



Discovering
Jesus
through Asian eyes

discussion guide



Discovering Jesus through Asian eyes *Discussion Guide*

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Departures

Destination	Platform	Time
London	1	10:15
Manchester	2	10:30
Edinburgh	3	10:45
Birmingham	4	11:00
Cardiff	5	11:15
Sheffield	6	11:30
Leeds	7	11:45
Nottingham	8	12:00
London	9	12:15
Manchester	10	12:30
Edinburgh	11	12:45
Birmingham	12	13:00
Cardiff	13	13:15
Sheffield	14	13:30
Leeds	15	13:45
Nottingham	16	14:00
London	17	14:15
Manchester	18	14:30
Edinburgh	19	14:45
Birmingham	20	15:00
Cardiff	21	15:15
Sheffield	22	15:30
Leeds	23	15:45
Nottingham	24	16:00
London	25	16:15
Manchester	26	16:30
Edinburgh	27	16:45
Birmingham	28	17:00
Cardiff	29	17:15
Sheffield	30	17:30
Leeds	31	17:45
Nottingham	32	18:00
London	33	18:15
Manchester	34	18:30
Edinburgh	35	18:45
Birmingham	36	19:00
Cardiff	37	19:15
Sheffield	38	19:30
Leeds	39	19:45
Nottingham	40	20:00
London	41	20:15
Manchester	42	20:30
Edinburgh	43	20:45
Birmingham	44	21:00
Cardiff	45	21:15
Sheffield	46	21:30
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Nottingham	48	22:00
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Manchester	50	22:30
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Cardiff	53	23:15
Sheffield	54	23:30
Leeds	55	23:45
Nottingham	56	00:00
London	57	00:15
Manchester	58	00:30
Edinburgh	59	00:45
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Cardiff	61	01:15
Sheffield	62	01:30
Leeds	63	01:45
Nottingham	64	02:00
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Manchester	66	02:30
Edinburgh	67	02:45
Birmingham	68	03:00
Cardiff	69	03:15
Sheffield	70	03:30
Leeds	71	03:45
Nottingham	72	04:00
London	73	04:15
Manchester	74	04:30
Edinburgh	75	04:45
Birmingham	76	05:00
Cardiff	77	05:15
Sheffield	78	05:30
Leeds	79	05:45
Nottingham	80	06:00

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What is Christianity?

Is Christianity a Western religion?

Question 1 in Jesus through Asian eyes.

1. Which aspects of Western society do you think are Christian?

For example, how much of what happens at Christmas is actually Christian? What about Western attitudes towards marriage and family?



2. Do you think that people can follow Christ only in the West or can anyone follow Him wherever they live? Do you know any non-Western Christians?



(Note: This comes from the story of the first Christians, written by Luke.)

³⁴Then Peter began to speak: “I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism ³⁵but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. ³⁶You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. ³⁹We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, ⁴⁰but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Dictionary

Peter (v 34): One of Jesus' twelve closest friends and followers.

Fear (v 35): To honour and respect someone more than anyone or anything else. Here it doesn't mean to be afraid so that you hide from the person, but afraid of displeasing them, so that you obey them.

Lord (v 36): King.

Judea, Galilee (v 37): Areas in the land of Israel.

The baptism that John preached (v 37): John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin. He was sent by God to prepare people for Jesus and His teaching. John told people to turn away from wrong, and he baptised those who responded to his message. People were dipped in water by John to show that they wanted to change their lives.

The devil (v 38): God's enemy. The devil tries to spoil and destroy everything that comes from God.

Preach (v 42): To announce and teach the good news about Jesus Christ.

Testify (v 42, 43): To speak out about something that you have witnessed.



3. Wouldn't a message from God be for everyone?

a. What does this passage tell us about Jesus' life and message?



b. Whom does God accept? Does He have any favourites (v 34-35)?



c. Who can be forgiven (v 43)?



Read: Matthew 24 v 14

(Note: This comes from the story of Jesus' life and work written by Matthew, one of his disciples.)

[Jesus said:] "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

Dictionary

Gospel of the kingdom: *The good news about Jesus Christ.*

Testimony: *Evidence about the truth.*

d. What is Jesus prophesying about His message?



Summary

God has no favourites but accepts and forgives everyone who puts their trust in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Jesus commanded His message to be preached to all mankind and prophesied that this must happen before the world ends. This means that Christianity is not just a Western religion; following Jesus is for everyone from every ethnic group.

Manoj's story

In 2007 I was living the high life. I was a successful businessman, buying and selling blocks of apartments throughout the country.

However, as I entered the New Year, my good fortunes took a downturn. As the credit crunch set in, my property business began to wobble. But this paled into insignificance as my two-year-old son was suddenly taken severely ill with breathing difficulties.

Though I was a born-and-bred Hindu, I had never really practised my faith. I always thought Christianity was something that was more to do with Europeans and Americans than with Asians like me. But at school I had learned a little about the Christian faith, and it had resonated with me.

But as my wife and I sat in the hospital with my son's life slipping away before us, I had a powerful sense that God truly exists, and that He alone could help in our hour of need. All the while a Christian couple we had only recently befriended were praying for us.

On the fourth day the consultant came and told us our son was gravely ill—she seemed to be preparing us for the worst. An hour later, to everyone's utter astonishment, my son suddenly sat bolt upright in bed. We had witnessed what could only be described as a miracle.

I agreed with my wife that we should visit our local church to say thank you to our friends for their prayers. But as I met for the first time with real Christians who loved me and cared for me, and listened to teaching about Jesus from the Bible, I began a journey which challenged my previous perceptions and beliefs about life. I felt called to re-evaluate my life, and new values and priorities began to take shape. I discovered that there was a God who loved all and died for all. Within just a few weeks I found myself walking to the front of the church to commit my life to Jesus Christ.

My business is no longer what it was. But what does that matter? When I found Jesus, I found a new purpose in life.

Why are so many Christians not like Jesus?

Question 2 in Jesus through Asian eyes.

4. Do you think it is possible that people can belong to a religion without actually following it? Why do you think this would happen?

5. What do you think it means to follow a religion? What in your opinion is a "living faith"?

¹Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ²“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. ³So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practise what they preach. ⁴They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. ⁵Everything they do is done for people to see: they make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; ⁶they love the place of honour at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷they love to be greeted with respect in the market-places and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by others.” ...

²³“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practised the latter, without neglecting the former. ²⁴You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.”

Dictionary

Disciples (v 1): *Followers.*

Pharisees (v 2): *Jewish religious leaders who were very strict about keeping the religious laws.*

Moses (v 2): *A famous leader of Israel from history. Moses received the law from God and brought it to the people of Israel.*

Cumbersome (v 4): *Difficult to carry.*

Phylacteries (v 5): *Small leather boxes which contained texts from the law and were worn by Jewish men to show their devotion to God’s law.*

Tassels (v 5): *A decorative edge on a piece of cloth.*

Synagogue (v 6): *A religious building where Jews met to learn from their holy books.*

Rabbi (v 7): *A Hebrew word meaning “Teacher”.*

Hypocrites (v 23): *People who tell others what to do, but don’t do that themselves.*

The latter (v 23): *The second thing mentioned (here, “justice, mercy and faithfulness”).*

The former (v 23): *The first thing mentioned (here, giving a tenth of their spices to God).*

Gnat (v 24): *A tiny flying insect.*

6. Can people be outwardly religious but not follow from the heart?

a. What was wrong with the Jewish spiritual leaders?



b. Do you think we can be like this in any way?



Read Matthew 13 v 3-9 and 18-23

³Then [Jesus] told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

¹⁸“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹when anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²²The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who

hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

Dictionary

Parable (v 3): *A story from everyday life which illustrates a spiritual truth.*

The kingdom (v 19): *The kingdom of heaven or God; all the people throughout history who are saved from their sins by Jesus' death, who are reconciled with God, and who live under the rule of King Jesus.*

The evil one (v 19): *God's enemy, the devil.*

The word (v 20): *God's message to humans, the good news about Jesus.*

c. What does the seed represent in the story?



d. What stops the "seed" from growing?



e. How do these things happen in everyday life?



Summary

People can be born into a religion without actually following it or having a living faith. Others can be outwardly strictly religious but inwardly unloving and unkind. Fear of trouble, worries or the distractions of worldly wealth or success can stop us from following God.

