



Discussion Guide for “Contempt and Kindness”

Cringeworthy Week 3

We're learning to value empathy as a culture, but just being able to understand another person isn't enough. Understanding without connection leads to contempt. David's encounters with Bathsheba, Uriah and Nathan show us why we need not just understanding, but kindness.

Scriptures for Further Reading

[2 Samuel 11:1-12:14](#)

[Psalm 51](#)

[Psalm 139](#)

[John 3:19-21](#)

[Romans 7:21-25](#)

Passage for Sacred Reading:

Sacred Reading is a way of reading Scripture with an eye toward transformation, not just information. You can find a [step-by-step guide here](#). The passage for this week's sacred reading is [2 Samuel 11:1-12:14](#).

Questions for Discussion

1. We think of empathy as the ability to understand another person. How can empathy be dangerous? What kinds of people demonstrate a toxic kind of empathy?
2. Review the story of David, Bathsheba, Uriah and Nathan in 2 Samuel 11:1-12:14. Identify both cognitive empathy and compassionate empathy in the story.
3. What kinds of people do you not understand at all? Who in your life do you have cognitive empathy for? What about compassionate empathy?
4. Cognitive empathy alone leads to contempt. Compassionate empathy leads to kindness. How can we take steps toward kindness? (Language nerds: there's a clue in the roots of the word 'compassion'!)
5. How is kindness different from niceness?
6. Why does Paul call kindness a fruit of the Spirit? What are the implications for those of us who need to practice kindness?