

First Love Life... *Loving Jesus first*

Jesus Lives For Us

“Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” —Jesus (John 15:13)

“The great turning point in your life comes not when you realize that you love God but when you realize and fully accept the fact that God loves you unconditionally.” —Anthony de Mello

This week we are going to look for the heart and mind of Christ through the life lessons He taught and walked.

Day One

Let’s begin with a refresher on how Jesus entered our world to walk in our shoes. Remember, we are looking for the heart of God, not gathering facts of the account. We aren’t searching for information on how Jesus was born, but we are searching for hidden treasure. So, as you read this familiar story, be thinking about what you are learning about the character of God as you look past the words to the person.

Before you begin listening to the Word today, pray this prayer inspired by **Proverbs 2:1-6**:

“Lord, I accept Your words and want them stored up within me. I am turning my ear to wisdom and applying my heart to understanding. I call out to You for insight, and cry aloud for understanding! I am looking for it as for silver and am searching for it as for hidden treasure. I want to understand who You are and find the knowledge of You. For You, Lord, are the One who gives wisdom, and from Your mouth come knowledge and understanding. Oh Lord, give me ears to hear Your voice today. All for Your glory and power, through the name of Jesus, amen.”

1. Read **Luke 1:26-38**. What is this passage describing? _____

2. Read **Luke 1:26-38** again, carefully looking for insight into the heart of God. Look at the setting, at how God approaches Mary, at her situation, the details described, etc., and see if you can find some insight into Who God is. If you’re struggling with this type of question, use the example question to help you get started. Look for facts in the account that reveal something about God.

Example: What do you learn about God from the fact that He chose Mary, a virgin, to carry Jesus in her womb?

FACT:

WHAT I SEE ABOUT GOD:

- | | | |
|----|-------|-------|
| a. | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| b. | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| c. | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |

3. Read **Luke 2:4-20**. Seeing the way in which Jesus entered in the world, and who was there to worship Him, what do you learn about the character of God?

FACT:

WHAT I SEE ABOUT GOD:

- | | | |
|----|-------|-------|
| a. | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| b. | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| c. | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |

Life Points . . .

- How does it affect your view of God when you think about the way He chose to enter the world as a man?

- Meditate on these details and talk to God about Himself:
 - Would you expect the King of the Universe to be born in a remote village and His first cradle to be an animal trough?
 - Would you expect Him to be first revealed to unknown shepherds and have them be the ones to spread the news?

- Why do you think everyone was amazed by this (Luke 2:17)?

- What do you think Mary treasured and pondered in her heart?

- If you had to describe God in one word through this account, what would that word be?

Day Two

Comprehending that God is a triune being is difficult for our finite minds. Scripture is clear that He is one God, but three parts. When God became man He chose to send Jesus as the Son of Man and the Son of God. As the Son of Man, He became “in every way like us” (see Hebrews 2:14-18 and Philippians 2:7).

1. Keeping this in mind, read the account of Jesus’ experience in the desert as He was preparing to begin His public ministry in Israel. Read **Matthew 4:1-11**. Describe the scene: _____

 - a. Why do you think Jesus didn’t turn the stones into bread when He was so hungry? _____

 - b. Why do you think He didn’t accept the offer of instant splendor and power? _____

 - c. Why wouldn’t He prove Who He was in that instant to the devil? _____

 - d. What does this account teach you about Who God is as revealed in His Son, Jesus? _____

2. Write out the three statements Jesus makes during this time of temptation:
 - a. (v.4) _____

 - b. (v.7) _____

 - c. (v.10) _____

Life Points . . .

Jesus was tempted in every way like us. You may look at these three highlighted examples and think, *I don’t struggle with those!* But, let’s look a little deeper. Take some time with this. If we don’t grasp the important fact that Jesus WAS in fact *just like us*, we won’t relate to Him as God intended.

Matthew 4:4

- Think of ways you experience hunger other than physical hunger. What are they?

- In what ways are you tempted to meet your own needs instead of waiting on God to meet them?

Matthew 4:7

- Do you ever ask God to prove Himself in ways He never promised?

Day Three

Jesus came to set us free from being the self-satisfying, self-serving, self-exalting sinners that we are! Isn't that great news? We are all captives born into this bondage, but Jesus sets us free.

1. After this proclamation in the synagogue, Jesus begins calling His disciples to follow Him and starts teaching what it means to live as a child of God. What He teaches is diametrically opposed to our *natural* bent. Let's highlight just a few of His principles. Read the following words, listen to what Jesus taught, and write out the principles He lives by.

Summarize Passage:

Principle:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| a. Matthew 5:38-42 | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| b. Matthew 5:43-49 | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| c. Luke 12:22-24 | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| d. John 6:35-40 | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |

There are so many more passages we could do this with. This is a great practice to build into your devotional life. If you have time, read some more and continue on with your list of holy principles. How is Jesus different from any teacher you've ever had? _____

Life Points . . .

- From the principles you've listed above, which ones stand out to you and why?
- Go back to that passage and meditate on it, asking the Lord to renew the way you think according to His word.

Day Four

Jesus performed many miracles in the presence of His disciples. He did this to prove He was the Son of God. However, this was not the “work” He came to do and He made that clear to His disciples and to us as we study His life through the written Word. Continue to cry out for insight.

1. During one of His private prayer times, Jesus dialogues with His followers. It was recorded for our hearing. Read about this amazing interaction from **Luke 9:18-23**.
 - a. What question does Jesus ask his disciples? _____

 - b. After Peter answers, “the Christ of God” what does Jesus explain? _____

 - c. Jesus lays out exactly why He came. Why did He come? _____

 - d. If you were one of those initial followers, watching Him heal diseases, feed thousands, etc., how do you think this information would effect you? _____

2. Jesus goes on to tell us how following Him will change our lives forever. Read what He says in **Luke 9:23-27**. Read it slowly and listen to the principles taught. Take them at face value and define them in your own words below:
 - a. Come after Me: _____
 - b. Must deny yourself: _____
 - c. Take up your cross daily: _____
 - d. Lose your life for Christ: _____
 - e. Save your life in Christ: _____
 - f. Live unashamed: _____
 - g. You won’t taste death: _____

3. Look at what you have defined above. Jesus tells us the truth. Remember the devil from Day 2? He wants to deceive us unto death! How would he (the devil) re-write each principle above? Think opposite.
 - a. Come after Me: _____
 - b. Must deny yourself: _____
 - c. Take up your cross daily: _____
 - d. Lose your life for Christ: _____
 - e. Save your life in Christ: _____
 - f. Live unashamed: _____
 - g. You won’t taste death: _____

Assign one of the three temptations to each principle above.
X: Self-Satisfaction
Y: Self-Serving
Z: Self-exalting

Life Points...

- Scripture teaches us that our enemy's native tongue is lying. Jesus can only speak the truth. How important is it to you that you penetrate your mind with the truth?

- Think about the images, messages, media input and pressure you hear and see every day that is directly opposing the truth of Christ's teachings. What will you do to combat these attacks?

- Meditate on the fact that as we lose our lives in Christ (love Him first), we find *real* life and we will share in His glory (remember, He prayed for that in John 17).

Day Five

We have covered a lot of ground this week and have looked at things that we could spend weeks meditating on and learning more about. For today, *slowly* walk through each day's lesson. Remind your mind and heart of what you are learning and of new insights you are gaining. Take some time and write out a prayer in response to what you've been given through His Word. If this is a new practice for you, use the prompters below. If you don't need them just cross them out and write your own prayer.

(Day 1) Lord Jesus, you entered this world in such humility, thank you for...

(Day 2) Lord Jesus, you have been tempted just like I am...

(Day 3) Lord Jesus, all that you are and all that you taught goes against the grain of this world I live in...

(Day 4) Lord Jesus, You have called me to deny myself and live for You. Lord, I need...

Lord Jesus, you have proven you are the Christ, and now you call me to...

Lord Jesus, I love You. I bow before You and...

Amen!

Wrapping Up This Week

Challenge:

Read a whole gospel in one sitting looking for new insight into the heart of God as revealed in His Son. This will only take about 30 minutes. Make a date with the Lord and do it! He wants to speak to you.
