

Discussion Questions

Prepare:

Share one example of a good ripple effect you have witnessed in your lifetime and one bad ripple effect you've witnessed in your lifetime.

1. *"The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; Psalm 18:2 The Rock who "will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. Daniel 2:44 Jesus refers to himself as the Rock upon whom he will build his church and the gates of hell will not prevail is over it. Matthew 16:18*

Has God lived up to this image of him in Scripture? If so, share how.

2. Pastor Richard said that *"if we want to be part of the ripple effect Jesus started we must follow him; we must become more and more like him!"* Is that true? Can we make the kind of ripple effect God desires apart from being an authentic believer? What has happened to the cause of Christ when God's people do what God wants but not the way God teaches? Share some examples.
3. How important is it for the witness of the church for God's people to live godly lives?
4. What is compassion and does American compassion mirror the type of compassion mirrored in Scripture?
5. What does this passage say about the importance of showing compassion to others?

"If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, return it by sunset,²⁷ because that cloak is the only covering your neighbor has. What else can they sleep in? When they cry out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate." Exodus 22:26-27

6. What does these passages say about compassion?

"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 19:9-10

John 21:19; Matthew 28:20; Ephesians 4:12-13

"When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick."
Matthew 14:14

"Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 'I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.'" Matthew 15:32

7. *"The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed," Psalm 103:6*

What is justice and what is righteousness biblically? Does one take priority over the other? How hard is it to keep these two in harmony with one another?

8. *"Honest scales and balances are from the Lord. All the weights in the bag are of His making."*
Proverbs 16:11

Give examples of how our culture tries to practice this teaching? It's a good example of how biblical teaching has shaped our laws and values for the good!

9. *"This is what the LORD Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.'" Zechariah 7:9-10*

What does this passage say about justice and righteousness?

10. How is the Church doing when it comes to upholding both righteousness and justice?

11. Talk about the generosity of God as it relates to this passage: *"God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'" Genesis 1:28*

12. *"The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."* Exodus 34:6-7

Are we as generous with God when it comes to our love and forgiveness and as stingy as he is when it comes to crime and punishment?

What happens though when people aren't held accountable for their actions? What happens when we are too hard and judgmental of those who have committed a crime? Can we both show compassion for the broken while holding them accountable for their actions?

13. How can we cultivate the type of generosity of spirit captured in this passage?

"If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to take it back to him. If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, don't leave it there. Be sure you help him with it." Exodus 23:4-5

14. *"Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."* Matthew 19:14

Share ways we can be more welcoming of children in our church and in our culture.

15. Our view of children is one of the most dramatic examples of how God's intervention in the world through Jesus created a ripple effect that has changed the world. Are there other examples that you see where the teachings of the bible have made their way into our laws, values, beliefs, and systems.

16. What are examples of ways the ripple effect of God has dissipated in our culture and has been replaced by the influence of less than good influencers?