



STUDY GUIDE

CHAPTER 1

EXPLAINING EXCLUSION

1. Everyone has been excluded from something at some point in their lives. Take a few moments to reflect on a memorable experience of exclusion and the impact it had on you immediately as well as the potential residual impact.
2. If the Christian conception of God is fundamentally relational, what does this say about humans created in God's image and likeness? How do we reflect this relationality?
3. Many people have never examined the psychological impact of exclusion. How does seeing this data impact the way you think about exclusion in the church or other faith-based contexts?
4. Have you ever been a part of a group that scapegoated a person or group of people as a means of forming a more cohesive bond? Explore that experience and the impact it had on both the excluded and the excluders.

Study guide for
*True Inclusion:
Creating Communities
of Radical Embrace* by
Brandan Robertson
(St. Louis: Chalice
Press, 2018).

1. The author notes that many of the ways that communities of faith express their “inclusivity” is through outward symbols such as a rainbow flag. However, these symbols hold different meanings for various generations of people. Are outward signs helpful or do you think they create more difficulty to becoming truly inclusive?
2. What is the difference between “welcome” and “included”? Have you belonged to a community that is either welcoming or inclusive? Compare and contrast the differences between your experience in those communities.
3. Why is “welcoming” marginalized people not enough?
4. The author makes a point to decry the “third-way” approach to inclusivity in churches. What are potential benefits of embracing a third-way approach? What are the downsides?
5. The author suggests that to be inclusive, churches must come to terms with the reality that they may never grow to be incredibly large. Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?

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CHAPTER 3

THE INCLUSION IMPERATIVE

1. The author says, “*Embracing the radical inclusion of the gospel of Jesus is the hardest thing that any human being can ever do.*” Do you agree with this statement? Why might this be true?
2. Why is the path toward inclusivity a death to our ego? Why does it require us to confront our personal and corporate selfishness?
3. What does it look like to embody grace in a truly inclusive community?

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THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSION

CHAPTER 4

1. The author suggests that inclusion is a fundamental human need at various levels of society. Using the Hierarchy of Inclusion, discuss what it would look like to embrace true inclusion at each level in the hierarchy.
2. What does it mean to include oneself? How can our faith communities help lead us on a journey toward self-inclusion?
3. Many marginalized individuals have faced exclusion from various levels of the societal hierarchy. How can our faith communities help foster inclusion for marginalized people at each of the various levels of inclusion?

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CHAPTER 5

THE PROBLEM OF PATRIARCHY

1. Reflect on the ways that patriarchy manifests in your own life and community.
2. How can those with the most privilege in society begin to leverage their positions and power for the good of the marginalized?
3. The author suggests that Jesus launched an assault on patriarchy in first-century Palestine. Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?
4. What do you think of the concept of intersectionality? How can you as an individual and your faith community begin to think and act in an intersectional manner?

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THE INGREDIENTS OF INCLUSION

CHAPTER 6

1. The author suggests that exclusion is hardwired into most traditional Christian theologies. Think about the ways your inherited theology may or may not embody exclusion and discuss.
2. If “metanoia,” or the expanding of one’s mind, is at the heart of the Christian gospel, how can communities of faith remain dedicated to continually growing and expanding their perspectives?
3. In what ways does being a part of an inclusive community benefit you with whatever identities you possess? How does it challenge you?

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1. Was there a practitioner's perspective that resonated with you and your context most profoundly? Was there a perspective that didn't seem to connect with your context?
2. What do you think is the biggest barrier to inclusion in your life or community of faith?
3. Have you paid a price on the journey to inclusion? If not, are you prepared to pay a price in order to include others?

MAKING TRUE INCLUSION REAL IN YOUR CONTEXT

APPENDIX 1

1. Has your community of faith taken any of the 10 suggested actions listed in the appendix? If so, how did taking that step go? If not, why not?
2. Has your community taken all of the suggested actions? If not, which action do you think would be most appropriate to do next?
3. Which action would you anticipate posing the most challenges for your faith community? Who are key leaders (or people who are not yet leaders) you need to get on board for pursuing that action?

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