



Stuart Hall

Sometimes It Takes A Party - Part 1

Small Group Material

June 11th, 2017

Leader Guide

Bottom Line: *Instead of building a wall, build a bigger table.*

Study Verses: *Matthew 23:27-28, Matthew 22:1-10, 1 John 4:17-21, Luke 15:11-32.*

Define The Win: *Participants would understand that everyone is invited to the party. They would get a glimpse into God's heart and how the Gospel is good news for everyone. Group members would begin to pinpoint ways they can be party starters and build bigger tables.*

Key Points

- *Sometimes people need your love and acceptance more than they need your advice and opinion.*
- *A party is any effort to celebrate, serve, or enjoy each other in a way that adds value to life.*
- *Sometimes it takes a party to change how we see each other.*
- *Jesus loved parties because Jesus loved people.*
- *Sometimes it takes a party to demonstrate that God cares about people who party.*
- *Sometimes it takes a party to confirm we can always be forgiven.*
- *Sometimes it takes a party to prove that people matter more than opinions.*

- *Sometimes it takes a party to remind us that everyone is invited to the party.*
- *Every table is an altar.*
- *Faith is meant be lived.*
- *There has never been a more important time in history than right now to start acting like we believe everyone is invited to the party.*
- *Too many of us act like everyone is NOT invited to the party.*
- *Jesus doesn't segregate. Jesus integrates.*
- *Loving God affects how we love others. Loving others affects how we love God.*
- *Parents are programmed to teach kids what to believe. What if we started coaching our kids how to love and serve?*

ENCOUNTER

- **How are Christians viewed as it relates to fun and freedom? Why does this tend to be the picture people have of Christ followers? Do you think this assessment is valid?**
- **Too many of us act like everyone is NOT invited to the party. How does this statement convict you? What causes you to not invite some people to the party?**
- **How do we make loving others a lot more complicated than it needs to be?**

FORMATION

- **Read Matthew 22:1-10. Who received an invitation to the party? What does this story teach us about God's heart?**
- **Read Matthew 23:27-28. What caused Jesus to have this response to the religious leaders? What did Jesus see within their hearts that broke His heart?**
- **Read 1 John 4:7-21. Loving God affects how we love others. Loving others affects how we love God. How does the way we treat, care and value others speak to our understanding of God's love?**
- **Read Luke 15:11-32. Why did the father throw a party for his prodigal son? Why did the older son rally against the party being held? What did the older son not understand about why there was reason to celebrate?**

EXPRESSION

- **Where are you erecting bigger walls? What would it look like for you to build longer tables instead?**
- **A party is any effort to celebrate, serve, or enjoy each other in a way that adds value. During this upcoming week, how can you be a party starter?**
- **Sometimes it takes a party to change how we view each other. Who needs to be invited to your party? How could inviting them change the way you see them?**

LEADER INSIGHT: *As believers, the way we live our lives should be contagious to others. Culture should see how we live free, take notice and be curious as to what drives this freedom. Unfortunately, many of us live as if following Jesus excludes us from having any fun. Rather than inviting everyone to the party, we act like bouncers, checking the credentials of anyone who dares to enter our space. We live as if there is some exclusive VIP section where only special individuals are allowed behind the velvet rope.*

If we're honest with ourselves, Christians are known for being party poppers rather than party starters. The closer we get to walking with Jesus, the easier it is to have smaller tables and bigger walls. If we're not careful, our tables can shrink all in the name of godliness and holiness.

When we respond this way, we break God's heart and show a lack of understanding in the power the Gospel message holds. We act like everyone is not invited to the party, but they are. Everyone has received an invitation. Jesus doesn't segregate. He integrates. Jesus loved parties because he loved people. Instead of building a wall, Jesus is calling us to build a bigger table. Loving God affects how we love others. Loving others affects how we love God. Being a party starter is part of our DNA as Christ followers. Having experienced the love of Christ firsthand, we have been set free and that is reason to celebrate.

Jesus went to parties. Jesus told stories about parties. Jesus compared God's Kingdom to a party. Jesus understood that there is something that happens at a party that can't happen anywhere else. It's as if Jesus is saying, "Sometimes it takes a party."

Sometimes it takes a party to change how we see each other. Sometimes it takes a party to demonstrate that God cares about people who party. Sometimes it takes a party to confirm we can always be forgiven. Sometimes it takes a party to prove that people matter more than opinions. Sometimes it takes a party to remind us that everyone is invited to the party.

Parties should be our priority. A party is any effort to celebrate, serve, or enjoy each other in a way that adds value to life. Our interactions with others should

leave a positive impact. Our faith is meant to be lived. Every single time we gather people together is an act of worship because we demonstrate how God cares and loves. Every table is an altar. There has never been a more important time in history than right now to start acting like we believe everyone is invited to the party. If we don't learn to love and serve, the power of the church diminishes. What if we started acting like everyone is invited to the party?