

News Story Summary

On March 6, a police officer fatally shot an unarmed teenager in Madison, WI. The unarmed teenager had plead guilty in December to an armed robbery. When asked about the past conviction, the police chief stated that it would not be appropriate for him to make any comment on the past. The teenager's uncle stated that his nephew had made some poor decisions. He went on to state the his nephew was a human being who as a 19-year old made a terrible mistake that was dissociated with the events on Friday. The mayor of Madison was adamant that the teen was not on trial and that the past had nothing to do with his tragic death.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the sentence “Madison officials respond to shooting.”)

Focus Attention

After asking the question about what our judging of others reveals about us (second paragraph of Focus Attention section, page 48, Leader Guide), share the comments made in the aftermath of the fatal police shooting in Madison. Ask: What do these responses reveal about the person making the statement?

Say: How we respond when we see others suffering the consequences, or even when it is us who suffer, says a great deal about our character and where we place our trust. Jerusalem was being ransacked because of the sin of the people and Obadiah gave a warning not to delight in their judgment, but instead be compassionate to the circumstances.

Ask: As a society, do we tend to delight in the misfortune of others without compassion? Are we quick to mourn the decisions people make or are we quick to delight in the consequences faced because of the decisions made?

Challenge the group to listen for the warning issued through Obadiah.

Challenge

Remind the group of the responses shared by the uncle and city officials in the aftermath of the police involved shooting in Madison. Lead the group to discuss how these response reflect compassion. Ask: What parts of these responses, if any, reflect the attitude called for by Obadiah?

Ask: How can you show compassion this week to someone who is dealing with the consequences of a bad decision they have made? How can we mourn that bad decision without sitting in judgment over them?

Pray: Thank God for providing us with biblical stories that show us how we are to live. Ask God to help instill in us compassion as we interact with those who are suffering because of sin. Have group members silently lift up specific relationships and circumstances asking for the Holy Spirit to lead them to respond with humility and compassion.