

# When Jesus Wasn't Nice

In episode 7 of my new series, *Questions With God*, I ask the question, "What does love actually look like?" It's a question I have sought the answer to for the past 10 years, and it's what all my films and television shows have striven to uncover. 1 Corinthians 13 gives us the very definition of love, but defining something and living it out in a world and culture that is constantly trying to twist and distort that definition is something else entirely. For instance, is it more loving to pray for someone or to attend to their needs? Is it more loving to tell someone what they're doing wrong or to allow them to navigate their journey at their own pace? Is it more loving to explain the consequences of sin or to instead focus on the joys of Christ? It should come as no surprise that the world is confused about love if we Christians can't even agree on it!

For most of my life I spouted the platitudes of love as the highest ideal for a Christian, but inwardly I hardly did anything about it. Knowing the right answer and changing your behavior to match it are two very different things, and that hypocrisy is precisely what riled Jesus up the most. It should be noted that Jesus, for all his kindness, grace and mercy that we so love to extol, was surprisingly vehement in his vitriol against certain people. If you were saying one thing but living another way, and especially if you were a "religious" person and should know better, He brought the fire and the fury of heaven down on you. Publicly. To bring spiritual men to such a froth that they literally want to kill you is no easy task, yet Jesus did it in a relatively short time frame. When the darkness in our hearts is exposed, it isn't fun. But how we react to that exposure will reveal everything about who we really are.

I have no patience or tolerance for "religious" people anymore. I used to be one of the highest order, so I know how

they think. Religious people are non-lovers. They are concerned with appearances, rituals, and theological ruminations. Their faith is firmly rooted in their head, but hasn't yet made its way to their heart. They know the right things to say, but strap a camera onto them 24/7 and you'd be appalled at their behavior. They "have a form of godliness, but deny its power" (2 Tim. 3:5). But more than anything, they think of themselves above others. This, I am convinced, is the truest form of religion in the worst sense, because it is the exact opposite of what Christ models for us.

I was this person for many, many years. I had just enough knowledge of the Bible to make me dangerous, and I had just enough transformation in my life to make me feel good about myself, but drill down to the root of my heart and it was mostly selfishness and self-focus. I would love you only if it was convenient.

I don't think God wants us to beat ourselves up, and I'm certain He doesn't want us to wallow in shame and condemnation, but I do think He wants us to consistently shine the light of truth into our own hearts and expose the darkness that is there, so that He can purify it and make us new again. We are professional screw-ups—it's what we do best as humans. But thankfully we have a Father who loves us in spite of our best efforts, and who has given us the greatest example of love to guide us into all truth. His Son. The Savior of the world. He put you ahead of Himself. All he's asking is that you do the same for others.