

SEEKERS – Fall/Winter 2021-2022

Welcome! We will meet for the next 12+ weeks, on Friday mornings at 10:00 am. (NOTE: We may take off two weeks in December as Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve are on Friday.)

We will be in discussion and discovery based on two books:

“Hard Sayings of Jesus- Discussions for Serious Christians” by John Zehring

and

“The Difficult Words of Jesus – A Beginner's Guide to His Most Perplexing Teachings”

by Amy-Jill Levine

You are welcome to purchase these books on your own for a deeper dive into the Scripture texts we will cover but it is not necessary. **BUT...BRING YOUR FAVORITE BIBLE!**

Each week you will receive in person or by email the texts that will be discussed the following week along with some questions to ponder in preparation for our gathering.

You may want to acquire a notebook to record your thoughts on paper or record them in a Notes app on your tablet or cell phone. Either or Neither way is fine. It's up to you.

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Week 1: “Cut off your hand?

Even literalists don't take this one seriously.”

Read Matthew 5:29-30

Discussion questions:

1. How would you define sin?
2. Other than Jesus, do you think there has ever been a human being who has not sinned?
3. Jesus said, *"If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell."* What do you think Jesus meant by the right eye causing a person to sin? Give examples of how the eye might cause people today to sin.
4. Our culture and media encourage people to present themselves as attractive, sexy and appealing to the attention of others. Do you think it is wrong to be attracted to others or to look at another more as an appealing object rather than a person? Some have joked to a spouse "You can look but don't touch." Discuss Jesus' hard saying about what a person looks at or touches in light of today's ethos.
5. Have you ever met anyone who claims to take the Bible literally word for word? How do you think such a person would interpret this verse? Are they wearing an eye patch? Or, might they claim not to have sinned? How could their not sinning be reconciled with Paul's observation that *"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* Romans 3:23?
6. If God is loving, kind and compassionate, does it not sound unlike God to suggest a person tear out an eye or cut off a hand because he or she has sinned? What do you think is going on in this hard saying?
7. If Jesus is using hyperbole to make the point that anything that separates a person from God's ways needs to be removed, how might that apply to our lives today? Is what Jesus suggests still very demanding and dramatic? Is it possible for us to comply? What happens if we try but fail?