

YOU LOST ME

Discussion Guide

Starting Conversations Between Generations . . .
On Faith, Doubt, Sex, Science, Culture, and Church

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and Aly Hawkins



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Discuss the Following with Your Group

In addition to David Kinnaman, six people are featured in this video series. They are

- Rebecca, an actor
- Andrzej, a welder
- Christopher, a seminary student
- Laura, a fashion entrepreneur
- Ross, a scientist
- Derik, a comic book artist

Which person or people do you most identify with from their comments in the introductory clip? Why?

David Kinnaman introduces three types of “you lost me” stories. *Nomads* identify as Christians but are not active in the church or in their pursuit of Christ. *Prodigals* have left both the church and Christianity—they no longer identify as Christians. *Exiles* are passionate about faith in Christ but feel torn between church expectations and engagement with the wider culture.

If you are a young adult, which of these stories do you most identify with? Why?

If you are an older adult, which of these stories have you observed playing out among young adults in your family and/or faith community? How?

David views Barna Group’s research, such as the scientific surveys and interviews done for *You Lost Me*, as a bridge that can help different groups of people better understand each other. What do you hope to accomplish as your group begins this study?

Spend some time in group prayer as you bring this session to a close or before moving on to “Session 1: Overprotective.” Pray for the Spirit to grant wisdom and guide your community’s conversations during the next few weeks.

Session 1

OVERPROTECTIVE

Five-Minute Prep

Before your group session, take the following self-diagnostic to prepare for conversation.

1. Anything that is not Christian is evil or sinful.

● ————— ● ————— ● ————— ● ————— ●
Strongly agree Agree somewhat Not sure Disagree somewhat Strongly disagree

2. It's a good idea to make strict rules about what I watch, read, or view online.

● ————— ● ————— ● ————— ● ————— ●
Strongly agree Agree somewhat Not sure Disagree somewhat Strongly disagree

3. The Bible has a straightforward answer for every issue.

● ————— ● ————— ● ————— ● ————— ●
Strongly agree Agree somewhat Not sure Disagree somewhat Strongly disagree

4. Life is one big gray area.



5. Nothing I watch, read, or view online can harm me.



6. The best way to serve God is by working in a church or other Christian endeavor.



7. The Bible is complicated and sometimes hard to understand.



8. God wants to redeem human culture, not destroy it.



9. Being “in but not of the world” means separating ourselves from non-Christian influence.



10. I want to use my gifts and skills to participate in and influence culture.



Discuss the Following with Your Group

In the video, David observes that the church sometimes minimizes transcendent or meaningful experiences that occur outside the church, whether they happen in nature, at a museum or concert, or elsewhere. Has your experience of the church been similar or different? In what way?

Christopher, a seminary student, is the young Asian man featured in the video. He says visiting an art museum on a Sunday morning, rather than going to a church service, puts him “in dialogue with God.” Where do you best experience God’s presence? Why?

Laura, the British fashion entrepreneur, suggests that Christians often overemphasize the divide between sacred and secular. Do you agree or disagree with her assessment? Why?

David echoes Augustine and Aquinas's belief that all truth is God's truth. How might the church do a better job celebrating truth wherever it is found?

According to *You Lost Me*, many young people have been discouraged through their Christian upbringing from exposure to secular films, TV, music, and other media. The adults who have warned them away from these influences believe that anything not overtly Christian has the potential to mislead or corrupt impressionable young minds. Based on your answers to the Five-Minute Prep, do you think Christians should protect and separate themselves from secular culture? Why or why not?

In contrast, many teens and twentysomethings—and some older adults too—view their cultural surroundings in a positive light. Secular films, TV shows, music, and so on are often meaningful and enriching, and many young adults value the opportunity to participate in culture by creating, not just consuming, content such as music and video. In what ways do you think Christians should engage with and participate in secular culture?

In *You Lost Me*, David suggests that there are inherent risks associated with following Christ. What types of risks might be diametrically opposed to our fear- and security-oriented culture?

In the video, Derik, the bearded comic book artist, talks about his struggle to read and interpret the Bible with the Christian community. He feels that getting caught up with questions about whether various Bible stories should be understood literally misses the point. What are some risks you see in setting aside questions like these?

With every risk comes a possible reward. If your faith community were to take a risk and make space in the conversation about Scripture for people like Derik, what are some rewards or positive outcomes that could result?

Laura says that, in the past, fashion became an idol in her life, but continuing her work in the industry is worth the risk because it is what God created her to do—it is her calling. Do you agree or disagree that the risk is worth it? Why?

Laura goes on to say that she is also passionate about inspiring people to live fully into their calling, the unique vocation to which God has called them. As you think about your calling, even if you're not completely clear about what it is, what are the risks you must take to answer God's call?

Is it worth the risk? How can you know?

Spend some time in group prayer as you bring this session to a close. Set aside time for those who want prayer specifically for discernment as they seek to follow God's call. Then pray for the Spirit to guide the ongoing conversation about risk-taking and discernment in your faith community.

Keep Talking (and Listening)

The following questions will help you and your group keep the conversation going. If you can, make time in the coming week to connect with one or two of your group members to continue the discussion.

In what ways is our church (or ministry or other group) overprotective of children, teens, and young adults? What is the motive behind our overprotectiveness? Is God calling us to change? How?

How is our church (or ministry or other group) teaching discernment? What needs to change in order for us to train more effectively?

How can parents and ministry leaders work together to shape our children's hearts to be responsive and obedient to God, regardless of the risks?