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# 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.

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

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# 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

### 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

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



**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?**

**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?**

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



**Historical Background:**

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

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

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

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?**

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

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





### **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?**

**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?**

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

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

14. What is the highest mountain in the world?
15. Would you like to climb it?
16. What if you were invited to climb Everest next weekend? Would you go? Why or why not?
17. What would you need to climb Everest?
18. Would you climb it alone or would you want a guide?



### **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?**

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

### **Gospel Invitation -**

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.

## 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?

### 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](http://seeJesus.net/APrayingLife).

<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.

## 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

Date

Prayer

Father, I want to be an apprentice of your son, to learn from him. Please help me.