

FAITH **UNDER** **CONSTRUCTION**

STUDY GUIDE WITH
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

EPISODE 3:

“I Love God, But His People Are Weird”

In this episode of Faith Under Construction, Rasool Berry and Christin Thorpe join Briana McCarthy to discuss church hurt and how that may strengthen or weaken people's relationship with God. Briana McCarthy is Our Daily Bread Ministries' director of engagement for African American Ministries and leads a discipleship organization called The Brilliant Tribe.

1. “The number three reason that people do not attend church is because they believe that church people are judgmental . . . How many times do people get in the way of people knowing God?” –Christin Thorpe
 - a. Have you noticed this with your peers in your own church or Christian community? Discuss your experience.
2. Rasool Berry asks Briana McCarthy: “How have you experienced the ‘weird’ at church?” What “weird” experiences shaped your church’s culture that others wouldn’t understand?
3. Berry mentions that, in the same way, there are also aspects to the faith that are counter-cultural and we should embrace that. Read Romans 1:1; 2 Timothy 2:21; and Psalm 4:3. What does it mean and look like to be set apart in a positive way in the Christian faith?
4. McCarthy gives us a definition of discipleship: “to submit yourself to an intentional process of being shaped and formed into the person of Jesus.” Read Matthew 28:16–20 and 1 Corinthians 11:1. What does it look like to be a disciple of Jesus? How have you seen intentional discipleship in your own church?
5. Thorpe defines the “black sheep” as someone who may not look like your traditional church person. Have you ever felt like the “black sheep” in church? Have you ever felt judged by the church for being different? What can you do to lessen this type of judgment?
6. In this episode, the hosts and guest talk about how the church should accept people’s differences, but sometimes changes need to be made for someone to be renewed and transformed in Christ. What do you think the difference between accountability and judgment is?
7. Thorpe mentions: “It’s hard for people to receive accountability outside of relationship.” How can church leaders be better at developing deeper, more meaningful relationships with their members?
8. “I wish the church had more grace for people to overcome and heal well.” –Christin Thorpe What kind of space do you wish the church was for you when you were struggling? How can you create this space for others who are struggling?
9. When speaking about her experience with church hurt, McCarthy says: “The Lord used the very thing that hurt me to heal me.”
 - a. Take a few minutes to intentionally recall moments of grace within the church. Write down three tangible ways the church has strengthened, formed, or supported you — think real people, real moments, real impact. Then share at least one with the group.

10. “The thing that has helped me . . . with dealing with the hypocrisy or the injustices [from people] who represent Christianity is that when I look in Scripture, I see Jesus dealing with the same thing.” –Rasool Berry
 - a. If Jesus was misunderstood, opposed, and mistreated by those who claimed to represent God, how does that reshape the way you process church hurt today?
11. **Read Hebrews 10:24–25.** Rasool Berry states, “*There is something supernaturally necessary to growing in family and the church.*” In light of this passage, to what extent do you agree with his claim? What in the text supports or challenges that idea?
12. **Prayer:** “Fight for your spiritual family because it will encourage you. You cannot do this walk alone.” –Christin Thorpe
 - a. Pause now and pray for each other and for the body of Christ. Pray for grace to see one another clearly, courage to be self-aware, and healing where wounds have formed.