

Jesus

Part 1

LIFE-CHANGE OBJECTIVE

- To enable you to get to know your best friend, Jesus Christ, better than you ever have before.
- To encourage you to act on the truth that Jesus is your best friend in one specific way.

The object of this study is simple: to get to know Jesus better. I want you to get to know your best friend, Jesus Christ. The teaching centers around getting to know Jesus as you would get to know anyone: by learning his names, by understanding his life history, and by appreciating and enjoying his personality.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

1. Knowing Jesus is life's continuing_____.

PHILIPPIANS 3:8 (NLT)

Everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

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2. Knowing Jesus is the believer's continuing _____.

2 PETER 1:3 (TLB)

For as you know him better, he will give you, through his great power, everything you need for living a truly good life: he even shares his own glory and his own goodness with us!

THE NAMES OF JESUS

One of the first ways to get to know another person is by learning his name. That's not such a simple task when it comes to Jesus. Walter Elwell's *Topical Analysis of the Bible* lists 184 different names for Christ in the Bible.

Remember, a name helps you to identify someone. The names of Jesus Christ help you to identify who he is.

A FRESH WORD

A Person's Name

In the Bible, names had more significance than we sometimes give them today. A name was an indicator of three specifics about a person:

1. His purpose

2. His position

3. His promise

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The angel told Mary: Jesus (Luke 1:31)

Jesus means “salvation of God”

The angels told the shepherds (Luke 2:11)

- Savior: Showing Jesus' _____.
- Christ: Showing Jesus' _____.
- Lord: Showing Jesus' _____.

Jesus Christ, today I want to begin a relationship with you. I don't want to just know about you; I want to know you personally. I ask you to forgive me for the wrong things I've done. I want to learn from you how to live. I choose today to begin to live by your direction and guidance. I don't even know all that this will mean, but I'm trusting you to show me the way. In Jesus name, Amen.

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KEY PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

The Bible does more than just list Jesus' names; it tells us of the power of his name! Certain names do have power. List below some of the names in our world today that have certain power or authority or clout behind them.

1. Jesus' name is above all names

Just when it seems that the words are not enough to express the greatness of Jesus' name, we're reminded of God's word to us in **Philippians 2:9-11:**

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 confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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2. As believers we live in his name!

We are anointed (James 5:14)
forgiven (1 John 2:12)
baptized (Acts 10:48)
and justified in his name (1 Corinthians 6:11).

We assemble in his name (1 Corinthians 5:4)
we bear his name (1 Peter 4:16)
believe in his name (John 1:12)
and call on his name (1 Corinthians 1:2)

In his name we give thanks (Ephesians 5:20)
have life (John 20:31)
preach (Acts 8:12)
speak (Acts 9:28)
and suffer (Acts 21:13; 1 Peter 4:16)

We do everything in his name (Colossians 3:17)

THE DETAILS of JESUS' LIFE

Jesus's life did not begin with his birth and it did not end with his death. We're going to look at Jesus's life before, during, and after his time on this earth. If you did a timeline of Jesus' life, his time on earth would be an exclamation point in the middle of an eternally long line. We see it as the larger part, and it is the most significant part for us, but in terms of real time, it is the shortest part

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WHAT DID JESUS DO BEFORE HE WAS BORN?

THE PRE-INCARNATE CHRIST

He has always existed: He is eternal (Micah 5:2; John 8:57-58).

He _____ the universe (Colossians 1:16).

He _____ to people.

JESUS' LIFE ON EARTH

A SHORT STORY

Although Jesus is eternal, we are most acquainted with the 33 short years that he walked this earth. One part of making friends with someone is getting to know the facts about him: where he was born, important relationships, memorable events, and so on. How do the stories you've heard about the life of Jesus fit into the overall history of his life? As we see the events of Jesus' earthly life, we have an opportunity to get to know him better.

A LOOK AT JESUS' LIFE IN SIX MAJOR PERIODS

- Jesus' _____
 - Beginning: his birth (Matthew 1-2; Luke 1:1-2:38)
 - Ending: Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-50)
 - Significant Events:
 - Jesus' dedication at the Temple (Luke 2:22-39)
 - Fleeing to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-23)
 - Visit to the Temple at age 12 (Luke 2:41-50)

“THE SILENT YEARS” OF JESUS' LIFE

The Bible tells us nothing of Jesus' life between his infancy and this event when he was twelve. And after this event, we hear nothing until he is thirty years old. You might call these “the silent years” of Jesus' life. Although the Bible does not directly tell us about these years, it's surprising how much we can learn through a close look at Scripture.

- Jesus grew as any child should grow.

LUKE 2:52

And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

- His mother, Mary, was there (of course!) with him at his birth (Luke 2:7), at his death (John 19:25), to witness his Resurrection, and for the beginning of the church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:14; 2:1).

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- His father, Joseph, probably dies sometime after Jesus' visit to the Temple in Jerusalem and before the beginning of his public ministry at age 30. Joseph is never mentioned after the experience in the Temple, although Mary is with Jesus numerous times. It would have been very unusual in that day for Mary to be traveling without her husband if he were still alive.
- There were at least seven children in Jesus' family: Jesus, four half-brothers, and at least two half-sisters (half-brothers and half-sisters because God was the Father of Jesus, and Joseph was the father of the others). We know this from Matthew 13:55-56: "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us?"
- His brother Judas wrote a book in the New Testament, the book of Jude.
- His brother James also wrote one of the books in the New Testament. Guess what it was named. Right... James! Judas and James were skeptics until they met with Jesus after his Resurrection (John 7:5; Acts 1:14; 1 Corinthians 15:7). James became a leader in the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; 15:13-21).

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- Beginning of Jesus' _____

Four significant events mark the beginning of Jesus' public ministry at 30 years of age:

- The ministry of John the Baptist (Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-18)
- Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11)
- Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13; Matthew 4:1-11)
- Jesus' turning the water to wine (John 2:1-11)

- Jesus' ministry in _____

Beginning: Cleansing the Temple (John 2:13)

Ending: Conversation with the woman at the well (John 4:1-42)

Significant Events: Conversation with Nicodemus (John 3)

- Jesus' ministry in _____

Beginning:

- Healing the nobleman's son at Capernaum (John 4:46-53)

Ending:

- Peter's statement of trust (Matthew 16:13)
- Jesus' Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1; Luke 9:28)

Significant Events:

- The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:7)

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- Calling the disciples (Luke 5:1-11; Mark 2:13-14; Luke 6:12-16)
- Feeding the 5,000 (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44)
- Jesus' journey to _____

Beginning:

- He *“resolutely set out for Jerusalem”* (Luke 9:51)

Ending:

- Mary anoints his body for burial (John 12:1; Matthew 26:6-13)

Significant Events:

- Clashes with the Pharisees (Luke 14; Luke 16:14)
- The resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:1)
- Meeting Zacchaeus in Jericho (Luke 19:1)

- Jesus' death, burial, and Resurrection

Beginning:

- The triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11)

Ending:

- The ascension into Heaven (Luke 24:50-51)

Significant Events:

- Cleansing the Temple, the Garden of Gethsemane, trials (Luke 19:45-46; John 17-18)

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- Jesus dies on the cross (Matthew 27:31-50; Luke 23:26-46)
- Jesus is buried in a tomb (Mark 15:42-47; John 19:38-42)
- Jesus is alive (Matthew 28:2-15; Mark 16:1-17; Luke 24:1-7; John 20:1-18)

KEY PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Jesus is a part of history. In the Encyclopedia Britannica, following a discussion of the writings about Jesus outside of the New Testament, the following statement is made: “These independent accounts prove that in ancient times even the opponents of Christianity never doubted the historicity of Jesus, which was disputed for the first time and on inadequate grounds by several authors at the end of the 18th century, during the 19th century, and at the beginning of the 20th century.”

JOHN 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

THE ETERNALLY EXISTENT CHRIST

WHAT DOES HE LOOK LIKE?

All the evidence points to Jesus still existing in his _____ in Heaven:

- He ascended to Heaven in bodily form (Acts 1:9).
- He will return in bodily form (Acts 1:11)
- Stephen saw him in bodily form in Heaven (Acts 7:55-56).
- Paul indicated Jesus now has a glorious body (Philippians (3:21).

WHAT IS HE DOING?

- He is _____ at God's right hand (Ephesians 1:20-22; 1 Peter 3:22).
- He is _____ for us (Romans 8:34).
- He is holding the _____ together (Colossians 1:16-17).
- He is anxiously _____ for us to be with him (John 14:1-3; 17:24).

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ACTING ON THE TRUTH

Jesus Christ wants to be your best friend. Think of it – your best friend is ruling at God’s right hand, is the one who holds the universe together. Let me encourage you to enjoy the fact that he is your friend this week by choosing to act as if he is your best friend. Here are three ways to do that:

1. Say to yourself, “He accepts me even when I don’t feel acceptable.” Remind yourself throughout this week that you are Jesus’ friend because of his grace, not because you somehow deserve that friendship.
2. Talk to him – like a friend. That’s what prayer is. At least one this week take a few minutes to tell Jesus what is happening in your life much as you would talk to a friend. Sure, he already knows what’s happening to you. But it is life-changing for you to talk to him as a friend about what you are facing each day.
3. Listen to him – like a friend. When I’m reading the Bible, I’m reading the book he gave me. This week, listen as you read. What is God saying to you about his love for you?

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does “having a relationship with Jesus” mean to you?
2. When you get to Heaven and come face to face with the eternally existent Jesus:
 - What do you want to say to him?
 - What question do you want to ask him?
 - What emotions do you think you’ll experience?
3. Here’s the important follow-up: What keeps us from telling him or asking him or feeling those emotions right now? What gets in the way of us sensing that Jesus is our best friend right now? (talk about ways you may have broken through some of these barriers.)
4. What new thing did you learn about Jesus in this study?
5. At the end of the study we looked at three ways to begin to act on the truth that Jesus is your best friend this next week: Remind yourself of his acceptance of you as a friend, talk to him as a friend, or listen to him as a friend. Which of these do you think would best help you to come to a new understanding and appreciation of your friendship with Jesus? Why?