

## REFLECTION GUIDE

### JOHN 8:37-47 | THE GREAT DIVIDE

#### KEY TERMS

**Abraham** - Abraham (v. 39ff) is considered the "Father" of the Jewish people. For 1st century Jews, lineage to Abraham was a source of pride and gave them a sense of spiritual heritage.

**Hears/hear** - In biblical thought, the idea of hearing (*hear/hears* vv. 43 & 47) is always tied to obedience. Jesus is thus not inviting people to simple auditory listening—he's inviting people to trust and follow him.

**Father of lies** - Jesus applies this title to Satan in verse 44. This phrase has echoes from Genesis 3, where the snake deceived Adam and Eve with lies. Although the snake is not identified as Satan in the story, Jewish tradition believed Satan was operating as or through the snake.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The word for *truth* in v. 40 (*aletheia*) doesn't just mean factual correctness—it carries the idea of reality as it truly is before God. When Jesus says the religious leaders are rejecting the truth, he's accusing them of refusing to align their lives with God's revealed reality, not just of misunderstanding a few facts.

#### SYNOPSIS

During this exchange between Jesus and some religious leaders, the leaders appeal to their lineage as proof of their spiritual "correctness." Jesus pushes back on their understanding, however, first suggesting that while they claim *Abraham* as their *father*, Jesus has God as his *Father* (vv. 37-38). Jesus then presses further and even challenges their claim that Abraham is their father saying, *If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did* (v. 39). Jesus' point is that Abraham did the works of God, but they are rejecting the work God is doing in Jesus, so they are not acting in accord with "family resemblance." The leaders seem to catch on somewhat and come back around claim that *God* ultimately is their *Father*, not Abraham (v. 41). Jesus though continues to make his point that true children of God would listen to him (v. 42-43). Jesus then uses even stronger language saying their father is actually the devil—whom Jesus calls the *father of lies*, which stands in contrast to the *truth* that is aligned with God and Jesus all throughout this section (vv. 45-46). Jesus' main point seems to be that their behavior reveals their true standing, and by rejecting him they are not standing on the side of God. Instead, Jesus is inviting them to believe the truth and to trust in him, not their cultural heritage (vv. 45-47).

#### GOING DEEPER

Read Romans 8:12-17 and Galatians 4:4-7. Paul picks up and builds on the theme of followers of Jesus being part of God's family that Jesus references in John 8:37-47.. How does this doctrine deepen your understanding of your identity as a Christian? How does knowing you are a child of God encourage and shape your everyday life?



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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*Reflection Questions are available during Redemption Group trimesters. Groups are currently taking a break and will resume the week of June 1st. For more information or to jump into a group, visit [redemptionedmond.com/groups](http://redemptionedmond.com/groups).*