

Screenshots of Jesus

A companion study to the podcasts of Amber Albee Swenson

Lesson One:

The Pharisees were all about rules without compassion. God made rules, then they added to God's rules. God said not to work on the Sabbath. They made rules to explain what they thought that meant. You could walk this far but no further. You could do this, but not that. In doing so, they turned God's laws into a score card. Their job was to monitor and keep track of who did what, as if those who followed the laws best earned favor with God.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

1. How does this definition of love motivate us to want to keep God's commands?
2. How does this definition keep us from nit picking which rules our friends, neighbors and loved ones are keeping or breaking?
3. Matthew 18:15 gives us direction if someone sins *against* you. That is also a good model if someone is sinning in a way even if it isn't against you. What should you do and how do you do it?

Our job is not to fix everyone. Our job is to bring people to Jesus. As we study the Word, we fall more in love with God, his ways and his plans for our life. Then, we willingly obey him, knowing we will always falter because we are sinful people.

4. What things in your life make you feel comfortable and secure?
5. If time were the only determining factor as to what you love, what would fill the number one place?

“The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news.” Mark 1:15

God is gracious to give us good gifts. We just need to make sure we keep them in their proper place. God is the giver. His good gifts, like a spouse, family, material possessions, job, food, etc. point to the goodness of the giver.

6. How do we make sure to love God more than the gifts he gives?

Think of the effort the people put in to go to see John the Baptist. Now think about the things you love the most. What would you do to get the things you love? Would you drive out of your way to get coffee? Would you skip something to go see your spouse or the person you're dating or your best friend on his/her break? What does this show us about God, when we don't make time for him?

No one is like God. He's there waiting for us whether we make time for him every day or once a week. His Word is full of affirmations and promises, so when we do go to him, he meets us not with a sullen, "*where have you been?*" but a "*oh, man, you're here. How have you been?*" As I go to the Word and find refreshment, I wonder why I so often neglect the One who gives me the comfort and security and protection I crave.

7. J. Sidlow Baxter gave us four points to consider in Jesus' life and our own. Have you had to separate from friends or things that keep you from a closer walk with God? If not, is there someone or something you should separate from?

8. Have you been through a major trial/time of testing? Who or what keeps you grounded in your faith, so you don't fall away?

Big Idea: God loves you in ways no one else ever could or will. He is always waiting, always thrilled when you turn to him, always hoping to guide you to a better path and help you avoid the pitfalls of the devil, the world and our sinful nature. Don't push Him away!

Action Item: Write down one promise or affirmation from God's Word. Read it every day until you know it by heart.

Prayer: God, thank you for loving me and wanting a relationship with me. Help me to realize you are what I am looking for and that you are easily found. Forgive me for turning to things that will never fill me up and lead me back every time I fall. Amen.