



JESUS THE GAME CHANGER

How the life and teaching of Jesus still changes the world and why it matters.

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INTRODUCTION

Never before was there a man like Jesus! Never again will there be a man like Jesus Christ! No one else in history has ever impacted the world as much as Jesus.

Timothy LaHaye wrote in his book *“Jesus: Why the World Is Still Fascinated by Him”*, that during a break from his interview with Larry King on *Larry King Live*, in March 2006, King said that although he was an agnostic, he had the greatest respect for Jesus Christ. He said: *“I believe He was the most influential person who ever lived.”*

The world's three biggest news magazines: Time, Newsweek and US News World Report, not known at all as religious journals, had Jesus more than 20 times on their front pages during the past decade. Jesus has appeared on the cover of the Time Magazine 21 times; more than any other person ever. Love Him or hate Him; Jesus changed and is still changing everything. The Western world's two biggest holidays, Easter and Christmas, have to do with Jesus. We live in the year 2019. 2019 years after the coming of Jesus, the Western “clock” is in sync with the coming of Jesus. Every time someone writes the date, it is a testimony that Jesus is a

game changer and that with His coming He changed everything.

In 2016, Skienna and Ward released the book *“Who’s Bigger”*, investigating who is the most influential person in human history. The outcome of their research was that of all the people in history, recent or not, the most influential person ever to have lived was Jesus of Nazareth. This is surprising when you consider what little Jesus left at the end of His time here on earth.

Author and pastor, John Ortberg, made the point that at the time of Jesus’ death, no one was less likely to be remembered or be more influential than Jesus of Nazareth.

Consider what Jesus left at the end of His ministry:

- He didn’t own any property.
- He didn’t write any books.
- He didn’t start any organisation. Remember, Jesus didn’t start the church while He was still on earth.
- He didn’t hold any political positions.
- He had few followers (Acts 1:15 refers to Peter addressing about 120 believers in the upper room)
- Very limited travel in His lifetime, and He was limited to a small region.

Karl Faase who developed the series: *Jesus the Game Changer*, said that Jesus Christ has made a lasting mark on human history and He continues to do so through His followers. Yet many people do not realise that the values Western democracies are built on like: the equality of all, servant leadership, care for the poor and marginalised, dignity of women and children, education (to name just a few) originate by the life and teaching of Jesus.

We are excited about this series. May you encounter a new or fresh understanding of, and appreciation for, those changes that would NEVER have been/happened was it not for Jesus. May you realize what all this means for you and the world we live in.

Ask God how you can use this series to reach your unbelieving family members, neighbours, friends and colleagues.

Ask God to change everything in your life and may this year always be remembered as a turning point towards more of God in your life.

Soli Deo Gloria!
To God alone all the glory!



Week 1

JESUS THE
GAME CHANGER

Jesus

Memory verse:

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11

Day 1:



Son of God and Son of Man JESUS GAME CHANGER

Begin today's study with prayer.

We believe that Jesus is more than a special person born in history and more than only a prophet. We believe that Jesus is the Son of God! Luke 1:35 says: *"The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.'"*

The Bible also calls Him the Son of Man! In Luke's Gospel and account of Jesus' life, he shows us how God explained to people who He is and what He does for mankind and what He expects of them. Luke describes Jesus as someone who is at the same time Son of God and Son of Man.

Son of God

Read John 1:1,14

What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of God?

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Jesus is not God's Son in the sense of a human father and a son. God did not get married and have a son. Jesus is God's Son in the sense that He is God in human form. Jesus is God's Son in that the Holy Spirit conceived him in Mary.

Jesus' Baptism is largely seen as the beginning of his public ministry. On that occasion (refer to Matthew 3:17) God Himself declared in a voice from heaven: "*This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.*"

Read Matthew 26:62-64

During His trial before the Jewish leaders, the High Priest demanded of Jesus to tell them if He was Christ, the Son of God. What did Jesus answer him?

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Read Hebrews 1:3

To be the Son of God is to be of the same nature as God. What does this verse teach us about the Son?

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Son of man

Read Daniel 7:13-14

What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of Man?

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Jesus is referred to as the “Son of Man” 88 times in the New Testament. The description, “Son of Man,” was a Messianic title. Jesus is the One who was given dominion and glory and a kingdom. When Jesus used this phrase, He was assigning the Son of Man prophecy to Himself. The Jews of that era would have been intimately familiar with the phrase and to whom it referred. Jesus was proclaiming Himself as the Messiah.

Read Luke 2:46-51

Do you think the people of Jesus's time understood this?

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Do YOU understand it now and how does this change your perspective about Jesus?

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Jesus was the Son of God—He was in His essence God. Jesus was also the Son of Man—He was in His essence a human being.

There is no exclusive meaning in one name, which is not present in the other. Both cover the same spectrum of meanings, so to speak. Each one illuminates the person of Jesus from two perspectives:

- The name, Son of God, describes Him as the One standing at God's side from where He will go to stand on the side of man and His cause.
- The name, Son of man, signifies the opposite movement: from bottom to top, from man to God.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



Day 2:

The life and teaching of Jesus

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Jesus was a typical boy in a typical family of that day. As required by their faith, Joseph and Mary brought their 12-year-old son to celebrate His first Feast in preparation for His bar mitzvah at age 13, when Jewish boys commemorate their passage into adulthood. He fulfilled His duty to His earthly parents in submission to the 5th commandment, an essential part of the perfect obedience to the Law of Moses that He rendered on our behalf. Though fully God, Jesus grew up as any human does.

Read Luke 2:41-52

What do we learn about Jesus' childhood in these verses?

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We learn more about Jesus in Matthew 3:1 - 4:11. His baptism and temptation are described. In Matthew 3:15 Jesus submits to baptism, not because He has sins to

confess, but to fulfil all righteousness and to be fully identified with people. God gives his own testimony to Jesus in verse 17 when the heavenly voice declares: *“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*

The obedience of Jesus as Son of God is especially prominent in the temptation story, which follows immediately. There Jesus is tempted precisely in his role as Son of God and as Son of God he refuses to yield to the temptations of the Devil. Jesus' baptism and temptation serve to equip him for his ministry. The descent of the Spirit upon Jesus in verse 16 indicates that the entire ministry of Jesus is an expression of the power of the Spirit. Indeed, the work of the Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus is manifested already in the temptation.

The Gospel of Luke states that Jesus was "about 30 years of age" at the start of his ministry. (Luke 3:23)

Read Matt 4:17-19,23

What did Jesus do before he began to go through Galilea "teaching and preaching the news of the kingdom"?

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By first calling disciples to follow Him, Jesus left a legacy for His followers of all centuries - duplicate yourself by making disciples. This is the most effective method of spreading the Gospel.

Read Mark 4:33-34 and Mark 4:10-12

What was another effective method that Jesus used to teach people the principles of the Kingdom of God?

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Jesus also taught some of His most important lessons by asking questions - and by answering those who tried to outwit Him.

Read Mark 12:28-31

What lesson did Jesus teach us when one of the teachers of the law, tried to outwit Him?

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Read John 5:19

With His life and teaching, Jesus impacted history. What was His secret?

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It is No Secret (says the song) - it was His WAY OF LIVING.

This Jesus who came to seek and find those who are lost, also came for YOU. May you yield to His example and teaching and follow Him in obedience till the end!

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 3:



The authenticity of the New Testament

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

The opponents of Christianity frequently claim that the New Testament documents are not to be trusted. However, an examination of the currently available evidence shows that in reality they are far better attested than any comparable documents of the period. On every historical criterion, the text of the New Testament is vastly better documented and corroborated than any other document of these times.

There are four rules or principles for the determination of true history:

- Eyewitness testimony - a particular event has been described by a “credible witness” who had the means of observing that which he describes. (E.g. The disciple's description of Jesus' crucifixion in Matthew 27 / Mark 15 / Luke 23 / John 18 and the disciple's description of Jesus' transfiguration in Matthew 17 / Mark 9 / Luke 9)
- Second-hand testimony - a writer records an event, having obtained his information directly from eyewitnesses. His testimony must be considered as probably true; the “second degree” of historical

credibility. (E.g. Luke's description of the appearance of the Angels to the shepherds near Bethlehem in Luke 2; the disciple's testimony of Maria and other women who followed Jesus and the open tomb and the angels after Jesus' resurrection in Matthew 28 / Mark 16 / Luke 24 and Luke's description of Paul's conversion in Acts 9:1-6 and 22:6-16)

- Oral tradition - the writer obtained the information through oral tradition. (E.g. The description of Noah's calling and obedience in building the ark in Genesis 6 and the description of Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice in Genesis 22)
- Corroborating societies (When the traditions of one society support those of another. This is even more the case if it can be shown that there has been no collusion between the two groups.)

The New Testament passes the credibility test with flying colours. In addition to this secular evidence, the BIBLE also claims to be authentic.

Read Luke 1:1-4

Do you think there were ample witnesses and other sources for Luke to be satisfied that he was writing the truth?

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Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Do you think the Bible was only meant to collect facts - or is it meant for revelation and instruction in the Christian faith?

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Read 1 John 1:3

Did the different authors of the Bible only rely on what they heard from others?

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All eight New Testament writers' writings pass the authenticity test superbly. Therefore, we can accept every word from the Bible - and everything it teaches about Jesus.

- *Thank our Father in Heaven for His Word and for His Son, who came to save the world.*
- *Thank Him for the revelation of Jesus' life and teachings to us.*

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 4:



JESUS THE Jesus changes lives! GAME CHANGER

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

One of the most compelling reasons for people to believe in Jesus Christ is because He promises to change their lives. What are promised in each of the following verses?

2 Corinthians 3:15-18	
2 Corinthians 5:17	
Romans 5:1	
Romans 5:2	

Maybe the best- known example in the Bible of how a life has been turned around forever is, is that of Saul - who subsequently became the apostle Paul.

Read the whole story of his conversion in Acts 9:1-9

Saul was a Pharisee, trained in all the details of Jewish Law. He was so zealous about his religion that he felt duty bound to persecute those whom he deemed as heretics and blasphemers. It was this religious fervour that led Saul to hunt down, imprison and even preside over the execution of Christians. On his way to Damascus to persecute Christians, Saul had an encounter with the resurrected Jesus Christ.

Read Acts 9:15-16

Why did Jesus change Paul's life - and why did He change YOUR life? (Verse 15)

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Is a changed life a trouble-free life? (Verse 16) Motivate your answer

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Paul, who had dedicated the rest of his life to Jesus who changed him, eventually died as a martyr because of his faith in Christ.

But he lived with a daily appreciation for how Jesus Christ had changed his life. The angry, driven and self-righteous Pharisee was transformed into a humble and influential Apostle of Christ.

Read 1 Timothy 1:15-17

How did Paul describe his salvation? (Write it in your own words)

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Jesus changes lives. His offer is open to everyone who believes.

How about you? Are you experiencing the life-changing power of Jesus Christ? If not yet - turn to Christ and ask Him to change your life.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 5:



JESUS THE GAME CHANGER *“Who do you say I am?”*

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Theologians, historians, philosophers, and common folk have pondered about the question who Jesus really is for centuries. Was he just a good man or philosopher who left us with some virtuous teachings to live by? Was he just another prophet? Or was he a madman who thought he was divine, or an impostor who claimed to be God? Did he even really exist, or was he just a fabrication of men who lived nearly two thousand years ago?

Today, as in centuries past, attacks are made on the deity of Jesus Christ. If Jesus was merely a good man, then the Bible is not the word of God, but merely a good book on the same level as other literature. If Jesus is not God, then men have no Saviour, since he could not forgive sin just by being a good man. If it is true that Jesus is not God, then he has deceived and misled people and declared a lie. So, if Jesus is not God, he is not even a good man.

If Jesus is not God, then there is no heaven. For if he is not God, he did not rise from the dead. And if he did not rise from the dead then neither will we. When we die, we

remain dead and rot in our graves as those who have gone before us (1 Corinthians 15).

Jesus' existence is not only a proven fact. Jesus' significance is not only that he brought salvation and forever changed the world – He also wants to change you. Somewhere along the line every living human inevitably must make a choice about this Jesus!

Read Philippians 2:9-11

God exalted him to the highest place. What is proclaimed about Jesus in each verse?

Verse 9	
Verse 10	
Verse 11	

Jesus confronted his own disciples about who they think He is.

Read Matthew 16:13-17

From this we can clearly see how little the people of Jesus' time either knew or believed about Him. They all had different views of Him, but all of them were wrong. What do people in your community say about Jesus?

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It is not enough to only know WHO Jesus is. It is also not important to merely know much ABOUT Jesus. It is crucial to KNOW Jesus, to be in a personal relationship with Him that is real and growing.

There is only one source to help you grow in a relationship with God. In this incident where Peter declared that Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus made a life-changing comment: "flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17).

ONLY GOD can reveal Himself to you. He does it through the Spirit of His Son Jesus - and He uses many means. But the most important and most consistent means God uses to teach and guide us is his Word.

Be careful not to spend too much time on You-tube and listening to sermons to acquire knowledge and inspirational thoughts about Jesus and too little time to

personally read and ponder on the Bible - His life-giving Word.

If Jesus should direct this question: “Who do you say I am?” to you today - what would your sincere answer be? I challenge you to spend an extra 15 minutes and to prepare your answer:

- Pray to the Lord and trust Him to reveal himself to you;
- Read a chapter or two from the Gospels and focus on what is revealed about Jesus;
- From the bottom of your heart - pray again and write down what you have learnt and experienced about WHO Jesus is

“...What about you...who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16:15)

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End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



GROUP DISCUSSION:

Prayer

Memory verse:

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

John 1:1 and 14, Hebrews 1:3, Daniel 7:13-14; John 5:19, Matthew 16:13-17 and Philippians 2:9-11

Discussion questions

Read John 1:1 and 14 and Hebrews 1:3. What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of God?

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Read Daniel 7:13-14. What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of Man?

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Read John 5:19. What was the secret to Jesus' ministry on earth?

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Read Acts 9:1-9. Jesus changes lives. Discuss the statement: When you meet Jesus, you cannot stay the same.

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Read Matthew 16:13-17. What does your community say: Who is Jesus?

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Read Philippians 2:9-11. How can you impact your community by living a life dedicated to Jesus? Be practical.

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Close in prayer



Week 2

JESUS THE
GAME CHANGER

Equality

(Valued before God)

Memory verse:

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17:22-23



Day 1:

Made in His image

Begin today's study with prayer.

Jesus was a game-changer in many respects, but chief among these was His treatment of people. In a time when social position allowed people to treat those underneath them like objects of service, pleasure or even lower than animals; Jesus' acknowledgement of the poor, weak and undervalued is an outright miracle.

In your own words, describe what you understand to be the meaning of Biblical equality.

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Biblical equality is the belief that all people are equal before God and in Christ. All have received the same grace and all have equal responsibility to use their gifts and obey their calling to the glory of God. God freely calls believers to roles and ministries without regard to class, gender or race.

Read Genesis 1:26-27 and Psalm 139:13-16

God created humans in His image. He created every fine detail according to His will.

What are the implications for us? How should we treat people?

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Notice the wording in each of the above phrases: “are made,” “are fearfully and wonderfully made”. These phrases all have one thing in common: they are things done to us or for us by God. These are not things we have done for ourselves, nor have we earned or deserved them. Therefore, we can conclude that our worth is not really of the “self” at all; rather, it is worth given to us by God. For this reason, every human being deserves our respect and is the object of the love of God.

Read Matthew 5:43-48

Jesus insists that we love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Why?

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Equality - moral, spiritual and political equality - does not mean all people are the same. However, it does mean that all are equally made in the image of God, and Jesus reaches out to everyone and treats everyone the same.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 2:



Everyone valuable in God's eyes

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

We have been made by God and that makes us special. We have been created in His image. His desire is that all of us become His sons and daughters and join Him in heaven for eternity. In God's eyes we all have importance. In God's eyes we are precious and valuable.

Read 1 Samuel 16:7

How does God determine your value?

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Read Matthew 10:29-31

How important are you in God's eyes?

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God cares for you much more than you care about yourself. He even knows how many hairs are on your

head. You neither know nor care, but God does. He knows everything about you, and He cares about everything He knows.

Our self-worth is too often based on what other people tell us about ourselves. The one, true authority on our self-worth is Jesus Christ, and since He gave His own life for us by dying on a cross, that should tell us just how valuable we really are.

People who believe that Jesus came to earth because of His love for all people - to tear down walls, to set the world right - should lead to ensure that all people understand how valued they are as human beings. They then must go beyond words and take action.

Read Matthew 22:37-40

Jesus summed up the Ten Commandments with: Love God and love others. How does this affect the way you think about other people and their value in the eyes of the Lord?

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Every person is created in the image of God and everyone is equal before God. This is a privilege that we must recognize, nurture and build on; rather than a right that must be protected by law.

Jesus was interested in much more than just human rights; He came to restore human relationships with God. That is where the cycle of inequality is broken. Love God and love others as yourself.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 3:



God protects His own

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Pastor Dan Lupton once said: *"The safest place in the world for a believer is in the centre of the circle of God's will for him. A believer would be safer on a battleground than in his bed at home if that battleground is God's place for him. A believer would be safer preaching on a street corner in a ghetto than in a church full of like-minded believers, if that was God's place for him."*

Read Psalm 91: 1-4

Do you agree with Dan Lupton's statement? Why, why not?

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Read John 10:1-13

In your own words, write down the meaning of this parable. What promise do we find in verse 10?

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There are two things promised here. Jesus says that whoever enters through Him will be saved. “Going in and out” pictures safety. And, “finding pasture” pictures the sustenance our good shepherd provides. Jesus is the only way that his sheep may experience his safe fold and luxurious pasture.

In the context of the sheep analogy, being saved refers to the sheep being protected from predators that would kill them. But Jesus obviously has the idea of spiritual salvation behind His words. John 3:17 says: “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

The spiritual picture of safety is that if you have entered the fold through Jesus, who is both the shepherd and the door. He provides safety and access. He is guarding all of your ways. You can go out to the rich pasturelands that He provides and come into the safety of His fold as you please.

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:3

What promise do we find here?

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In this verse, our God’s faithfulness is sharply contrasted with people’s lack of faith. God is sovereign over every detail of the universe. You will have what you need when you need it. Why? Because God is faithful.

Does this mean we will never have any problems or any struggles? No, we live in a broken world, full of broken people and full of evil. However, Proverbs 18:10 says: *The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runs into it and is safe.*

Read Isaiah 54:17

What promise do we receive from the Lord in this verse?
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Believers need fear no “terror”, as long as they are in a trusting relationship with the Lord. We will never be plucked from the hand of the Father (John 10:28{b}) – though our earthly bodies may suffer, we are sure of eternal life with Him.

Have you made this promise your own yet? If not, talk about this promise to Father in prayer.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 4:



Unity in Diversity

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

The idea and related phrase of unity in diversity is very old and dates back to societies about 400-500 BC.

What does the slogan: *Unity in Diversity* mean to you?

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Unity in diversity is a concept of unity without uniformity and diversity without fragmentation. It is more than just the tolerance of physical, cultural, social, religious, political, linguistic, ideological or psychological differences. It is about unity based on understanding that difference enriches human interactions. God's great goal in all of history is to uphold and display the glory of His name for the enjoyment of His people from all nations.

Perhaps it will be helpful to ponder the reasons why God ordained ethnic diversity and the unified harmony of diverse ethnicities in the family of God. One diverse body. One chosen race. One royal priesthood. One holy nation. One treasured possession. One family. And all of

this unity is blood-bought. Christ did not die for this in vain.

Read Psalm 96:3-4

How does the Psalmist connect evangelism with the praise that God deserves?

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The power of praise that will come to the Lord from the diversity of the nations are greater than the beauty and power that would come to Him if the chorus of the redeemed were culturally uniform.

The reason for this can be seen in the analogy of a choir. More depth of beauty is felt from a choir that sings in parts than from a choir that sings only in unison. Unity in diversity is more beautiful and more powerful than the unity of uniformity. This carries over to the untold differences that exist between the peoples of the world. When their diversity unites in worship to God, the beauty of their praise will echo the depth and greatness of God's beauty far more than if the redeemed were from only a few different people groups.

Read Romans 15:11

Why is it important that all the nations should praise the Lord?

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Paul is saying that there is something about God that is so universally praiseworthy and so profoundly beautiful and so comprehensively worthy and so deeply satisfying, that God will find passionate admirers in every diverse people group in the world. By focusing on all the people groups of the world, God undercuts ethnocentric pride and throws all peoples back upon His free grace rather than any distinctive of their own.

Read John 17:22-23

Why is Jesus praying for complete unity?

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The unity believers have is not perfect yet; we are all growing in unity. Jesus prayed that we would be united in our common purpose and mission. He has revealed

God's character to us and we, as His followers, are now reflecting the glory of God to the world.

John Piper says: "It's a humbling thing to discover that God does not choose people because of any distinctive of worth but rather as a means of bringing all the other people into the same joy. Humility is the flip side of giving God all the glory. Humility means revelling in His grace, not our goodness. In sending us to all the peoples, God is pressing us further into the humblest and deepest experience of His grace and weaning us more and more from our ingrained pride. In doing this He is preparing for Himself a people — from all the peoples — who will be able to worship Him freely and with admiration."

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 5:



Slaves and Masters

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

There is a tendency to look at slavery as something of the past. But it is estimated that today there are over 27 million people in the world who are subject to slavery: forced labour, sex trade, inheritable property, etc. As those who have been redeemed from the slavery of sin, followers of Jesus Christ should be the foremost champions of ending human slavery in the world today.

The question arises, though, why does the Bible not speak out strongly against slavery? Why does the Bible, in fact, seem to support the practice of human slavery? Rules governing slavery can be found in both the Old and New Testament.

What many fails to understand is that slavery in Biblical times was very different from the slavery that was practiced in the past few centuries in many parts of the world. The slavery in the Bible was not based exclusively on race. People were not enslaved because of their nationality or the colour of their skin. In Biblical times, slavery was based more on economics; it was a matter of social status. People sold themselves as slaves when

they could not pay their debts or provide for their families. Furthermore, unlike our modern government welfare programs, there was no safety net for ancient Middle Easterners who could not provide a living for themselves. In ancient Israel, people who could not provide for themselves or their families sold them into slavery so they would not die of starvation or exposure. In this way, a person would receive food and housing in exchange for labour.

In New Testament times, sometimes doctors, lawyers, and even politicians were slaves of someone else. Some people actually chose to be slaves, to have all their needs provided for by their masters.

Read Exodus 21:16

What instructions do we find here in relation to human trafficking?

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Read 1 Timothy 1:8-10

Although slavery was a reality of the Biblical era, the Bible never approved the trading of people.

We know that the righteous is justified through faith. What will happen to slave traders?

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The Bible does not specifically condemn the practice of slavery. It gives instructions on how slaves should be treated. What does the following verses teach us about the way we should treat people?

Ephesians 6:9	
Colossians 4:1	
Philemon 1:7(a), 16-17	

The Bible often approaches issues from the inside out. If a person experiences the love, mercy, and grace of God

by receiving His salvation, God will reform his soul, changing the way he thinks and acts. A person who has experienced God's gift of salvation and freedom from the slavery of sin, as God reforms his soul, will realize that enslaving another human being is wrong. A person who has truly experienced God's grace will in turn be gracious towards others. That would be the Bible's prescription for ending slavery.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



GROUP DISCUSSION:

**JESUS
THE
GAME CHANGER**

Prayer

Memory verse:

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me— so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17:22-23

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Genesis 1:26-27, 1 Samuel 16:7, John 17:22-23 and Philemon 1:7, 16-17

Discussion questions

Read Genesis 1:26-27 and Philemon 1:7, 16-17. Equality does not mean all people are the same. How should believers treat all people? Why?

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Read 1 Samuel 16:7. How does God determine our value? How do people determine their own value? Discuss in the group.

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Discuss the statement: The safest place in the world for a believer is in the centre of the circle of God's will for him. Do you agree? Why or why not?

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Read John 17:22-23. Discuss the slogan: Unity in Diversity. Do you agree? Why is Jesus praying for complete unity?

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Close in prayer



Week 3

JESUS THE
GAME CHANGER

Women & Children

Memory verse:

*Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven...
Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”*

Luke 7:48 and 50

Day 1:



JESUS THE Christianity and Women GAME CHANGER

Begin today's study with prayer.

Some feminists say that Christianity, the Bible, and the Church are anti-female and horribly oppressive to women. Alvin Schmidt, in his book *How Christianity Changed the World*, says: “*the only way to measure the impact of Christianity on women, is to look at the status of women in most present-day Islamic countries. Then you will see that Christianity was the best thing that ever happened to women.*”

During the time Jesus lived on earth, both Judaism and first-century Romans regarded women as second-class citizens. In ancient Greece, a respectable woman was not allowed to leave the house unless a trustworthy male escort accompanied her. A wife was not permitted to eat or interact with male guests in her husband's home; she had to retire to her woman's quarters. Men kept their wives under lock and key, and women had the social status of a slave. Girls were not allowed to go to school, and when they grew up, they were not allowed to speak in public. Women were considered inferior to men. The Greek poets equated women with evil. Remember

Pandora and her box? Women were responsible for unleashing evil on the world.

The status of Roman women was also very low. Roman law placed a wife under the absolute control of her husband, who had ownership of her and all her possessions. He could divorce her if she went out in public without a veil. A husband had the power of life and death over his wife, just as he did over his children. As with the Greeks, women were not allowed to speak in public.

Jewish women, as well, were barred from public speaking. The moral law prohibited women from reading the Torah out loud. Synagogue worship was and is still today segregated, with women never allowed to be heard.

The Bible provides some thought-provoking evidence that Jesus really broke with tradition concerning the role of women. It also shows that the Bible, and early Christianity, elevated the role of women from what it was in early Judaism and other cultures.

Read John 4:4-26

Can you name some of the social barriers that Jesus broke when He spoke to the woman at the well?

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Jesus treated the woman not as an object of disdain, or as something less than a man, but as a person. He not only asked her for a drink, but He offered an eternal drink of “living water”. He then shared with Her the fact that He indeed was the promised Messiah.

Read John 4:28-29 and 39

What was the result of Jesus’ conversation with this woman?

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This woman, who was evangelized by Jesus, becomes one of the first evangelists!

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 2:



Jesus appreciated women's Spiritual and Intellectual capabilities

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Jesus demonstrated only the highest regard for women, in both his life and teaching. He recognized the intrinsic equality of men and women, and continually showed the worth and dignity of women as persons. Jesus valued their fellowship, prayers, service, financial support, testimony and witness. He honoured women, taught women, and ministered to women in thoughtful ways. Both in his teaching and in his activities, Jesus reached out to women as persons who were equally worthy as men in His saving activity.

Read John 20:10-18

What is significant about this passage?

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Jesus appreciated women's spiritual capabilities in that it was a women (Mary Magdalene) who was first to receive news of His resurrection and then she was given the

honoured position of telling the disciples. Jesus could have paraded through the streets of Jerusalem. He could have knocked on Pilate's door. He could have confronted the high priest. But the first person our resurrected Lord appears to, is a woman without hope and He gives her a ministry.

Read Mark 7: 24-30

How did Jesus react on this woman's faith?

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While there were conflicting attitudes about the education of women among the rabbis, there was no confusion with Jesus. We've already seen Him instructing the woman at the well about spiritual truth. She was the first person to whom He revealed He was the Messiah. Jesus did not only talk to women, He also taught them.

Read Luke 10:38-42

What is significant about the fact that Mary sat listening to the teaching of Jesus?

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Three times in Scripture, when we observe Mary (sister of Martha and Lazarus) she is sitting at the feet of Jesus. This is the traditional posture of a learner, a student, and a disciple. What is of critical importance is the fact that Jesus would be willing to sit in conversation with women in such a manner. Jesus valued her enough to teach her and her physical posture reflects the posture of her heart - humble, reverent, and teachable - all the qualities of a good disciple.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



Day 3:

Jesus appreciated women's abilities to serve

JESUS THE
GAME CHANGER

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Jesus desires that all believers think, grow, learn and he is an equal opportunity teacher to both men and women. Women participated in the ministry of Jesus, accompanying Him on his travels. He also respected the special characteristics of women.

Read Luke 7:36-50

How did this woman serve Jesus?

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Read John 11:1-3

In what way did Martha serve Jesus?

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In what way did Mary serve Jesus?

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Jesus was served and anointed by women. He received worship and adoration from them. There is no greater

service to Jesus than worship, and they served him through their worship and by taking care of His physical needs.

Read Mark 12:41-44

Why was this widow's offering so significant that Jesus called His disciples to watch?

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Jesus stopped and noticed this act of service. He took such pleasure in so small a gesture. She served by giving all that she had she gave. Her gift may not have meant a lot to the ministry of the temple, but it meant a lot to God. That is why the Saviour, on His way to the costliest of sacrifices, stopped to honour this woman's sacrificial act of service.

Jesus came to serve. We see His service to women through talk, through teaching, through touch and through thankful praise for their faith. As we all have a need to belong, feel worthy and feel competent, we see that Jesus brings dignity, value, and worth to women and their roles of service as "daughters of God."

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 4:



Women as disciples

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Whereas the tradition of the times placed women at a lower social status than men -and male Jewish leaders had no women disciples - Jesus elevated the role of women in His ministry.

Read Luke 8:1-3

What was the significance of the fact that women followed Jesus and His disciples?

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In what way did these women support the gospel ministry?

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Jesus clearly had women as well as men as part of His followers. He even tailored some parables specifically to women.

A disciple is not just a Christian in name; they are followers of Christ, going where He sends them, following in His footsteps, doing what He did, and following the will of the Father. Therefore, these women were disciples.

Read Luke 23:44-56

What did the women do while Jesus died on the cross?

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What did they do when Jesus' body was handed over to Josef of Arimathea?

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A disciple of Christ doesn't forsake Christ, especially at a critical time of testing. They might fall into sin and even deny Jesus, but they don't stay there. They get back up and dust themselves off and start walking with Christ again. When Jesus went to the cross, most of those that remained to the end were women. They did not forsake Him; they tended to His body after it was released to Josef. They, together with Josef, gave Him a proper burial.

Read John 20:11-18

In your own words, describe what happened in this passage.

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Mary Magdalene is the first eyewitness to Jesus' resurrection. Mary did not recognize Jesus until He says her name. In something as simple and intimate as saying her name the reality of the resurrection is revealed.

Jesus could have just as easily appeared to Peter and John, the beloved disciple, or to the disciples cowering behind locked doors. That He appeared to Mary first can only mean that this was by divine appointment and was a deliberate act on His part. Women as well as men were credible witnesses to the gospel and were commissioned to preach it to all with whom they came into contact.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



Day 5:

Let the little children come to me

GAME CHANGER

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

During the time of Jesus’s life on earth, children were a very important part of the survival of the culture. They were a proof of prosperity and a way of providing for yourself in your old age. However, although parents loved their children, they were also seen as disposable, especially if they were the “*wrong*” gender.

Scripture records instances of Jesus interacting with children and in each one we see Jesus treating the children with kindness and love, therefore showing how much He values them. We are going to look at a few:

Read Mark 10: 13-16

How did Jesus react towards the children?

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Read John 6: 5-11

How did Jesus use the child’s meal of bread and fish?

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Read Mark 5: 22, 35-43

What was the lesson that Jesus taught the little girl's parents (refer to verse 36)?

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Read Matthew 18:1-6

Who is the most important in the kingdom of God?

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To be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, we must mirror the humble position of children. This does not mean we should be childish, but we should be childlike in recognizing our own vulnerability and dependence on God. We should have childlike humility and avoid causing others to stumble.

Often children are regarded as lesser human beings; to be humoured and endured. Jesus taught us that to receive a child into your arms in the name of Jesus is a way to receive Jesus. And receiving Jesus is a way to receive God. Therefore, how we deal with children is a signal of our fellowship with God. Something is deeply amiss in the soul that does not want to love and hold a child.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



GROUP DISCUSSION:

Prayer

Memory verse:

Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven... Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

Luke 7:48 and 50

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

John 4:6-10 and Matthew 18:3-4

Discussion questions

Do you agree with the statement: "Christianity is the best thing that ever happened to women"? Why or why not?

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Read John 4:6-10. What was the significance of the fact that Jesus spoke to the woman at the well? Discuss.

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Does your church minister to women according to the example set by Christ? Discuss.

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Read Matthew 18:3-4: Do you think that ministry to the children is important? Why or why not?

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Close in prayer



Week 4

**JESUS^{THE}
GAME CHANGER**

Care

Memory verse:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Galatians 6:9-10



Day 1:

The role of the Messiah

Begin today's study with prayer.

Messiah comes from the Hebrew word *mashiach* and means “anointed one” or “chosen one.” The Greek equivalent is the word *Christos* or, in English, Christ. The name “Jesus Christ” is the same as “Jesus the Messiah.” In Biblical times, anointing someone with oil was a sign that God was consecrating or setting apart that person for a particular role. Thus, an “anointed one” was someone with a special, God-ordained purpose.

The Messiah had two roles: first to deliver His people spiritually; that is, to redeem them from sin (John 8:31–36). Then, later, Jesus the Messiah will deliver His people from their physical enemies, when He sets up His Kingdom on the earth (see Isaiah 9:1–7).

Read the following verses and in your own words, describe what the Bible teaches about the Messiah:

Micah 5:2	
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Isaiah 61:1	
Isaiah 53:3	
Isaiah 53:6-7	

Read Luke 4:16-22 and 28-30

What was the people's reaction when Jesus said that the Scripture was fulfilled?

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Jesus had certainly brought Good News of salvation to bankrupt sinners and healing to broken-hearted and rejected people. He had delivered many from blindness and from bondage to demons and disease. The problem was that His listeners would not believe in Him, they saw Him only as the son of Mary and Joseph.

At first, they admired the way He taught, but it didn't take long for their admiration to turn into antagonism. Why? Because Jesus began to remind them of God's goodness to the Gentiles. Our Lord's message of grace was a blow to the proud Jewish congregation, and they would not

repent. They could not believe that Jews had to be saved by grace just like the pagan Gentiles!

People today are faced with this same dilemma. Many have thought of Jesus as a teacher, as a good man, or a tragic historical figure who was killed because He was too far ahead of His time. But when we meet Jesus in Scripture, and hear His claims, we realize that Jesus calls on us to see Him as the living Son of God.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



Day 2:

JESUS **Jesus teaches us to care** GAME CHANGER

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

How would you define the word care in your own words?

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The Merriam-Webster dictionary describe the word care as *“painstaking or watchful attention or to be concerned about”*. Biblical care is a practical outcome of loving vigilance, efforts and tenderness. Care is perfectly shown by God. People should imitate God’s care, but human care is often limited, faulty or misplaced in self-centred ways.

Caring is part of God’s character.

Read the following verses and in your own words describe what it teaches us about God’s care:

Psalm 8:4	
Psalm 65:9	

Psalm 121:3-4	
Matthew 10:30-31	

God’s care is infinitely more extensive than what we can imagine.

Read Isaiah 49:15

How does God’s care contrast with human care?

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Read 1 Peter 5:7

What is the difference between the word “care” (in the sense of loving care) and the “worldly cares”?

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Christians should transfer their worldly cares to God, since their needs are His responsibility. He will provide.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



Day 3:

JESUS **Where is your treasure?** GAME CHANGER

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament has several reflections on treasure. There is a definite difference between earthly treasures and heavenly treasures.

Read the following verses and identify the heavenly treasures that we should accumulate as a treasure deposited with God:

Proverbs 2:1-5	
Proverbs 8:12,18-21	
Colossians 2:2-3	

Spiritual treasure is of eternal value and comes from knowing and serving God. Earthly treasures, however,

have at best only a short-term benefit but can bring spiritual dangers.

Read Matthew 19:21-24

What did Jesus ask the young man to do?

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Why did Jesus say that it is more difficult for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle?

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Read Matthew 6:19-21

What warning does Jesus give in verse 19?

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What is the meaning of verse 21?

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Materialism is God's rival, because it is competing for the allegiance of human hearts. The spiritual danger of accumulated earthly treasure is that it can lead to greed, dishonesty and idolatry. It does not satisfy and the constant strife to secure one's life via possessions causes anxiety.

Spiritual treasure, on the other hand, consists of knowing God and His wisdom. It is of eternal value and more important than material possessions. God will take care of the basic needs of our physical lives. He does not promise prosperity, but He calls on believers to give generously from any surplus they have. The issue is therefore not your net worth, but how you use your material possessions to care for others.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



Day 4:

Jesus cared

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Helping and caring for others was something Jesus did on a daily basis. People constantly approached him, but He always found time to stop what He was doing to help those in need. This is a lesson we must learn if we want to be anything like Jesus, our Saviour. Jesus cared for the people around him, by healing them of their illnesses; by showing a great deal of compassion for them. He never sent anybody away who came to him even if it was in the night.

Read Matthew 14:13-21

What was Jesus' reaction when He saw the crowd?

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What lessons are we taught in this parable?

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The feeding of the five thousand was one of the more spectacular miracles in the ministry of Christ. It was an

occasion in which the disciples overemphasized the problem and underemphasized the resources, for they underestimated the Master! We bring what we have to the Master, and He will bless it. A little with God is more than much without Him.

Jesus was filled with compassion for the people. Compassion literally means “to have one’s inner being stirred”. It is stronger than sympathy and it causes you to do something about the need that you see.

Read the following verses and in your own words, write down what filled Jesus with compassion:

Matthew 14:14	
Matthew 20:33-34	
Mark 1:41	
Luke 7:13-14	

Jesus gave us an example of caring for others. Are you willing to follow that example?

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



Day 5:

Will you care?

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Our modern world is very competitive, and it is easy for God's people to become more concerned about profit and loss than they are about sacrifice and service. "*What will I get out of it?*" may easily become life's most important question.

Read Matt. 19:27-30

What does these verses teach us?

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We must strive to maintain the unselfish attitude that Jesus had and share what we have with others.

Read Luke 14: 7-14

In your own words, describe what lessons we can learn from this parable.

Luke 14:7-11	
Luke 14:12-14	

Jesus had been invited by a ruler of the Pharisees to a Sabbath dinner and He used the occasion to teach two great truths: Humility and showing kindness.

Jesus knew that the host had invited his guests for two reasons: (1) to pay them back because they had invited him to past feasts, and/or (2) to put them in his debt so that they would invite him to future feasts. Such hospitality was not an expression of love and grace but rather an evidence of pride and selfishness. He was “buying” recognition.

Jesus does not prohibit us from entertaining family and friends, but He warns us against entertaining only family and friends exclusively and habitually. That kind of “fellowship” quickly degenerates into a “mutual admiration society” in which each one tries to outdo the other and no one dares to break the cycle. Our motive for sharing and caring must be the praise of God and not

the applause of men; the eternal reward in heaven and not the temporary recognition on earth.

Jesus, the Son of God, the Most High King, Lord of Lords, never placed himself in a position above others. He led by serving and He loved by serving. He washed feet. He fed thousands. He walked to visit and heal the sick and dead. He stopped to touch and heal a sick woman. He spent time with those no one else cared to spend time with. Jesus lived a life of humility.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



GROUP DISCUSSION:

Prayer

Memory verse:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Galatians 6:9-10

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 8:4, Psalm 65:9, Psalm 121:3-4, John 15:12-13, Luke 10:34-35, Acts 20:31 and Philippians 4:10 and 14

Discussion questions

Read Psalm 8:4, Psalm 65:9 and Psalm 121:3-4. How would you describe God's care?

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What does the following verses teach us about the way we should care? Discuss.

John 15:12-13	
Luke 10:34-35	
Acts 20:31	
Philippians 4:10 and 14	

Rodney Stark says: *“It was the essence of the Christian lifestyle that people cared for one another and looked after one another and that there is a much greater sense of an intimate community, the community of believers.”*

What is your experience of community and care? Are you willing to care like Jesus?

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Close in prayer



Week 5

JESUS THE GAME CHANGER

Leadership

Memory verse:

But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. “Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.” Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. “But the greatest among you shall be your servant.

Matthew 23:8-11



Day 1:

Spiritual leadership

Begin today’s study with prayer.

Despite being the most influential figure in human history, Jesus did not follow conventional patterns of leadership of His time. He gathered only a small group of followers in His lifetime and died a humiliating death at the hands of the Roman authorities. His call for His followers to serve one another as servant leaders is one of the most powerful and enduring ideas from all His example and teaching (JGC – Discussion Guide P63)

How do you define leadership?

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John Piper defines leadership as, *“acting and speaking so as to create a following toward a goal.”* John Maxwell writes in his book **21 Irrefutable Laws of leadership**, *“Leadership is simply about influencing people. Nothing more, nothing less.”*

Read Mark 10:35-45

How does Jesus describe leadership?

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How do you define Spiritual Leadership?

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John Piper says Spiritual Leadership is, *“knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance.”* Henry and Richard Blackaby add to that; *“Spiritual Leadership is moving people on to God’s agenda.”* It is all about Him.

Read 1 Corinthians 11:1

How does Paul describe leadership?

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We as followers of Jesus are called to serve and lead in every area of life, by imitating Jesus. Jesus’ methods are still the most effective. We face the same challenges that He faced in training his twelve disciples.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



Day 2:

Servant Leaders

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

How do you define Servant Leadership?

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John Maxwell says; *“I believe the bottom line in leadership isn’t how far we advance ourselves but how far we advance others. That is achieved by serving others and adding value to their lives.”* As leaders, we need to be willing to invest in others to help them achieve their goals.

Read Matthew 20:25-28 and John 13:13-17

One of Jesus’ last lessons to his disciples was his willingness to wash the feet of the disciples. This wasn’t some empty, symbolic gesture. Jesus showed the example of a servant leader. Jesus never promoted Himself; it was always about his Father and his calling to serve people.

Servant leadership is the focus on the growth of the individual, that they might flourish and achieve their full potential.

Although Jesus was the Son of God and more powerful than any other leader in the world, He submitted his own life to serve others. You have read in John 13 that Jesus was motivated by his love for his followers. Although he was fully aware of his position as leader, he voluntarily becomes a servant to his followers. He sets an example for his followers, then and today.

A servant leader is someone who submits to a higher purpose, which is beyond personal interests or the interests of others. He or she serves out of love for God and others.

When thinking about the servant style of Jesus, it would benefit any leader to follow his example. John Stott put it this way; *“The authority by which the Christian leader leads is not power but love, not force but example, not coercion but reasoned persuasion. Leaders have power, but power is safe only in the hands of those who humble themselves to serve.”* This style of leadership is precisely the example that Jesus set for those who are willing to follow Him.

When people are looking for authentic leadership, they are looking for people who have been spiritually filled by Jesus and are willing to humble themselves. They are willing to serve. That is the mark of a true servant leader.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



Day 3:

Humble leaders

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Read Philippians 2:1-8

What is humility?

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Humility can be defined as the quality of having a modest or low view of one's own importance. Humility is not to have a poor self-esteem.

How is humility exhibited in leadership?

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Godly leadership and humility cannot be separated. Real and powerful leadership starts by recognizing the power of others. Humble leaders respect the worth of other's abilities, accomplishments and talents. Humble leaders can grasp the idea of not knowing all or having all the answers

Humble leaders lead peacefully and reject self-glory. They look out the window when things go right and point to their team, and in the mirror when things go wrong.

Read Proverbs 16:16-20

How do you show humility?

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Humility and a teachable spirit are attitudes of good, Godly leaders. Humble leaders are willing to face areas of weakness and mistakes. Humble leaders start their day with God and submit in their daily walk to God and seek His direction. As leaders, we are tempted to lead in our own power and strength and to make our central focus ourselves. We lead in our own strength, but we must seek out Christ and live and lead in the power of His Holy Spirit.

As we read in Proverbs 16, pride and our own strength will get us nowhere in our leadership.

Andrew Murray once said: *“True humility comes when, in the light of God, we have seen ourselves to be nothing, have consented to part with and cast away self—to let God be all”*

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



JESUS ^{THE}
GAME CHANGER

Day 4:

Lead like Jesus

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Identify the different characteristics of Jesus as a leader:

Mark 1:9-11	
Mark 1:12-13	
Mark 1:14-15	
Mark 1:17	
Mark 1:19	
Mark 1:23-25	
Mark 1:29-31	
Mark 1:35	
Mark 1:4-45	

To lead like Jesus, we need to lead with Jesus. Intimacy with Christ is root of fruitful ministry and leadership.

- **Jesus was not self-promoting** (Mark 1:11). He as the Son of God recognizes John the Baptist's calling and placed himself under the authority of John.
- **Jesus was obedient to the Holy Spirit** (Mark 1:12-13). Immediately after Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit took him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
- **Jesus cast God's vision, with clarity, simplicity, and directness.** (Mark 1:15) One of the most powerful components of Jesus' ministry was his ability to be simple, clear and direct.
- **Jesus was a strategic team builder** (Mark 1:17). When Jesus called people to follow him, he began with men who had something in common. In building a team it is essential to have a core group of people who understand each other.
- **Jesus was a relationship builder** (Mark 1:19). Jesus began recruiting his disciples by finding those who shared some common ground. This strong foundation led to calling those of differing character.
- **Jesus expressed control and authority as a leader when needed** (Mark 1:23-25). Jesus met a man possessed by demons. He demanded the spirit to

leave, because he had the authority and he expressed firm control when needed.

- **Jesus engaged crisis head-on** (Mark 1:29-31). Often a crisis cripples people. However, Jesus met a crisis head-on. There will often be times when a strong leader will have to take on what others fear.
- **Jesus practiced daily prayer** (Mark 1:35). Jesus prayed every day.
- **Jesus empowered others** (Mark 1:40-45). Jesus' entire ministry focused on the empowerment of others.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



Day 5:

Respect versus exaltation of leaders

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Read Matthew 23:1-12

What does Jesus teach His disciples regarding respecting leaders?

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In the synagogue the best seats were those on the platform facing the congregation. During the synagogue service, members of the congregation were able to see the people on the platform and are reminded of their importance. Rabbi in general means “teacher,” but it also means “great one” or “master,” and so conveys superiority, or an important person.

Jesus accuses the scribes and Pharisees of loving the adulation of the people too much and enjoying it to be called: “Rabbi. The problem is that pride has a tendency to derail those whose true calling is humble service.

God's Word teaches us to recognize our leaders' leadership and respect the position God has given them, but we must also recognize their fallibility.

Read Matthew 23:13-36

List the things Jesus is warning leaders of his church against?

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Respect is not a title but is earned. Leaders are signposts that direct people to be part of God's Kingdom. God did not call leaders to make people followers of them, but to make them followers of Him. Leaders are part of God's family and ought to listen to other members of God's family too. They ought not to build their identity around their achievements, talents and following, but rather in Christ.

Read Romans 13:1-5 and 2 Timothy 2:1-4

How do you understand respect and authority?

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God has appointed leaders in our lives for our good and for his good order. Respect the leaders God has placed over you without worshiping them. There must be a balance between unhealthy adoration of leaders and unloving and harsh criticism of them.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



JESUS
THE
GAME CHANGER

GROUP DISCUSSION:

Prayer

Memory verse:

But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. “Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.” Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. “But the greatest among you shall be your servant.

Matthew 23:8-11

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 20:25-28, John 13: 1,3-5,12-15, Matthew 23:1-12 and Romans 13:1-5

Discussion questions

Read Matthew 20:25-28. Whom would you consider to be great in the world today? Why? Do you think God cares about us having position and power? Why or why not? How ought we, as Christians, to lead?

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Read John 13: 1,3-5,12-15. What does a servant leader look like? Share your experience and feelings after you served someone.

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Read Matthew 23:1-12. Why do you think titles are so important for some people? What does Jesus have to say about titles?

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Read Romans 13:1-5. What work did God appoint rulers to do? How are we to treat people in authority, even if they are not following God?

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Close in prayer.



Week 6

JESUS THE
GAME CHANGER

Forgiveness

Memory verse:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

Romans 8:1



Day 1:

Forgiveness is Radical

Begin today's study with prayer.

The word radical means extreme, profound, far reaching and when we begin to think of Jesus's ministry, then everything about Jesus is radical. The way He loves people, the way He cares for people's needs and the way He forgives us.

Today we are going to look at one specific event where Jesus forgave a man. This is the only event recorded from the gospels that took place during Jesus second visit to Galilee, making it a significant event. As we study this event, we will note that the forgiveness that God offers us through Jesus, truly is radical. It radically changes the way we should think about the transforming power of forgiveness.

Read Matthew 9:1-8

Identify and list the characters in this passage.

Some of the main characters in the passage were the scribes (teachers of the law). The Greek word for scribe is "*grammateus*". The English word grammar is derived from this word. It has a combination of three meanings: a clerk-public servant, an interpreter of the Mosaic law-Jewish religion and a teacher. So, these Scribes or Pharisees understood the Word of God. But did they really understand? They were the ones who should have known all about His forgiveness, but did they?

Why was the man brought to Jesus and what was the first thing that Jesus healed the man of and why?

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What was the reaction of the scribes? Why do you think they reacted this way?

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What does verse 2 teach us about the way we should respond?

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The scribes' shocked reaction was because of their misunderstanding of who Jesus was, the Son of God. As the Son of God, Jesus had the authority to forgive sins. They failed to recognise Jesus as the forgiver of sins even though they were the teachers of God's Word. They failed to point people to Jesus who forgives. They failed to recognise their own need for forgiveness. They failed to recognise Jesus as no mere ordinary person, but one who is the Saviour, who offered forgiveness to the paralytic and to all people. Forgiveness changed this man's life. Jesus changed this man's life!

This same forgiveness is given to us as well.

Spend time reflecting on Luke 24:46-47. Allow God to engrave this truth deep into your heart and make it a reality.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



JESUS THE
GAME CHANGER

Day 2:

Radical forgiveness: NOT GUILTY!

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Read Ecclesiastics 7:20 and 1 John 1:8-10

What do these scriptures reveal about man's nature?

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What does 1 John 1:9 reveal about God's nature?

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Read Psalm 37:1-2

What does God not credit us with, through Jesus Christ's forgiveness?

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Read Romans 5:1 and Romans 8:1

What are some of the effects of sin not being credited to us?

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According to the Meriam Webster dictionary the word, acquittal is used to describe, *“a decision of a court that someone is not guilty.”* When Jesus said to the paralytic man that his sins are forgiven, He was not just saying to him, “you are guilty, but I forgive you for what you have done.” No! Jesus revolutionises forgiveness. He forgave the man and deals with his guilt. Did this mean the man did not sin? No, we have already confirmed that all have sinned. However, Jesus who is called the righteous one (one without sin - refer 2 Corinthians 5:21) comes on our behalf and takes all our sin upon Himself. So, we become righteous. Jesus offers us a life free from guilt, through forgiveness. As John Piper said: *“Our sin on Christ, His righteousness on us.”*

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 3:



Radical forgiveness sets free

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Read Romans 5:18

What is the difference between the effect of our trespasses and the effect of Jesus' righteous act?

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Read Romans 6:18 and Romans 6:22-23

What is the effect of forgiveness and our fellowship with God?

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Read 1 John 1:3 and John 8:36

What does forgiveness separate us from and what does it unite us with?

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In secular Greek literature, the word for forgiveness, “*aphiemi*” was fundamentally used to state the sending away of an object or a person causing separation. It was used to describe the voluntary release of a person or thing over which one has legal or actual control over.

When Jesus forgave the man his sins and sent him away, He was not thinking in terms of sending this man to face judgement. That which was “sent away” or got rid of through forgiveness was his sin. The effect thereof was, rather than being separated from God, he was brought into fellowship with Him. Jesus’ forgiveness changes us from being separated from Him to having close fellowship with Him.

R.C Sproul said: *“The central message in Scripture is one of forgiveness. The believer in Jesus Christ can have real assurance that the guilt from sin is no more, and that forgiveness has been freely granted. Jesus says that he who the Son sets free, is free indeed.”*

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



Day 4:

Radical forgiveness cleanses

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Read Luke 5:12-15 and Luke 5:17-26 (the parable of the paralysed man as described by Luke)

What is the main difference between the two parables described in Luke?

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When Jesus healed the man of leprosy, He did not say to him that his sins are forgiven, rather he healed him of his illness and sent Him to the religious leaders to offer sacrifices for his sins. Jews believed that leprosy was a sign of sin in someone’s life. Jesus knew this, so even though Jesus did not say His sins are forgiven, Jesus still forgave Him.

Read Mark 7:20-23

Besides separating us from God, what else does sin do?

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The word defile means to pollute or make unclean. So, sin makes us "spiritually sick". The effects of this defilement lead to death. (Refer to Romans 3:23) This is where **Jesus the game changer** steps in.

Read 1 John 1:7-9

What do these verses tell us about forgiveness?

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Forgiveness cleanses us and it purifies us. Because Jesus knew the Jewish leaders and people viewed leprosy as the result of sin, Jesus healed the leper as a demonstration that He had the power to heal sickness. This meant that if He had the power to heal sicknesses, something they viewed was a result of sin, then He had the power to forgive sins as well. Jesus showed that forgiveness and cleansing is necessary, and He offers both.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



Day 5:

Radical forgiveness is for all!

Begin the study by spending time in prayer.

Read Luke 5: 27-31 and Matthew 9:9-13.

Identify and list the main characters in this parable.

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Who did Jesus speak to first and what was his occupation?

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What does the reaction of the religious leaders tell us about Matthew and His friends?

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What does the way Jesus reacted tell us about Jesus, how we are to treat others and about forgiveness?

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The religious leaders were blind; blind to the fact that they too were sinners and blind to the fact that Jesus came to forgive all people. It would be easy to blame them. However, remember that Jesus was a radical leader, who thought radically, taught radical truths and lived radically. Jesus demonstrated radical forgiveness by asking a tax collector, who was hated by society because they were themselves thieves, to follow Him. He then went to his house and ate with him and his sinful friends. He befriends sinners, eats with them, speaks to them, loves them and forgives them. Jesus is the game changer.

Read Matthew 6:14-15, Ephesians 4:32

How does Jesus expect us to follow Him with regards to forgiveness?

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We, too are called to be game changers:

- to see ourselves as sinners,
- not be blind,
- to accept forgiveness from God through Jesus,
- to be set free from all our sins and guilt,
- to be cleansed from sins and
- to offer forgiveness to all people,

because **Jesus change us!**

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.



GROUP DISCUSSION:

Prayer

Memory verse:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

Romans 8:1

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 103:10-14, Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Matthew 9:9-13

Discussion questions

Read Psalm 103:10-14, Romans 8:1 and 2 Corinthians 5:21. What are some of the implications of Jesus' radical forgiveness in the above scriptures?

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Have you come to the point where you have fully accepted Jesus' forgiveness? If not, what is holding you back?

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Are you able to forgive radically like Jesus did? If not, what is keeping you from forgiving others?

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Read Matthew 9:9-13. How can we apply the way Jesus approached and spent time with Matthew in our lives?

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Close in prayer



Memory verses

JESUS THE
GAME CHANGER

Week 1:

*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
Philippians 2:9-11*

Week 2:

*I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they
may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—
so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the
world will know that you sent me and have loved them
even as you have loved me.
John 17:22-23*

Week 3:

*Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.... Your
faith has saved you; go in peace”
Luke 7: 48 and 50*

Week 4:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Galatians 6:9-10

Week 5:

But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. “Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.” Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. “But the greatest among you shall be your servant.

Matthew 23:8-11

Week 6:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

Romans 8:1



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