

PARTICIPANTS GUIDE



Him. us. them.

SESSION ONE: HIM pt. 1



The Lesson:

This video is about how much God loves you!

Mark 2:23-28 and Ephesians 2:4-10

From Mark 2: *One Sabbath, Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"*

He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? In the days of Abiathar, the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions."

Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (Mark 2)

People – that's YOU – are more important than just the systems of religion and programs... YOU are more important than rules and rituals. God loves you. That's where it all begins.

From Ephesians 2: "But God is rich in mercy because of his great love for us. We were dead because of our failures, but he made us alive together with Christ. (It is God's kindness that saved you.) God has brought us back to life together with Christ Jesus and has given us a position in heaven with him. He did this through Christ Jesus out of his generosity to us in order to show his extremely rich kindness in the world to come. God saved you through faith as an act of kindness. You had nothing to do with it. Being saved is a gift from God. It's not the result of anything you've done, so no one can brag about it. God has made us what we are. He has created us in Christ Jesus to live lives filled with good works that he has prepared for us to do, (Eph 2:4-10)."

Follow Along with Nicole's video

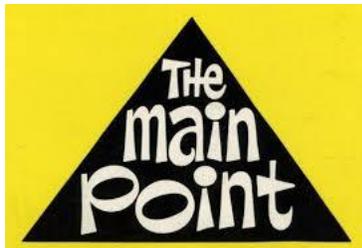
God's love for you is **G**_____.

God's love for you makes you **A**_____

God is a **K**_____ God

God has given you a **G**_____

You are more important than **R**_____ and **R**_____



Point – we have to understand God is love and he wants to give us the best gifts. You are more important than rules and rituals.

Ask Yourself: “Am I really loved by God more than anyone else loves me” and “Can I trust He loves and wants the best for me?”

Ponder This:

God is the main thing and the main thing in human life is love. The person who loves, Paul wrote, fulfills the law. God is love. He loves. He doesn't have to. But he does. We could say that the only reason the law of God exists is to point us toward the life of love. He wants each of us to live in an eternal love with the Father for the Son and of the Son for the Father.

?onder

People are more important than systems and programs. People are more important than rituals and religion. John wrote that if a person loves God, then that person will love his brother (1 John 4:20). William Barclay (A smart guy) wrote: “The best way to worship God is to help men” If we are mean, hateful, cruel and inconsiderate of others, that is a demonstration of how devoted (or not devoted) we are to God.

God loves all people, even the ones we have no use for, the ones we treat as though they don't matter. When we behave poorly toward the people God loves, then we are behaving the same way toward God. God is interested in people, not in rituals for rituals' sake.



Questions for Small Groups:

1. What's the connection between being created by God and the greatness of His love?
2. When we sin, what is God's reaction and what does that say about His love for us?
3. Do you ever think God is mean? Angry? What word did Nicole use to describe God?
4. Look at this Ephesians passage again – what are some of your favorite words that describe God?
 - a. What are some that surprise you?
 - b. What words are not there that some people think of when they think of God.
5. What is the passage in Mark Ch. 2 about?
6. If you are loved by God, how does that change how you feel right now?

Session Two: us



The Lesson: (Everything below is in the students' participant guide.)

This Video is about how we all have a problem – we're separated from God and have hard hearts.

Mark 8:14-21 and Ephesians 4:17-19

Mark 8:14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread and did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. 15 He warned them, "Take heed. Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod."

16 They reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have no bread."

17 Being aware of it, Jesus said to them, "Why do you reason that you have no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts still hardened? 18 Having eyes, do you not see? Having ears, do you not hear?[a] And do you not remember? 19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?"

They said to Him, "Twelve."

20 "And the seven among the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?"

They said, "Seven."

21 He said to them, "Do you still not understand?" (Mark 8)

It's a comical story.... He says "Watch out for the stuff they put in to your heads... like the world does..." (yeast is what makes bread become bread) and they think they forgot to bring lunch.. haha. But what he is saying is that they have to believe (Talk #1) that God loves them and will provide for them if they do things God's way.... But they have a hard time TRUSTING him because of a problem – a hard heart, blind eyes that look at other things of the world.

Ephesians 4:17-19 Here is what I'm telling you. I am speaking for the Lord as I warn you. You must no longer live as the Gentiles do. Their thoughts don't have any purpose. 18 They can't understand the truth. They are separated from the life of God. That's because they don't know him. And they don't know him because their hearts are stubborn. 19 They have lost all feeling for what is right. So. they have given themselves over to all kinds of evil pleasures. They take part in every kind of unclean act. And they are full of greed. (Eph 4)

Follow Along with Laura

Do you ever have a hardened heart? Do you ever underestimate your own sinfulness?

Jesus is saying that we have to watch out for the stuff of the world because it can get in your head and separate us from God.



Point – we have a problem of shutting out God. We are “Separated from the Life of God” We have stubborn hearts that do their own thing. We have a hard time trusting that God loves us and cares for us because of a problem inside of us.

Questions for Small Groups:

1. What happened just before this passage in Mark?
 - a. He feeds a bunch of people – they weren’t starving, just hungry
 - b. Is this love that you think God has for you?



2. What are some things in the world right now that show our need for Jesus?
3. What are some things in your life?
4. In the music video at the end of Laura’s talk, what are some things that you connect with – ways you feel on the inside?

SESSION THREE: HIM Pt. 2



The Lesson (The following is in the student guide as well.)

This video is about how Jesus is the way to live and heaven.
It's about "Him, part 2"
Mark 8:27-30 and Ephesians 2:1-6

(Mark 8:27-30) Jesus and His disciples went out into the towns of Caesarea Philippi. On the way He asked His disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" They answered, "John the Baptist, but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered Him, "You are the Christ." He warned them that they should tell no one about Him.

(Matthew 16:17-19) And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

When we ask people "What do people say about me?" we want to be able to change to meet their expectations. Jesus asks that question, however, to see if they could get the RIGHT answer.

You were living in your sins and lawless ways. But in, fact, you were dead. You used to live as sinners when you followed the ways of this world. You served the one who rules over the spiritual forces of evil. He is the spirit who is now at work in those who don't obey God. At one time we all lived among them. Our desires were controlled by sin. We tried to satisfy what they wanted us to do. We followed our desires and thoughts. God was angry with us like he was with everyone else. That's because of the kind of people we all were. But God loves us deeply. He is full of mercy. So he gave us new life because of what Christ has done. He gave us life even when we were dead in sin. God's grace has saved you. God raised us up with Christ. He has seated us with him in his heavenly kingdom. That's because we belong to Christ Jesus. (Eph 2:1-6)

Follow Along with the Video

We often ask people what they think of us so we can change and fit in.
Jesus asks his disciples who they think he is to see if they got it right.

There were many false gods in the town where Jesus was (Caesarea Philipi)

Some people think of Jesus that way – like he is just one of many options.

Then Jesus asks them personally who they think He is

And Peter gets it right.

Jesus says that trusting that Jesus is the **M** _____/The Christ, and that He is the **R**_____ on which the whole Christian faith is built is how we find real life and eternal life.

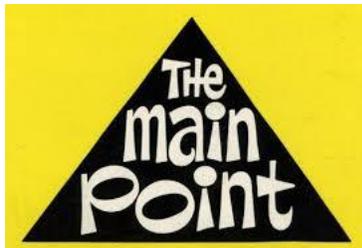
Lots of stories deal with building your life (or house) on the wrong thing.

Like the Three Little Pigs

And just like in that story... storms come.

Jesus says that trusting he is the Special Messiah is building our lives on a rock.

He still asks you today – “Who do you say I am?”



The Point: Jesus takes us from life to death. He is “The Christ” (Special Chosen One) and he will suffer and then rise from the dead.

When we trust in Him, we have eternal life and a better life now.



Questions for Small Groups:

1. Do you ever wonder what people think of you?
 - a. Do you ever worry about what people think of you?
 - b. Is knowing what they think something you want to know about?
2. In this story, is Jesus worried about:
 - a. what other people think of Him when he asks his disciples “Who do they say I am?”
 - b. Or, is he asking to see if they got the answer right?
3. What are some right answers about who Jesus really is?

4. Look at the passage from Ephesians. Read this part to yourself several times: *But God loves us deeply. He is full of mercy. So, he gave us new life because of what Christ has done. He gave us life even when we were dead in sin. God's grace has saved you.*
 - a. What does that mean to you?
 - b. How do you respond to all this?

SESSION FOUR: THEM

The Lesson

This lesson is about actively responding to Jesus.

Ephesians 5: Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually

immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not become partners with them;



Follow Along with Dave

Children watch what their parents' do and imitate them. With God, we're supposed to be like children and watch what Jesus does and do it.

Verse 7 basically says what?:

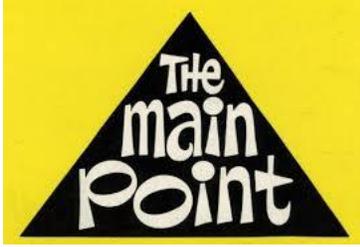
We should be **I** _____ of God

God says "I am always **W**_____ **Y**_____"

What kind of word is "Faith?"

Be careful who your **F** _____ are.

Don't fall into the wrong crowd.



The Main Point

Imitate God in your life. Respond to God's love and faithfulness.

Ponder

If you want to play your best at basketball – who would you imitate?

If you want to look your best and have perfect fashion – who would you copy?

If you wanted to change the world for better, who would you choose to be like?

Who would you imitate if you wanted to be super-smart?

So how does this connect to today's teaching by Dave?

Ponder

Questions

1. What do you remember about the story that Dave shared about hanging out with the wrong crowd?
 - a. Have you ever been with the wrong crowd or tempted to be?
 - b. What did his life-long friends do for him?
 - c. Did he stop hanging out with the guys making bad choices?
2. What are some promises that God's Word tells us about when we mess up?
3. What are some examples of how to be active in your faith and in the lives of other people around you?
4. If you watched the video prior to the talk, remember to check out the YCM Challenge that Katy and Stephen put together.

