together, and moves all things forward” more accessible.

What are the potential strengths, and weaknesses, of using different words to talk about God?

What are some metaphors that you find helpful when you think about God?

Some of the biblical laws we looked at aren’t often talked about in church settings.

Why do we avoid the strange laws and rules in the bible?

What good can come out of exploring these old and strange biblical laws?

The idea of “shifts” reminds us that the texts we read in the bible are ancient, and are taking a particular group of people from where they are, to the next healthy step.

Were you first taught to read the bible as written to real people, or as a “timeless” and “placeless” book?

Does the bible become less meaningful if we see it as speaking to a certain time and place?

How should we read the bible today if we are separated from the original culture by thousands of years and miles?

The “shifts” God gives tend to protect and care for particular groups of people.

Who are some people who are specifically cared for in biblical teachings?

Does this offer us any wisdom or insight into God’s heart? Does it help us as we make difficult decisions about who, and how, we welcome others into God’s family?

Jesus himself “shifts forward” from Moses’ laws.

What does the shift from “eye for an eye” to “love your enemies” mean for us today? What does it tangibly look like to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us?

Does this mean we need to stay in abusive or dangerous places?

How can we care for ourselves while also loving our enemies?

The reflections on using gasoline or having cell phones make “shifting forward” a little more tricky. In some ways we have shifted “forward” from the Ancient Israelites and early church. In other ways we seem to have shifted backwards.

Where do you see, in our modern culture, good and holy shifts?

Where have we shifted backwards (into selfishness, greedy, sin, etc)?

What is the right thing to do, especially if we are Jesus followers, about the places where we have shifted backwards culturally? What will be most fruitful? (Try to think in terms of practical “holy shifts” not just ideals)

The violence in the Charleston Church Shooting is a horrific example of racism and violence, and yet the response from the families was such a sign of hope.

Was there any part of a quote that stuck out to you in particular?

Kevin mentioned the idea of their gatherings as “preparation” for the dark day that might come, and when it did, they were ready with things like grace and forgiveness. Are there ways in which you regularly “practice” shifting gears forward?

Kevin framed the idea of “repentance” as turning around to shift in the right direction, not to earn God’s love, but to live in it more fully, and to be transformed by it.

When you think of the word “repent” is this the image that comes to mind?

Is this different from Christian teaching that describes God as angry until we repent?

What might happen to a person who never turns into the direction of love? What might a life look like that continues to shift into darkness?

The story of Anne and the coffee shop starts with someone feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what to do. She decided to take the next, simple step before her.

Do you have a sense of direction in your life, or do you feel like you don’t know what you should do?

What is the next tangible step you can take today or tomorrow?

What opportunities and questions could that small step present?

The story of the drug addicted man who leads worship confronts some of our assumptions about what people's shifts should look like.

Are there very small shifts in your life that you find very difficult?

Why is it important to celebrate the small shifts, not just the big ones?

How can we tell when we are equipping someone in their unhealthy actions, and when we are supporting them with grace? Can we tell?

The story of the baby dedication reveals how we all come from a culture and background that shapes us.

What is your cultural background (religious, political, ethnic, social, etc)?

What do you embrace from your background? Where do you digress?

Do you find it difficult to not harshly judge those who come from a different background?

Kevin ended the show by talking about his own past, and how for many of us it's easier to give grace to others, than it is to give ourselves grace.

Do you think this is true?

Why is it important to forgive ourselves for our past mistakes?

What is the role of other people (friends, family, mentors) in giving ourselves grace?

Thanks for using the HOLY SHIFT discussion guide. We hope this has been helpful for your group.

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