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DISCOVERY • 4

Jesus Offers New Life

In our previous discussions, we examined three distinctives about Jesus of Nazareth. In this session, we will discuss what happens when a person becomes a follower of Jesus.

DISCUSS

Have you ever met someone, perhaps a member of the opposite sex or a famous person for example, who made such an impression on you that your life was altered from that time on? What did it feel like?

One of the most important concepts presented in the Bible is that God created each of us to know Him in an intimate, personal relationship. True Christianity is not a moral code, a philosophy or a set of rules to keep. It is a love relationship with the living God that changes our lives forever.

“The Christian life is a great adventure! God loves us and has a wonderful, exciting plan for us. We are not creatures of chance, brought into the world for a meaningless miserable existence; but rather, we are people of destiny, created for meaningful and joyful lives.”
— Dr. Bill Bright, *A Great Adventure*

“The true Christian life, true spirituality, is not merely a negative not-doing of any...list of things. We must emphasize that it is more than refraining from a certain external list of taboos in a mechanical way. The Christian life and true spirituality are not to be seen as outward at all, but inward...we are to love God, we are to be alive to Him, we are to be in communion with Him in this present moment in history.”
— Francis Schaeffer, *True Spirituality*

● LET'S DO LUNCH

(Jesus speaking): *"Behold! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me."* — Revelation 3:20 (NASB)

DISCUSS

What action are we being asked to take and what does it mean?

What do you think Jesus has in mind when He says "dine with him and he with Me"?

Have you opened the door of your heart to Jesus Christ?

What would opening the door to Christ involve for you?

● A NEW FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

"But to all who received Him, He gave the right to become children of God. All they needed to do was to trust Him to save them. All those who believe this are reborn!—not a physical rebirth resulting from human passion or plan—but from the will of God." — John 1:12,13

DISCUSS

What are some privileges of being someone's child and how might this relate to being God's child?

According to this verse, is everyone already a child of God? Why or why not?

"What matters supremely, therefore, is not...the fact that I know God, but...that He knows me! I am graven on the palms of His hands; I am never out of His mind. I know Him because He first knew me and continues to know me. He knows me as a friend and father...There is tremendous relief in knowing that His love to me is utterly realistic based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery can now disillusion Him about me." — J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*

● COMPLETELY FORGIVEN

"...I will write My laws into their minds so that they will always know My will. And I will put My laws in their hearts so that they will want to obey them. And then He adds, 'I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.' Now, when sins have once been forever forgiven and forgotten, there is no need to offer more sacrifices to get rid of them." — Hebrews 10:16-18

DISCUSS

What does God say He will do?

What happens to our sins once they are forgiven?

What would it mean to you on a daily basis to know that all your sins are forever forgiven and forgotten?

● BRAND NEW

"When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun!" — 2 Corinthians 5:17

DISCUSS

How do you feel about becoming a "brand new person inside"?

What concerns might you have about that?

"If we let Him...He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into...a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly His own boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts very painful; but that is what we are in for. Nothing less."
— C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

● AN INTERESTING DINNER MEETING

“As Jesus was passing through Jericho, a man named Zacchaeus, one of the most influential Jews in the Roman tax-collecting business (and, of course, a very rich man), tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowds. So he ran ahead and climbed into a sycamore tree beside the road, to watch from there. When Jesus came by, He looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name!

‘Zacchaeus!’ He said. ‘Quick! Come down! For I am going to be a guest in your home today!’ Zacchaeus hurriedly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy... Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, ‘Sir, from now on I will give half my wealth to the poor, and if I find I have overcharged anyone on his taxes, I will penalize myself by giving him back four times as much!’ Jesus told him, ‘This shows that salvation has come to this home today. This man was one of the lost sons of Abraham, and I, the Messiah, have come to search for and to save such souls as his.’”

— Luke 19:1-10

DISCUSS

What might Jesus have said to Zacchaeus during their dinner meeting?

What changes took place in this man's life as a result?

If you were to allow Jesus to change your life, what changes do you think He would make?

● A NEW POWER

“For God is at work within your life, helping you want to obey Him, and then helping you do what He wants.” — Philippians 2:13

“I have been crucified with Christ; and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” — Galatians 2:20

DISCUSS

Have you ever felt it would be too hard to live as a Christian?

From where does the power come to live the Christian life?

“The transformed life with its freedom is the proof that the Christ-life has become a reality. ... It is different in each person. ... Many have made the statement, ‘I just don’t know myself anymore.’ ... The excitement of life under Christ’s control makes each day a new adventure when we are at rest and trust Him who is our life.”
— Charles Solomon, *Handbook to Happiness*

● PURPOSE FOR LIVING

“My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.”

— John 10:10

“For I know the plans I have for you,’ says the Lord. ‘They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.’”

— Jeremiah 29:11

DISCUSS

What has been your view of God's purpose and desire for your life?

How does it make you feel to know that God wants to prosper you?

● BOUNTIFUL FRUIT

“But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives He will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

— Galatians 5:22,23

DISCUSS

Which of these qualities would you most want developed in your life? Why?

● THE GREATEST LOVE OF ALL

“I want you to see that God Himself pursues a love relationship with you. He created you for a love relationship with Himself. That is the very

purpose of your life. This love relationship can and should be real and personal to you. No matter what the circumstances are, His love never changes. The cross, the death of Jesus Christ, and His resurrection are God's final, total, and complete expression that He loves us. Never allow your heart to question the love of God. He created you for that love relationship. Every dealing He has with you is an expression of His love for you. God would cease to be God if He expressed Himself in any other way than perfect love!"
— Henry Blackaby, *Experiencing God*

● SUMMARY

In this series we have studied four amazing concepts about Jesus of Nazareth.

1. **Jesus claimed to be God.**
2. **Jesus demonstrated authority over death.**
3. **Jesus claimed to forgive sin.**
4. **Jesus offers us new life.**

Knowing God through Jesus Christ is the greatest relationship one can experience. He reveals Himself to mankind and wants us to know Him intimately. And, He takes great pleasure in each of us as His children. When we get to know God as He really is, we will draw closer to Him, will trust Him more and will experience His purpose for our lives. Through growing in our relationship with Him, we can also draw upon God's resources in order to truly live life to the fullest.

1. *If Jesus' statements about Himself and what He offers us are true, what significance would you put on believing in Christ? Why?*
2. *What would keep you from making the decision to believe in Christ? Why?*

● WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID

"After all has been heard and considered, it is the human soul alone which passes from this world to the next. Can anything else matter, then, unless we address first the need of the human soul?" — Pat Morley, author and speaker

"If we're honest, we know there are no guarantees in this life. But when you belong to God there are some guarantees—of eternal life as well as abundant living here on earth."

— Scott Beck, founder of Blockbuster Video, Boston Chicken and Einstein Bagels

"When God is the center of your life and everything you do revolves around His plans for you and the world, then that is when life really gets exciting." — Mary L. Walker, former general counsel of the U.S. Air Force

"Whenever I see things that seem to be happening coincidentally, I put them together and they add up to a beautiful tapestry that God is weaving in me and in the world."

— Andrew Young, former ambassador to the United Nations and former mayor of Atlanta

"If you know who you are, as a child of God, and why you are here and where you are going after you die, then fear melts away and you can be a winner in life each and every day." — Tom Hopkins, America's salesman

"What my relationship with God does is allow me to focus on a solution beyond the immediate problem. If I look to myself for strength, it is a limited thing but if I look to God for strength, then it is a bottomless well."

— Barbara Bradley-Haggerty, National Public Radio

"I have relied on God so many times over the years for guidance and direction and He has helped me through many problems that I have been unable to cope with."

— S. Truett Cathy, founder and former CEO of Chick-fil-A

FOR FURTHER STUDY

- *The Secret* by Bill Bright
- *Now That I Believe* by Robert A. Cook
- *Be Rich* by Warren Wiersbe



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