FINDING OUT ABOUT CHRIST · STUDY NOTES

Study 3: What was Jesus like?

For personal study or groups

Your name

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How to use these notes. Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

PART 1

A perfect life

A perfectly upright life

The person God has appointed to judge everything we think, say and do must be sinless. Everything we know about Jesus points to His perfection. His life was as straight as a builder's plumb line, a measure of how upright (how good) we should be.

In this study we shall see how Jesus lived up to the impossibly high standards of His own teaching. This makes His claim to be the world's Judge a valid one (study 2). But it also shows that Jesus is infinitely kind and compassionate, not only to the sick but also to the sinful!

John the Baptist knew Jesus was sinless

John came to prepare people for Jesus, and to baptise those who turned from their sin. He said he was not worthy even to untie the straps of Jesus' sandals. This was not because John was such a bad person, but because Jesus was such a good one.

1 **Look up Mark 1:7**

How does John compare himself with the One who was to come?

John did not want to baptise Jesus, because he knew Jesus had no sin to turn from (Matthew 3:13–14).

Historic note

John the Baptist looked very different from Jesus. He wore rough clothes of camel's hair and ate locusts and wild honey.

God declared Jesus to be sinless

Jesus is the only person who has ever entirely pleased God. No one else was publicly declared from heaven to be pleasing to Him. When Jesus was baptised, God openly announced that He was very pleased with Him.

2 **Look up Mark 1:11**

What did the voice from heaven say about Jesus?

God later made a similar declaration about His Son (Matthew 17:5). A person must be very pure to please an all-holy God!

The New Testament writers say Jesus was sinless

Jesus knew the power of temptation, but He never gave in to it. If He had, He would have been a sinner like us.

3 **Look up Hebrews 4:15**

In what way was Jesus like us, and in what way was He different?

The perfection of Jesus showed up the imperfection of others. Even Peter, His disciple, felt an overwhelming sense of his own sinfulness in Jesus' presence: "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." (Luke 5:8). The Bible says Jesus "knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Consider the evidence for this in the record of His life that follows.

See also: 1 John 3:5.

PART 2

Perfect love

The hardest commandment

Do you remember how Jesus said we should love God, and love one another? He said we should love others as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:39). He also said we should love our

enemies – the hardest thing of all to do! This standard is impossible for us, but Jesus lived it.

Jesus loved God with all His being

When the thought of His coming suffering overwhelmed Jesus, He put His own will under the will of His Father in heaven.

4 **Look up Luke 22:42**

Whose will did Jesus choose?

Jesus loved others as He loved Himself

Jesus was completely selfless. Even while He was dying on the cross, He thought of others, not Himself. In terrible pain, He thought of His mother, and asked a disciple to look after her.

5 **Read John 19:26–27**

What did Jesus say to the disciple, and what did the disciple do (verse 27)?

The loving hand

How hard we find it to love even our friends!

Jesus loved His enemies

While they were doing their worst to hurt Him on the cross, Jesus asked God to forgive them – something He was ready to do Himself.

6 **Look up Luke 23:34**

For whom did Jesus pray, and what did He ask?

PART 3

Compassion, grace and courage

His compassion for the many

Most of the miracles Jesus did came from compassion, as we saw in study 1. His heart went out to people in their need, and He healed them. Jesus came to preach the good news, but the sight of so many sick people moved Him deeply, and He healed all who were brought to Him.

7 **Look up Matthew 14:14**

What did Jesus feel when He saw the crowd, and what did He do?

His compassion for just two

Blind people were often forced to beg for a living. Their suffering touched the heart of Jesus and moved Him to pity.

8 **Look up Matthew 20:34**

What moved Jesus to touch their eyes?

There are many other examples of Jesus' compassion for the sick. He also had compassion on the hungry (Mark 8:2–3) and the distressed (Matthew 9:36).

See also: Luke 7:11–15, another example of Jesus' compassion.

Jesus went to sinners

Think of a wind so strong that it is hard to stay standing. That is a picture of temptation. Jesus knew the power of temptation, and the misery that sin can drag a person into. Though He never sinned Himself, He had compassion on those who had.

Jesus ate with some of the worst people of His day. Some despised Him for being so friendly to sinners, but they failed to see that they were sinners themselves (Matthew 11:19). It was because Jesus was perfect that He loved sinners more than we would, or could. He was criticised for welcoming them.

9 **Look up Luke 15:2**

What did the Pharisees and scribes complain about?

It was because Jesus knew sin could wreck lives and ruin people that He loved sinners so much. He also knew it would shut them out of heaven. He was full of love for sinners, or as the Bible says, "full of grace".

10 **Look up John 1:14**

What does John say the Son was full of?

He loved sinners, not sin

He loved the unlovely.

Sinners felt drawn to Jesus

Those who recognised their sin were drawn to Him, because they felt His love for them.

11 **Read Luke 7:37–38**

What does verse 37 tell us about this woman?

We saw earlier that Jesus came to save those who were "lost" (study 2).

See also: more people Jesus saved: Matthew (Matthew 9:9–13); Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10); the dying thief (Luke 23:39–43).

Jesus was fearless

We cannot end this study of Jesus' character without mentioning His courage. In the face of strong opposition, He was completely fearless. This is another side of His perfection: a timid

and frightened man is not a perfect one.

Jesus showed great courage when He rebuked the religious leaders of His day (Luke 11:42–54), drove out those who were misusing God's temple (Mark 11:15–19), and stood calmly before the Roman governor who condemned Him (John 19:5–11). His clash with the authorities was one of the reasons, humanly speaking, for His death – which we look at in the next study.

THINK IT THROUGH

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. **Which part of Jesus' character in this study surprised or moved you most?**

2. **Jesus prayed "Father, forgive them" for the people who crucified Him. Is there someone you find hard to forgive?**

3. **Sinners felt drawn to Jesus because they sensed His love. What does that tell you about how He sees you?**

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Memory verse for study 3

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

FINDING OUT ABOUT CHRIST · STUDY 3 · MEMORY VERSE

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet was without sin.”

Hebrews 4:15

Berean Standard Bible · biblehelp.net

“I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

The Bible passages (BSB)

1 **Mark 1:7** *And he proclaimed: "After me will come One more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.*

2 **Mark 1:11** *And a voice came from heaven: "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."*

3 **Hebrews 4:15** *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet was without sin.*

4 **Luke 22:42** *"Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me. Yet not My will, but Yours be done."*

5 **John 19:26–27** *26 When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, here is your son." 27 Then He said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." So from that hour, this disciple took her into his home.*

6 **Luke 23:34** *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up His garments by casting lots.*

7 **Matthew 14:14** *When He stepped ashore and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them and healed their sick.*

8 **Matthew 20:34** *Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes, and at once they received their sight and followed Him.*

9 **Luke 15:2** *So the Pharisees and scribes began to grumble: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."*

10 **John 1:14** *The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

11 **Luke 7:37–38** *37 When a sinful woman from that town learned that Jesus was dining there, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume. 38 As she stood behind Him at His feet weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears and wipe them with her hair. Then she kissed His feet and anointed them with the perfume.*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says 'man', 'he' or 'brothers' where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

Study 3: What was Jesus like?

> **Memory verse:** “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet was without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

Aims

- See that Jesus lived a perfect life, confirmed by John the Baptist, by God the Father and by the New Testament writers.
- See how He lived out perfect love: for God, for others and for His enemies.
- Be drawn by His compassion, grace and courage, especially His welcome for sinners.

Suggested timing (about 75 minutes)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer.
- **20 min** Part 1 video (5 min); Mark 1:7, 1:11 and Hebrews 4:15.
- **20 min** Part 2 video (4 min); Luke 22:42, John 19:26–27 and Luke 23:34.
- **25 min** Part 3 video (5 min); Matthew 14:14, 20:34, Luke 15:2, John 1:14, Luke 7:37–38 and the discussion questions.
- **5 min** Summary and closing prayer. Encourage everyone to take the online quiz.

If time is short, spread the study over two meetings (Parts 1–2, then Part 3).

Tips

- People sometimes think Jesus' goodness was easy because He was God. Hebrews 4:15 says He was tempted in every way, yet without sin.
- The "plumb line" picture can be uncomfortable: next to Jesus, we all look crooked. Bring the group back to His grace for sinners in Part 3.
- "Father, forgive them" can raise painful memories. Give space, and don't press anyone to share.
- Grace means love we don't deserve. Some may find it hard to believe Jesus welcomes them; Luke 7 and the dying thief (Luke 23:42–43) are good examples.

Answers to watch for

- **Mark 1:7:** John was not worthy to untie the straps of Jesus' sandals.
- **Mark 1:11:** "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."
- **Hebrews 4:15:** tempted in every way that we are, yet without sin.
- **Luke 22:42:** "Yet not My will, but Yours be done."
- **John 19:26–27:** from the cross, Jesus gave His mother into the care of the disciple He loved.
- **Luke 23:34:** "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."
- **Matthew 14:14:** He had compassion on the crowd and healed the sick.
- **Matthew 20:34:** He had compassion, touched the blind men's eyes, and they could see.
- **Luke 15:2:** "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."
- **John 1:14:** the Word became flesh, full of grace and truth.
- **Luke 7:37:** a sinful woman came to Jesus with an alabaster jar of perfume.