

Jesus, Our Example

Lesson 04 in the series, "Countercultural"

A. Jesus is the ultimate example of how to live a countercultural life.

"Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. *Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin.* Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.... After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, 'Do you understand what I was doing? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. *I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.'*" John 13:1-5, 12-17 (NLT)

1. Jesus knew His identity!

"After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.'" Matthew 3:16-17 (NLT)

Life Application: When our identity comes from God, we are free from fear, shame and doubt.

"We are (God's) children, He has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, 'Abba, Father'. Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir." Galatians 4:6-7 (NLT)

"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure." Ephesians 1:3-5 (NLT)

Countercultural Statement: **I** am adopted by God, therefore **I** am unconditionally loved, accepted, and forgiven; and **I** have unlimited access to God.

"And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39 (NLT)

2. Jesus knew His home!

"They (believers) do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world." John 17:14-18 (NLT)

Life Application: Living with eternity in mind helps us keep our priorities in order.

“Friends, this world is not your home, so don’t make yourselves cozy in it. Don’t indulge your ego at the expense of your soul. Live an exemplary life among the natives so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they’ll be won over to God’s side and be there to join in the celebration when he arrives.” 1 Peter 2:11-12 (MSG)

Countercultural Statement: I am a citizen of heaven, and this world is not my home.

3. **Jesus knew His purpose!**

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:28 (NLT)

“For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.” Luke 19:10 (NLT)

Countercultural Statement: I have the same purpose Jesus had: serving and loving others, reconciling people to God, and helping them growing in their relationship with Him.

“Again he said, ‘As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you’.” John 20:21 (NLT)

“Don’t use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.” Galatians 5:13 (NLT)

“God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.” 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 (NLT)

Life Application: “Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ.” Ephesians 5:1-2 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions

1. What does it mean for a Christian to live counter-culturally, and what does that look like?
2. Why is serving others such a countercultural concept? What principle was Jesus teaching when He washed the disciples' feet? How does this principle apply in our lives?
3. Other than God, who or what gives you a sense of identity or self worth? (Example: family, friends, work, sports, etc.)
4. Read Romans 8:14-17, and discuss God as the perfect "Abba" (daddy). Read the following statements.
 - I am unconditionally loved by God
 - I am unconditionally accepted by God
 - I am unconditionally forgiven by God
 - I am have unlimited access to God

Do you believe those statements? If so, how does that impact your life? What does it mean to be a son or daughter of God? What rights, privileges, and responsibilities come with being His child?

5. Have you ever trained or prepared for an event that caused you to live differently for a season? (example: marathon, vacation, promotion, etc.) Share your experience. Did keeping that goal or event in front of you help to keep your priorities straight? Read Philippians 3:10-14. How did Paul's goal of a heavenly prize affect his priorities? How would living with eternity in mind affect our priorities?
6. Read this statement together: "I have the same purpose Jesus had: loving and serving others, reconciling people to God, and helping them growing in their relationship with Him." Do you feel like this is your purpose in life?
7. 2 Corinthians 5:20 states that we are Christ's "ambassadors". Discuss the role of an ambassador. What representation, responsibilities, and rights does an ambassador have? Have you ever thought of yourself as an ambassador for God? Read Ephesians 5:1-2 and discuss.