



How can we move our communities to become relevant, responsive and reflective of the global community? That's the question that Eric Michael Bryant poses in "Not Like Me." With stories, observations and thought-provoking suggestions, this book maps the way beyond ethnic, racial and cultural barriers to the communities that Jesus wants us to have.

**"Not Like Me"** is *Saving Private Ryan* meets *Nacho Libre*! Eric calls us to a heroic mission and at the same time exposes our flawed humanity. He tackles one of the most critical and complex issues of our time and brings it down to earth and keeps us grounded in reality. It's quite a gift to force us to face such uncomfortable and serious issues and at the same time keep us laughing. Somebody needed to write this book; I am grateful Eric did. We will all be better for it. Thank you, Eric, for awakening in us a love that knows no boundaries."

- **Erwin Raphael McManus**

This discussion guide is designed to be a companion piece following a 4 week message series through the book "Not Like Me."

Note: If your group wants to do this as a chapter by chapter book discussion there are discussion questions about each chapter in the back of "Not Like Me."

## “Not Like Me” Small Group Discussions

Week #1 **Curry Favor** (Chapters 1-4)

- Winning People and Influencing Friends

Week #2 **Seeing Past Stereotypes** (Chapter 6)

- Building Friendship with Those with Whom We Differ

Week #3 **Religion, Sex, and Politics** (Chapters 8-10)

- Building Friendships with Those with Whom We Disagree

Week #4 **Uncivil War** (Chapter 5)

- Building Friendships with Those with Whom We Dislike

## WEEK 1: Curry Favor

### ICEBREAKER

1. Ask each person to think of an animal that would represent them. Have each person write their animal on a piece of paper. Collect all of the animal names and call them out to the group one at a time to see how many people the group can match up.
2. Ask each person to write down a name of a movie or song that would represent how life has been for them in the past two months.

### BIBLE BASED QUESTIONS

#### *Read Matthew 5:14-16*

1. Why would Jesus describe you as a light?
2. What are the characteristics/purpose of a light?
3. Jesus describes one light under a bowl and another light in a room. In each circumstance what would be the difference in the lights characteristics?
4. What are the ways that we keep our light under wraps?
5. What are ways that we allow our light to shine brightly?
6. Jesus says that we should let our light shine in the same way as a light shines in a room. If we did this, what would happen?
7. How can we encourage others to let their light shine?

### BOOK BASED QUESTIONS

1. What keeps people from engaging in new relationships?
2. Who are those within your “oikos” (family, neighbors, co-workers, or friends) who do not yet know Christ? How can you serve them?
3. Who are some “xenos” (strangers) that you can get to know? How can you serve them?
4. What cause in your life brought you together with others you may have never met?
5. Which hobbies or activities do you want to pursue in order to develop new friendships?

6. What are some examples of moments when you were able to “become all things” to someone around you in order to demonstrate Christ’s love?

7. What are some practical ways we can bring light into our neighborhoods?

## WEEK 2: Seeing Past Stereotypes

### BIBLE BASED QUESTIONS

#### *Read Matthew 9:36-38*

1. What happened when Jesus saw the crowds?
2. What did Jesus say to his followers?
3. Why do you think seeing the crowds ignited these emotions in Jesus?
4. What are stereotypes and why do they exist?
5. Have you been a victim of stereotyping? Describe how you felt?
6. When we stereotype people, what emotions are stirred up within us?
7. How might our responses be different between when we see someone that we don't know and stereotype them and when we see someone we know?
8. What can we do to deconstruct our stereotypes?

### BOOK BASED QUESTIONS

1. Have you made a decision based on a stereotype?
2. How have you been the victim of someone stereotyping you?
3. What new things can we do to show the world we represent God's love for all people?
4. How can we move beyond racial reconciliation and live a life reconciled to others? What personal sacrifices are necessary to move towards ethnic diversity? What sacrifices would our church or business need to make to move towards ethnic diversity?
5. Do you have any neighbors, coworkers, or family from a different ethnic background? How can you reach out to love them, serve them, and learn from them?

## **WEEK 3: Religion, Sex, and Politics**

### BIBLE BASED QUESTIONS

#### *Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-13*

1. What misunderstanding is Paul attempting to clarify in verse 10?
2. What did he say previously in verse 9?
3. What did Paul want them to do?
4. How does Paul clarify the difference between the “insider” and “outsider”?
5. Do you think that followers of Jesus today are following Paul’s guidelines?
6. What prevents followers from embracing Paul’s teaching?
7. How do you think Paul would advise us in interacting with people that we have political disagreements with? Theological disagreements with?
8. How could we reach out to those we disagree with?

### BOOK BASED QUESTIONS

1. What is your mission field?
2. Who are the “persons of peace” in your life?
3. Do you have any friendships with people from other political, moral/ethical or religious frameworks? If so, how have you been able to serve and love them?
4. How should we respond to someone who claims to follow Christ yet continues to participate in the actions on Paul’s list (thieves, slanderers, homosexuals, etc.).
5. When you are struggling, where can you go for help or healing?
6. How can we more actively serve and love others with whom we disagree without compromising our convictions?
7. When is it appropriate to partner with others who do not agree with us?

## **WEEK 4: Uncivil War**

### **BIBLE BASED QUESTIONS**

#### ***Read 2 Corinthians 2:14-16***

1. How does Paul describe spreading His knowledge?
2. How does this differ between those who are being saved and those who are lost?
3. What does this imply as far as how our communication and behavior should be?
4. What are the difficulties and challenges in talking the same to those being saved and those who are lost?
5. If we followed Paul's exhortation would we change our behavior towards people who are not followers of Jesus?

### **BOOK BASED QUESTIONS**

1. What are some of your spiritual gifts or strengths? What are some of the spiritual gifts or strengths of those closest to you (at home, work, school, or church)?
2. How do you approach conflict in your life?
3. What are some examples of times when you worked through conflict and restarted a relationship?
4. Do you have something against someone or does anyone have something against you? If so, what is your plan for resolving these conflicts?
5. Do you have any "enemies"? If so, what have you done to bring peace or what could you do?