

# CONTENTS

Introduction: Helping the Next Generation See Jesus . . . . .	ix
Summary of <i>The Person of Jesus—Student Edition</i> . . . . .	xi
Quick Start Guide . . . . .	xiii
Other Resources from seeJesus . . . . .	xx
1. Why Study the Person of Jesus? (John 13:1–5) . . . . .	1
2. Compassion for the Hurting (Luke 7:11–17) . . . . .	10
3. Compassion for the Wanderer (Luke 15:11–24) . . . . .	18
4. Enemies of Compassion—Part 1: Judging (John 9:1–7) . . . . .	27
5. Enemies of Compassion—Part 2: Fear and Cynicism (John 9:1–34) . . . . .	36
6. Compassion for the Oppressed (John 9:24–41) . . . . .	45
7. Compassion for the “BIG” Sinner (Luke 7:36–50) . . . . .	52
8. Compassion for the Captive (Luke 8:26–39) . . . . .	62
9. Compassion for the Desperate (Mark 5:21–43) . . . . .	71
Acknowledgments . . . . .	81

# INTRODUCTION

## Helping the Next Generation See Jesus

**By Robert Row**

I had followed Jesus for thirty years, been through seminary, been ordained, and was serving as a youth pastor—but I had become numb to Jesus. As one friend put it, I'd become so focused on the window of theology that I missed the grand vista of Christ that window was meant to look out onto.

I had heard the gospel, preached the gospel, and tried to understand life through a gospel grid, but something was not connecting. All this gospel-centered life stuff seemed floaty and theoretical. It seemed that, somehow, I had been given the good news with important emphasis on the work of Jesus but had missed the heart.

In the midst of this theological and personal desert, I attended a seminar that was a cup of cold, refreshing water. The speaker was Dann Spader and his theme was “Walking as Jesus Walked.” I left that one-day seminar deeply convicted and challenged. I couldn't get this question out of my mind, “If I am called to walk as Jesus walked, do I know how he walked?” The question was piercing and exciting all at the same time.

I quietly set out on a journey to know Jesus as a person, to learn how he walked, to learn how the Second Adam did life. I immersed myself in Scripture, and material from *Sonlife* ([www.sonlife.com](http://www.sonlife.com)). It was during this season that I learned about Paul Miller's *The Person of Jesus* and *Loved Walked Among Us* and “met” the ministry of seeJesus. I eagerly dove in.

Seeing the beauty of the Person of Jesus has changed my life. I'm six years in now and feel like I've only just begun the journey to know the most extraordinary person that has ever lived. I've discovered that the *Person of Jesus* is the Velcro of the gospel message. He makes the message of salvation stick. Knowing his message is paramount for salvation and life but if I miss him the message is simply an ideology, a creed, a system. At the core of knowing him is beauty formation. As I see his compassion, I am more compassionate; as I see his honesty, I grow in honesty; as I see his dependence, I grow more dependent. In seeing Jesus, I see both myself and others more clearly, and I begin to understand why Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with everything you have and to love your neighbor as yourself. When I see Jesus, I see love in action. To know him is to love him, and to love him is to love our neighbors.

**As a youth pastor, I believe *seeing Jesus is the answer for the next generation*.** Having worked with students for 25 years, I particularly desire to see students captivated by the beauty of the person of Jesus and, therefore, transformed to love as he loves. Millennials and Gen Z's are finely tuned to authenticity, and

there is no one more authentic than Jesus. They are no longer content with religious platitudes, impersonal theology, or flashy programs. But neither was Jesus! I believe that if students see the real Jesus, they will fall in love with him. When they fall in love, they will listen to his truth—but love must come first.

So how do we recapture their hearts to see Jesus? By slowing down and helping them discover him as he is revealed in the Bible. These interactive Bible studies are designed to do just that. We take scenes from Jesus' life and put the camera into slow motion. As we encourage the use of imagination, we make the scenes come to life, and Jesus becomes real in the heart of students. We hope this tool helps students fall in love with the Person of Jesus and be captivated by his beauty. When that happens the future of the church is filled with hope.

---

A study of the Person of Jesus is more than a resource,  
it is a paradigm shift.

---

# SUMMARY

## of *The Person of Jesus—Student Edition*

### WHY students need to study the Person of Jesus

Secularism is offering an enticing view of humanity and our students are believing it. Yet, the result is one of the most anxious, depressed, and lonely generations in history. There is mass confusion over what it means to be human, and students are searching for answers. As followers of Jesus, we have the best vision of humanity to offer, the Person of Jesus. He is Humanity 2.0. seeJesus longs to help students see and reflect the beauty of Jesus: his compassion, his honesty, his life of dependence, how he incarnates with people, ultimately how he loves. As Secularism continues in its journey to find the meaning of life, seeJesus offers students a Person who defines for us what it means to be human and to live the true and better story.

When students see him, they begin to fall in love with him, then they will long to imitate him. In Matthew 11:29 Jesus says, "...learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart..." Learning from him leads to following in his footsteps, entering into a life journey with him as our guide. Secularism presses its view that the meaning of life is found in self focus: "it's in you," "follow your dreams," "you be you." Jesus, however, offers a beautiful alternative: himself. He says "Follow me" and I'll show you the path to life. He defines for us what it means to be human as we were meant to be so we may live the true and better story. In this series of interactive Bible studies, we long to help students begin seeing Jesus as a Person.

#### **Unit 1: Compassion**

What does Jesus do? He loves with compassion. In this first unit of *The Person of Jesus—Student Edition*, you will discover the beauty of the Person of Jesus. You will see how he moves towards people in love by seeing, feeling, and doing. His pattern of love challenges the common obstacles of compassion: judging, fear, and cynicism.

#### **Unit 2: Honesty**

What does Jesus do? He loves with honesty. Jesus balances compassion by being honest in all of his relationships. For Jesus, compassion without honesty is not love, just as honesty without compassion is not love. Jesus holds both in perfect harmony.

#### **Unit 3: Dependence**

What does Jesus want? To do his Father's will. There is no self-will in the Person of Jesus. He only and always does the will of his Father. He is the most dependent person to ever live. He didn't do life on his own. To discern when to be compassionate and when to be honest was a matter of dependence for Jesus.

#### **Unit 4: Faith**

Who did Jesus love? His Father. The source and energy for the Person of Jesus' love is found in his trust of his Father (i.e. faith). He knows the Father loves him, which gives him the freedom to live in dependence, to know how and when to practice compassion and honesty. He doesn't feed off of other people, he lives for his Father.

#### **Unit 5: The Passion**

How does Jesus love? By laying down his life for his friends. In the final days of Jesus' life his mind is on his Father and on others. He loves to the very end as he willingly takes the lower place of humility, so that others may receive the gift of love that will usher in a new kingdom of hope and resurrection life unto eternity.

# LESSON 1: WHY STUDY THE PERSON OF JESUS?

## JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES

John 13:1–5

### SUMMARY

While cultural Christianity is numbing students in the church, secular culture is offering an enticing view of what it means to be human, and our students are believing it. Yet, some claim that students are the most anxious, depressed, and lonely generation in recent history. There is mass confusion over what it means to be human; we are in the midst of a generational identity crisis. As followers of Jesus, we have the best vision of humanity to offer: Jesus, the Person. He is the perfection of humanity, the Firstborn of Creation, the Second Adam!

As we face the challenging influence of secularism from our culture, inside the church we face the challenge of depersonalization of the Person of Jesus. Since the Protestant Reformation, the church has rightfully recaptured the work of Christ. We are wonderful at the declarations of what Christ has done for us but we are weak at imitation. Have we led with and cultivated a love for biblical truth and neglected a love for the Person of Jesus? Have we emphasized the gospel but perhaps missed the Person at the center of the gospel? When we begin to know him as a Person, we are witnessing God’s intention for humanity and beauty formation begins. The trajectory of the life of a follower is that we will become like the one we follow. Knowing him as a Person propels us towards beauty.

### OUTLINE

1. Seeing Jesus—A Glimpse of the Person . . . . . 15 mins
2. Seeing Jesus—Why Study the Person? . . . . . 5 mins
3. Seeing Self—The Need for a Sherpa . . . . . 10 mins
4. Becoming Like Jesus—An Invitation to Apprenticeship . . . . . 5 mins

Total: 35 mins

### GOAL:

The students will begin to explore the beauty of seeing the Person of Jesus.


### LESSON PREPARATION:

Do an honest evaluation of how often you have looked at Jesus as a Person. A proper theology emphasizes the importance of the Person and Work of Jesus, but in our training, emphasis, and lives, it practically works itself out to look like this: The **Person** and **WORK** of Jesus. We rightfully spend much of our time on the

Work of Christ, for without it faith is eliminated. However, to study the Person is to learn what it means to love. The purpose of this study is to reframe our lives towards imitation and love by being laser-focused on the most extraordinary Person behind the work. The Apostle Paul shares the realities of knowing the Person and his work when he says, “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except **Jesus Christ (Person) and him crucified (Work)**” (1 Cor. 2:2).

During your preparation time, meditate on John 13 and reflect on the beauty of the Person of Jesus, not necessarily the work of foot washing but the way he goes about it that reveals what he is like as a Person.

## SECTION 1: Seeing Jesus—A Glimpse of the Person 15 mins

-  **1. Fill in the blank: I would like to be considered the greatest \_\_\_\_\_.**  
**What would it be like to be the greatest \_\_\_\_\_?**

*Let students imagine this for a brief moment. There is something in all of us that dreams of greatness.*



### Historical Background:

We will be looking at a scene called “The Last Supper,” where Jesus is with his disciples in the upper room of a small two-story building, likely in the home of a man named John Mark. In about 24 hours from this time, Jesus will be hanging dead on a cross. In the last month of Jesus’ life, he has been moving lower, toward the humiliation of the cross, while the disciples are trying to go higher. But there are only so many spaces at the top, so three times, fights break out among the disciples. The final one occurred at the Last Supper. Luke 22:24 says, “A dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.” The disciples are arguing over who was the greatest and Jesus is about to die.

### 2. How would you respond if you were Jesus?

With anger, disappointment.

Let’s see how Jesus responds.

### Read John 13:1–5

<sup>1</sup> Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

<sup>2</sup> During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him, <sup>3</sup> Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, <sup>4</sup> rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. <sup>5</sup> Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

### 3. What's the first thing that jumps out at you from this passage?

*Various answers.*

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power. Jesus washes feet. The disciples were arguing. Why was Judas there, etc.?

### 4. What is going on in verses 4–5?

Foot washing.



#### Historical Background:

This is the only description we have of a foot washing in the entire ancient world.

*Don't expand here on Jesus doing the foot washing. We will get there. Let students discover the wonder. Don't spoil the discovery for those who haven't gotten there yet. Wait for them.*



### 5. What do you notice about the foot washing itself?

*Give students time to ponder this question. Draw them out.*

There is a lot of detail.

*Number the details to emphasize each one:*

Jesus... (1) got up from the meal, (2) took off his outer clothing, and (3) wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he (4) poured water into a basin and (5) began to wash his disciples' feet, (6) drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

### 6. If this were a movie, what is the camera speed?

Slow motion, camera on a gimbal circling around Jesus, capturing every move.

John wrote his gospel about fifty years after this event. He was likely a teenager when he saw this.

### 7. What do you remember from your childhood? What do you still see frame by frame?

*Note: If no one has a story, share your own of something you remember in vivid detail, frame by frame.*

### 8. Why does John give so much detail? Couldn't he have just said, "He washed the disciples' feet"?

*Teach what they don't say.*

John recalled this like it was yesterday. He was riveted by Jesus. He'd never seen anyone love this way before. This scene was forever burned on his mind. Pause: John was a man in love.

### 9. What is so striking about Jesus in this scene that is in contrast to the disciples' actions?

While the disciples are fighting over who is the greatest, Jesus gets on his knees and washes their feet. He takes the place of a slave. The contrast couldn't be any more obvious. A slave was the least thought-of person in any culture.





## Historical Background: Master Becomes a Slave

It was customary in the ancient world for the master of the house to serve his guests, as did Abraham, but this is the only known incident recorded in Middle Eastern history where a master becomes the slave.

### 10. So, according to Jesus, what does it mean to be the greatest?

To become a slave, to serve.

Read: Luke 22:25–27

<sup>25</sup> And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. <sup>26</sup> But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. <sup>27</sup> For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.”



### 11. By watching Jesus in the foot washing scene, what does this tell you about Jesus as a Person? What is he like?

*Various answers.*

**ROLE-PLAY:** *(Allow extra time if you choose to role-play the lesson.)*

*This is an optional way to solidify the story in the minds and hearts of students.*

*Use different colored scarves or shawls worn over the head or around the shoulders for costumes. Assign roles to students and have them act out their part either by reading from Scripture or while another student or leader reads the passage. (Note: You can either read through the passage once, then assign the roles, or pre-assign them when the students arrive.)*

*Other Props to consider:*

*Basin with water*

*Towel*

*Jesus’ outer garment*

**Roles for Foot Washing:**

Person 1: Jesus

Persons 2-13: Disciples

**Skit Idea:**

Students, playing the role of the disciples, enter the room arguing and sit in a circle as if ready to eat supper. Their arguing continues while “Jesus” sits and watches. When Jesus rises to take off his outer garment, the “disciples” get totally silent. Jesus goes through the steps laid out in the text pretending to wash their feet in silence, then sits back down. Jesus is silent in this skit.

There is no need to wait until all the disciples’ feet are “washed.” The point has been made, Jesus has just demonstrated what it means to be the greatest, silence from the disciples exaggerates Jesus’ actions. End the skit here.

**12. Why do we spend time with people? Why do we study people? Why do we watch documentaries or read biographies?**

They are interesting, it's how we get to know someone. We learn what motivates them, what they like and dislike, how they overcome hardships. We get the backstory of a person, why they are the person they are, etc.

**13. With this in mind, what might be the benefit of studying Jesus as a Person?**

*Various answers. Give time for answers as this will be a new concept for most students. Teach what they don't say.*

We get to know him as a Person. We get to know his personality, why he does what he does, what motivates him. What does he love? What does he hate? We learn from the perfect human what it means to be human. We also learn what God is like. Getting to know him in a more personal way will make faith more personal.

***Note to Leader:** What might happen to the church if a new generation were to fall in love with the Person of Jesus and not just the glory of what he has accomplished in rescuing us from sin and death? What would happen if we began catching Jesus' vision of love, and his vision of the good? The church can out-love secularism by going back to the basics of Christianity and rebuilding a vision of what it means to be a person made in the image of God.*

*The trajectory of this generation of the church is troubling—helping them see Jesus as a Person and fall in love with him can turn the tide. In Christ we not only see the face of God but we see what it means to be truly and fully human. The more we fix our eyes on Jesus, the more we are able to know what God is like and understand what his intentions are for mankind. In the end, we have the opportunity to shape the future of the church into lovers of Jesus.*

Let's talk about the importance of getting to know this Person and following him. We are going to do this by way of an illustration.

**14. What is the highest mountain in the world?**

Mount Everest

**Does anyone know how high it is?**

29,032 ft. and growing. (Because of colliding tectonic plates the mountain pushes higher about a quarter of an inch each year.)

**15. Would you like to climb it?**

Statistically you have a one in a hundred chance of dying while climbing Everest.

**Still interested?****16. What if you were invited to climb Everest next weekend? Would you go? Why or why not?**

I am not in shape for that; that would be crazy; that would mean certain death.

**17. What would you need to climb Everest?**

Training, money, time (minimum of 4 months to acclimate, climb, and recover – does not include training), reserve a spot, get equipment.

**18. Would you climb it alone or would you want a guide?**

I'd want a guide.

**Why wouldn't you attempt it alone?**

Because it would mean certain death.

**Everest: An Analogy for Life**

Guides on Everest are called Sherpa. They are the Tibetan tribe of people who live closest to the mountain and are accustomed to the elevation and the environment. Climbers have to trust the Sherpa to guide them to the top of the world. Climbers literally put their lives in the hands of their guides. They won't make it to the top without a Sherpa.

Climbing Mount Everest can be an analogy for life. As crazy as it sounds to go climb Mount Everest on our own, it sounds even crazier to do this difficult life journey on our own.

We are on the hardest climb of all: it takes a long time to train and learn skills that we never completely master. We experience frustration, anger, tears, laughter, joy and sorrow, beautiful vistas and dark crevasses. There will be sickness, perhaps injury, but good health and fitness as well. At times, we will be scared, at other times hopeful. We will make enemies along the way – but also

friends. Some days we will be super excited to wake up and continue the journey. Other days we won't want to get out of our sleeping bag because the journey has worn us out.

Most of the time we won't want to follow the Sherpa. We will take our eyes off him or tell him he has guided us far enough and we can take it from here. We lose our way; we end up in danger. The terrain around us is treacherous but we continue because it's the way we "normally" do life. Then, just as we think we have reached the top, we realize it's a false summit. We can't remember when we took our eyes off the Sherpa or even if we *ever* had laid eyes on him. We have lost our way. We begin to realize that we do not have what it takes for this long, difficult, and dangerous journey. We realize that this Mount Everest of Life is not to be taken lightly. Without a Sherpa, we will surely die. BUT if we are willing to descend to the bottom again, the Sherpa will be there waiting on us. He lives there. He welcomes us, comforts us and gently whispers, "Follow me." He will lead us to the real summit, where we will behold glorious vistas.



### **19. What things are hard about life as a student right now?**

*Various answers.*

### **20. How are you learning to do life right now? Where do you get wisdom and guidance?**

*Various answers.*

#### **Gospel Invitation -**

*For those who may not know Jesus this is a good opportunity for you to share the gospel:*

We are starting a journey to get to know the greatest Sherpa of all, Jesus Christ. He says, "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6). He knows the way! Just as a climber entrusts his life to a Sherpa, it is only by entrusting your life to Jesus that you will find the way to life.

### **Are you interested in getting to know the greatest-of-all Sherpa, Jesus Christ?**

Over the next seven lessons, we will be learning about the compassion of this Person named Jesus. Getting to know this "Sherpa" will be one of the most exciting journeys of your life.

## SECTION 4:

# Becoming Like Jesus—An Invitation to Apprenticeship 5 mins



In the Bible, Jesus says, “Follow me” (Matthew 4:19) and “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29). “Follow me” and “learn from me” are terms used to enter into an apprenticeship with a Master or Teacher<sup>1</sup>. The definition of an apprentice is a person who comes under the instruction of another person in order to learn a trade. Just think Star Wars and Jedis and you have an idea of what it means to be an apprentice.



### Historical Note: Apprenticeship

Traditionally, apprentices spent most of their waking hours in the master’s workshop, where they learned from their mentor and more experienced apprentices. Through their time in the workshop, apprentices would acquire the skills of the mentor through imitation and guided experimentation. Imagine what it would be like if you could enter into an apprenticeship with the master of whatever skill you wanted to learn. Jesus defines apprenticeship this way, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40). The goal of an apprentice is to be fully trained until you are like your master. But note the point of entering an apprenticeship with Jesus is “not to learn more of doctrine, nor more fully to follow out a life-direction already taken, but to begin, and to become, something quite new.”<sup>2</sup>

## 21. Would you like to enter an apprenticeship with Jesus?

*Various responses. Perhaps let the question sit for a week.*

### Introduce Prayer Cards:

Prayer is an essential piece of what it means to follow Jesus. We will see this later as we study Jesus’ dependence on prayer in Unit 3. Jesus could not do life without talking to his Father. Prayer cards are a tangible way for you to write prayer requests and keep track of God’s story in your life. Keep the requests simple, short, and personal. Below is an example of what a prayer card coming out of this lesson might look like. Feel free to make it your own. It is helpful to include a spiritual request, like shown, and also a day-to-day request that you need God’s help with or that you want him to do in your life. Create one card and add to it each week. For more detailed information on making prayer cards, go to seeJesus.net/APrayingLife.

**Note to Leaders about Prayer Cards:** *The prayer stories that develop will become one of your greatest discipling tools. It is a simple way to follow up with your students, to call them to dependence, to track God’s story in their lives. Give students an index card and ask them to fill it out. Each week they will*

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 329.

<sup>2</sup> Edersheim, *Life and Times*, 329.

*be adding to their card, prayer requests that are pertinent to the study. Sample cards are included, but feel free to have the students come up with their own.*

Following Jesus	
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matt 11:29	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Prayer</u>
	Father, I want to be an apprentice of your son, to learn from him. Please help me.