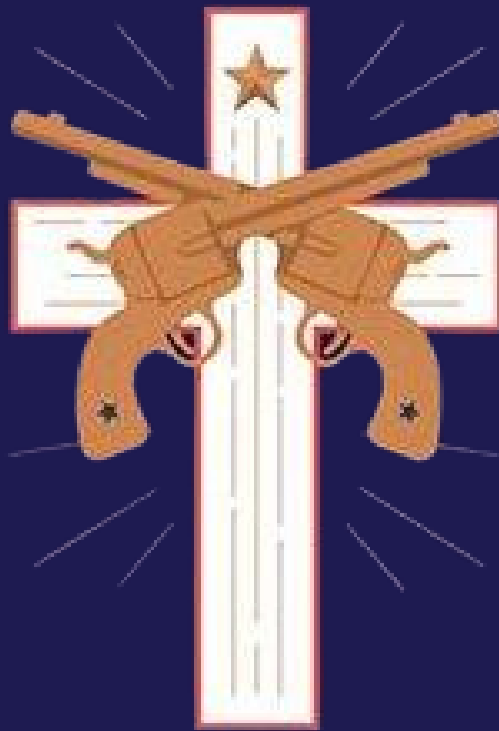


**SMALL GROUP
DISCUSSION GUIDE**

JESUS AND JOHN WAYNE



**KRISTIN KOBES
DU MEZ**

Schedule

WK 1: GROUP INTROS & INTRO

WK 2: CH 1-3

WK 3: CH 4-6

WK 4: CH 7-8

WK 5: CH 9-10

WK 6: CH 11-13

WK 7: CH 14-16

**WK 8: CONCLUSION & GROUP
REFLECTIONS**

Notes & Content

- Questions were formed by Kristin Kobes Du Mez, and Meghan DeJong. They aren't meant to be exclusive, only conversation starters.
- Please adhere to the Conversation Covenant listed on the next pages, or think about how to create one that fits your context..
- If you are using this with a group, and can't make it to one of your sessions, please write your small group members with a reflection on what was raised for you in that week's reading.
- Consider creating a way people can share relevant articles, videos, or books that will help connect your group throughout the week, and allow your meeting time to be more focused. Examples of this might be a Slack channel, a Facebook group, an email, or text thread.

Conversation Covenant

adapted from David Gurteen's work

I pledge:

To act in good faith. I will engage in good faith. I will be sincere, fair, open, and honest, regardless of the outcome of the conversation.

To show respect. I will show respect. I will be polite and give due regard for the feelings, wishes, rights, or traditions of others. I understand that I do not have to agree with someone to show them respect.

To give the benefit of the doubt. I will “give the benefit of the doubt” when someone says something that sounds ridiculous to me, recognizing that they may know something I don’t. I will ask them to explain in more detail rather than accusing them of being stupid.

To not talk behind someone’s back. I will never say anything behind someone’s back that I have not already spoken to their face.

To disagree constructively. I will refrain from name-calling and ad hominem attacks.

To speak the truth. I won’t use rhetorical tricks to try to win an argument. I will speak what I genuinely believe is the nuanced truth.

To aim to discover the truth. I will not enter into a conversation to change the mind of anyone to my way of thinking but to learn and to get close to the truth of matters jointly.

To focus on what we can change. I will focus on what we can do differently in the future since we cannot change what we did in the past.

To take responsibility for the conversation. I will take responsibility for the quality of the conversation and the abidance of the rules both in principle and in spirit. I will gently call out anyone I feel is breaking a rule and will be happy to be called out if I violate any of the rules myself. I will help ensure that everyone is included in the conversation.

To not be overly polite and apologize for things I did not say. I will not be overly polite and say sorry for things that I did not say.

To follow the covenant even when others fail to do so. I will abide by the rules regardless of whether another person breaks them. If someone launches an ad hominem attack on me, I will not take it as an excuse to respond in kind.

To lighten-up and approach the conversation in good humor. I recognize that humor is a hallmark of a constructive, generative conversation and take the conversation in good humor.

Week One

GROUP INTRODUCTIONS & INTRO

- Name, age, where you call (have called) home
- “Evangelical” can mean different things to different people. Do you identify as an evangelical? Do you know any evangelicals? When you hear the word “evangelical,” what does it mean to you?
- Jesus and John Wayne centers the role of consumer culture in creating evangelical identity. Looking at the list of examples on p. 7, have you participated in any part of this evangelical consumer culture? What additional examples would you add?
- What's your relationship and history with America & patriotism?

NOTES

Week Two

CHAPTERS 1-3

- Historians think a lot about both continuity and change. Was there anything that you found surprising in the longer history presented in the first chapter of the book?
- If you're old enough to remember the 1960s, what memories did this chapter stir? How were the 1960s such a pivotal decade in the formation of white evangelical identity?
- Evangelical masculinity isn't just a story about men. How have women helped prop up patriarchal Christianity and militant ideals of Christian masculinity, both past and present?

NOTES

Week Three

CHAPTERS 4-6

- A key challenge in researching and writing this book was determining what should count as “mainstream” and what should be relegated to the fringes. Over time, my understanding of the relationship between the two shifted; rather than distinguishing the margins from the mainstream, I began to identify affinities. What connections do you see between Gothard and Dobson? Have their teachings shaped your own life? How does their conception of authority shape evangelicalism more broadly?
- “Evangelicals like to write about sex. A lot. Why do you think that is? What patterns do you see in Chapter 5 (and also in Chapter 3) that point to broader implications of evangelical teachings on sex, both personal and political??
- The "purging of moderates" by Al Mohler and the testimony of Oliver North both point to a sense of being empowered by God to make "radical" choices. Was this seen as radical at the time? How has being "radical" for God manifested in your life/the lives of those you know?

NOTES

Week Four

CHAPTERS 7-8

- Do you have any memories of "Ollie-Mania?" What does the reading about this invoke in you?
- What was the impact on "family values" In your life growing up? How did It Impact your view of self, a potential partner, and your relationship with the world? If you didn't have a personal encounter with this, how did you experience those people that did?
- How did fighting for the "soul of America" impact you?

NOTES

Week Five

CHAPTERS 9-10

- Do you remember the Promise Keepers? What did you think of PK at the time? How was the evangelical men's movement of the 1990s different from what came before, and after?
- How have you defined religious persecution? Social Justice? What It means to be a real man, or woman? How does Du Mez's research inform how these were shaped In you?

NOTES

Week Six

CHAPTERS 11-13

- Were you aware of the increasingly militant masculinity that came to characterize post-9/11 American evangelicalism? What connections between gender and foreign policy are apparent in this era?
- Have you observed this embrace of militarism and the US military within American evangelicalism? What are some of the implications of this alliance?
- If you identify as a Christian, how have these movements shaped your view of God? Of Islam?

NOTES

Week Seven

CHAPTERS 14-16

- How did your faith impact your feelings about McCain or Obama in 2008?
- Apart from a brief mention in the introduction, Donald Trump doesn't make an appearance in this book until Ch. 15. How do the previous chapters help make sense of white evangelicals' embrace of Donald Trump?
- Du Mez says, "This was the hardest chapter at every stage of the writing process: researching, drafting, editing, proofing. More than once I questioned whether the chapter needed to be part of this book. What are your thoughts on this chapter, and how do you see it connecting to the rest of the book? [Side note: I consider Rachael Denhollander's quote at the top of p. 292 to be the moral center of the book.]"

NOTES

Week Eight

CONCLUSION & CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- From Du Mez, "Researching and writing this book was in many ways a profoundly discouraging project. The corruption of the faith seemed so entrenched, so endemic to American evangelicalism, that I was left with little hope for change. After finishing the manuscript, my editor asked if I could leave readers with just a bit of hope. I thought about it for a bit, but concluded that no, I didn't think that I could. A few days later the request came again: "Can you give us something?" It was then that I came up with the last sentence of the book. It felt too feeble at the time. But maybe it isn't." Where do you find hope in this story?
- What is a takeaway for you? What are your final thoughts?

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