

Session 4—Religion

Icebreaker - Play a round of 'Get-To-Know-You Tumbling Tower'. Try not to knock it down and make a hot mess!

Play the Video—Session 4

1. Was there anything from the video that stuck out to you? Could you relate to Susie's story in any way?

2. Chris told a story from the Bible about King David, who danced with all of his heart before God and was criticized by his wife for his behavior.

Earlier in David's life, when he was just a boy, a godly man named Samuel told him that one day he would be king. At the time, David was a scrawny little shepherd boy and didn't look very kingly. Samuel was a little unsure that God had chosen the right person. But God spoke these words to Samuel,

1 Samuel 16:7 *"The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

Do you think that Samuel shared these words with David? If so, how do you think that may have affected his attitude on the day he was dancing his heart out for God?

3. Chris explained that one type of "hot mess" religion is one that focuses on outward appearances and behaviors instead of the attitude of our hearts. Do you think that means our outward behaviors are irrelevant to our faith? Why or why not?

4. Why do you think we so often put our focus on outward appearances instead of what's in the heart of a person?

5. Have you ever experienced "hot mess" religion in a church or other Christian setting? Without mentioning any specific names or places, what did you experience? How did it affect your faith?

6. Do you struggle at all with judging others based on the way they act or look? Have you ever had a hard time accepting someone who came to your church? Explain.

7. Is there a person in your circle of influence who, on the outside, looks or acts very different from you? How can you walk across the room and show God's love to that person this week?

Pray the prayer below by going around in a circle and having each person read one sentence:

God, thank you for looking past our outward appearance and into our hearts.

We pray that when you look into our hearts, you see an attitude of humility and love.

If there is pain from religious people who have hurt us in the past, please heal those hurts.

If there is bitterness, help us to forgive.

Give us eyes like yours, to see past the outward appearance in others.

Help us to have eyes of love, and not judgment.

Give us the courage to walk across the room and talk to someone who is different from us.

If we have hurt or judged others, in the name of religion, forgive us.

And help us to take steps to make things right.

Let people who are far from you, be drawn to the love that we have.

And let that love point them to you.

So that they can know that there is a God that loves them just as they are.

Even if they are a hot mess.

Thank you for loving us, even when we are hot messes.

Thank you for loving us no matter what. Amen.