

*WitnessKit Bible Study:
Bible Doctrines As a System of
Thought*

Class 7

Seeing God by Example in
the Life of Jesus Christ

God Is One

Deuteronomy 6: ⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶ "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. (NKJV)

John 14:9b

“He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”—Jesus Christ

In *The Chronicles of Narnia* books

by C. S. Lewis, children from London escape the bombing of London by the Nazis, by staying in the country in an old house with elderly people. In that house, there is a wooden wardrobe, and when someone steps into the wardrobe, he or she steps into another world.

- The wardrobe was a doorway into a completely different realm.
- The life of Jesus Christ is like that, only “for real instead of pretend.” When we see Him, we see far beyond Him, into heaven, to see God.

For this class

You will gain the most insight by doing the first homework set **BEFORE** reading the rest of the slides. Because the life of Jesus Christ is so thought-provoking, the best way to see God the Father through Christ **for yourself**, is to read one of the gospels and notice for yourself the answers to the homework questions.

In fact, the third homework question can be pursued over and over and will always give fresh insights.

Homework Class 7 Set 1

- Two brief “sound-bite” descriptions of Jesus’ life are found in Acts 10:38 and in Matthew 9:35-38. What are those descriptions? What do those descriptions tell us about God?
- Read John 1:17-18. What do these verses say we can realize through Jesus Christ?
- For this lesson, choose one of the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John—and see how much of it you can read at once, with a way to take notes. As you read, write down things you notice that Jesus did, and what those items tell about God.

Question 1: Jesus Christ's Life in Acts 10:38

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing **all** who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. Acts 10:38 (NKJV)

What is God like? He is powerful for good, and for healing of all kinds of troubles. He wants to heal and do good things—not just for some, but for **ALL**. He does **not** want people to be oppressed by evil.

Question 1: Matthew 9:35-38

³⁵ Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. ³⁶ But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

Matthew 9:35-36 (NKJV)

Question 1: Matthew 9:35-38

- God is filled with compassion. God wants to teach us. God wants us to have good news about His kingdom. God wants to heal every disease and sickness in the world. God understands our weariness and confusion. He wants to help. If we access His help, we will find help—no matter what the problem.

Question 3: The next set of slides will be

Notes from one reading of the Gospel according to Matthew.

We see Jesus in the Gospels.

Sample insights—sound bites—reading the Gospel according to Matthew:

- Jesus' childhood was spent partly as a refugee—so He understands that situation by experience.
- Jesus will be the Judge who will tell the difference between wheat and chaff. He will deal appropriately with each.

Jesus' Life in Matthew's Gospel

- Jesus was baptized, not for repentance, but to fulfill all righteousness. His baptism was a completion of something righteous. He did every righteous thing in God's plan for His life on earth.
- We can look at everything He did and we can know it was righteous. When He withdrew from conflict at times, such as after His cousin was arrested, it was righteous to withdraw. That does not mean it is always righteous for us to withdraw from conflict, but it leaves open seeking God's answer for that choice.

Jesus' Life in Matthew's Gospel

- Jesus withdrew when news reached Him of His cousin John's arrest. Thus, if we assume Jesus knew the eventual outcome of that arrest, withdrawal for the purpose of grieving or prayer is right and acceptable with God.
- Taking time to be quiet before God on a regular basis is not wasted time.

Jesus' Life in Matthew's Gospel

God the Father affirmed His Son— “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”— before allowing the time of testing in the wilderness, where Satan attempted to trick Jesus into doing evil.

This tells us something about what a good father-son relationship looks like. On the eve of battle, the Good Father affirms His Son.

The Good Father is willing to publicly affirm His Son.

Jesus' Life in Matthew's Gospel

Jesus did both teaching and proclaiming.

Both kinds of verbal witness and the action witness of healing were necessary and righteous, as well as the discipleship ministry of spending time with the apostles.

When we study the gifts of the Holy Spirit later, we will see that Jesus ministered in all those ways represented by those Spiritual gifts—Proclaiming, Teaching, Healing, Discipling, Giving, Showing Mercy, Leading.

Jesus' Life in Matthew's Gospel

He ministered to people at all levels of commitment—

- from the multitudes who took a day away from work to hear Him
- to the apostles who left everything to follow Him.
- So we can assume God cares about people whatever their level of commitment and is willing and able to meet their spiritual need **as they seek Him.**

Jesus' Life in Matthew's Gospel

- That does not mean that He does not MIND when people ignore Him or despise Him or run away from Him. They will experience negative consequences of such foolish choices.
- It does mean He is concerned for them, and that He wants them to seek Him for their own good.

Jesus' Sermon Matthew 5 - 7

The Sermon on the Mount shows that God is a strict parent. He demands difficult, right things from His children.

Yet He is not talking about picky little details. He goes to the heart of each matter.

He gives what is good to His children who ask persistently.

He gives simple, clear directions:

“Go through the right gate. When you find the right path, get on it.”

The Incident of the Pigs and the Crazy Man

Even though the Gadarenes asked Jesus to leave after they lost their herd of pigs and saw the crazy demoniac healed,

Jesus still worked for their salvation through the power of the Holy Spirit and the witness of the healed man—

Five or six chapters later we see multitudes from that region seeking Him and being healed and fed by Him.

So God is persistent, too.

Jesus Calls Busy People

- Jesus called people from their work to follow Him—God has the authority to do that.
- Matthew was a tax-collector—a collaborator with Rome and considered a seriously sinful man for that reason—yet Jesus called him from his work to follow Jesus.
- Jesus defended that decision with those who challenged Him about it, too.

Jesus Calls Those Who Are Despised

- God calls sinners. The power of the Holy Spirit in people's lives makes this reasonable, whereas without that power, people reasonably expect the worst from others.
- Jesus healed a woman with a hemorrhage, who would have been considered perpetually unclean, and He raised a little girl from the dead. Both these people would have been very low on the social scale, but they mattered to Him.

Jesus Spoke with Authority

- He brought out the fact that faith is necessary in the healing of the men born blind.
- The longest recorded of His sermons—the Sermon on the Mount—is very directive. He makes demands on His listeners, and those demands are good, and they are difficult.
- He delegated spiritual authority to His disciples. God has the authority to delegate authority, and to hold people accountable for how they carry out their duties.

Jesus Spoke with Authority

- Jesus sent out His apostles to witness.
- He gave them directions to expect to find both good, worthy people who would be welcoming toward them,
- and hostile people who would set even their own family members against them and even persecute them to the death.

Jesus Spoke with Authority

- He demanded total courage from them,
- He reminded them of God's care and concern for them to the tiniest detail of their lives. He promised reward for even the tiniest good deed.
- We see that God knows everything about every person and every circumstance. He has a right to demand our courage and faith, and His plans for us are eternally good, even if we experience things that are temporarily VERY bad.

Jesus Shows that God is a strict Parent.

- Once again, God is a strict parent who demands difficult, right things from His children. It is difficult to be courageous and loving in the midst of hostility.
- Yet the eternal well-being of others depends upon it.

We Need His Insights.

- Jesus gave insights about the spiritual realm which people could not know on their own observations.
- God has practical knowledge we need, beyond what we can find out on our own.
- Because the spiritual world is real, Jesus' insights are important.

The first parable in Matthew's Gospel is the parable of the sower.

It explains the necessity **to seek God**.

If some people do not understand, they are likely to lose their opportunity.

If someone has no firm root, he is likely to cave in to pressure or persecution.

If someone gets distracted by temporary things—the worries of the world, the deceitfulness of riches—he becomes unfruitful.

The one who hears, understands, and perseveres in bearing fruit is the one who meets his spiritual potential.

The Parables and Judgment

Jesus' teaching about the final judgment and the kingdom of heaven is like a “judgment-decision-judgment sandwich.”

He talks about the fact that, at the end of the age—possibly the kingdom age—the Son of Man will send forth His angels to gather out of His kingdom those who have remained lawless, for their eternal destiny in the furnace.

Then He emphasizes how critically important it is to find the kingdom of heaven—to “sell everything to buy it.”

Then He speaks again about the final judgment.

The Parables and Judgment

- This means that God is willing to use FEAR of judgment to motivate people to follow Him. He commands us to LOVE Him. He is willing for *fear of judgment* to be a starting point toward that proper view of Him.
- He has our eternal best interest at heart, and He is willing to tell us hard truths in our best interest.

Pleasing Others

In Matthew chapter 11 we see Jesus recognizing that some people are impossible to please, no matter how good your actions. God knows that. Some of these examples relate to being set free from the emotional need to please people. We have to please God instead. And we need to be able to tell the difference between reasonable and unreasonable demands from others. Jesus went through these things. The stakes are very high—eternity is in view.

Pleasing Others

God gives rest, as well, when you go through such difficulties. When people were being unreasonable, Jesus spoke up about it. He placed the value of individuals above specific detailed rules. The rules are good; the heart meaning of the rules is vital.

Again in chapter 12, He withdrew from those who were seeking to destroy Him, and kept on healing people. He kept on doing good things, no matter what anyone else did or said.

Matthew Chapter 12

- In chapter 12, people of the party of the Pharisees had just called Jesus' power evil, and then they had the audacity to ask Him to perform a miraculous sign. This revealed that they did not respect God. Jesus explained in no uncertain terms that He would not give them a sign. He also explained that the only unpardonable sin is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew Chapter 12

- So it is a serious thing to attribute evil to the Holy Spirit, especially since He is the One who works to convince a person of sin and righteousness and judgment—all preliminary necessities for finding salvation. This was a terrible turning point for those individual Pharisees.
- This had to be a very low point emotionally for Jesus, especially in light of God's purpose of salvation for the Pharisees, as shown in Luke 7:30. Jesus' response was to go out that same day to the sea, and teach the multitudes.

Matthew Chapter 12

- He began teaching in parables, so that (I think) those who rejected would have a lesser judgment, less to be accountable for, and those who would find the truth would have to seek for it.
- Some of the passages that sound like predestination for hell are really about God's decision to reduce accountability for judgment for those too stubborn to receive His goodness. And some are about the natural confusion that accompanies rejection of truth—creating new barriers—so that a person must seek to find truth.

Rejection of truth → barriers to finding more truth

- This same phenomenon occurred in ancient Israel during Isaiah's time, and I think we see it around us right now. People reject God's word, and then lose the worldview that would enable them to easily understand it, so that they have to try harder to find the truth.
- In the meantime, troubles follow false worldviews, because they lead to poor decisions.
- The troubles motivate toward either a search for truth, or toward a mind more hardened against truth.

Rejection or Seeking?

- When Jesus went to His hometown, they took offense at Him over nothing of importance. So He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.
- So here we see God knows that a person does not have to do something wrong for someone else to be offended. Yet the “offendedness” can hinder the spiritual work that needs to be done.
- God is a realist, and His expectations are realistic.

Danger Zone

- Then Jesus came to dangerous, evil King Herod's attention. How do we know those words describe Herod? Because of the way Herod murdered John the Baptist.
- Jesus' response is to withdraw and minister, with feelings of compassion, to the multitudes—teaching, healing, feeding.
- Then prayer.
- Then the miracle of walking on the water.

Danger Zone to Gentile Area

- Then Jesus went back to the area of the crazy demoniac who was healed, to be welcomed instead of being sent away.
- So we see a slow change take place there, from rejection to seeking.
- That was a Gentile region, and outside Herod's jurisdiction, in the jurisdiction of Herod's offended brother.
- So we can see that politics were probably a consideration in Jesus' planning.

Jesus and the religious and political parties of His time

Then the Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus, but not to seek truth from Him. Even so, Jesus spoke to the heart of each issue.

- Then Jesus expanded His ministry to more Gentiles, first to an individual, then to 4,000 people.

Jesus and the religious and political parties of His time

- Then the Pharisees come back to ask for another sign, and Jesus gave them the same answer as before: no more signs until the sign of Jonah. Another Gospel explains this.

The Sign

- Just as Jonah was three days and nights in the depth of the sea, the Son of Man would be in the tomb.
- Just as Jonah came back from the depths to speak to the people of Ninevah so that they could be saved,
- Jesus would come back from the grave so that the world could be saved.

Jesus and the religious and political parties of His time

- Then Jesus began to warn His disciples about the teaching of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees—two combination political/religious parties or interest groups. The most political were the Herodians—a sub-group of the Sadducees.
- The Pharisees and Sadducees had opposite problems—one group of being overly concerned with the details and missing the heart of the matter, the other with being skeptical of miracles at all.
- We see the same problems today by different names, (legalists and pragmatists) so we should notice and beware of mistaken teaching.

Then Matthew's Gospel shifts in emphasis

toward preparing the disciples for Jesus' coming suffering. Jesus began to establish that His identity as Messiah includes suffering, and to prepare them for His suffering.

- What does this show us about God? He knew what people needed to know, and when they needed to know it.
- He did the next good thing, even when He was experiencing various forms of distress.

Then Matthew's Gospel shifts in emphasis

Jesus knew when to move back from rejection.

He stopped doing miracles before those specific ones who rejected Him, and chose to help others instead.

- He shifted His focus to those who were following Him and needed His insights.
- He knows when it is right to persist and when it is right to move back. He can help us know when we face similar decisions.

This was not a strategy set in stone.

- (Later on, at the tomb of His friend Lazarus, He did an amazing miracle among those who disbelieved, because the needs of His friends Lazarus, Mary, and Martha were so great. He brought Lazarus back to life 4 days after his death. This is reported in John chapter 11.)

Then Matthew's Gospel shifts in emphasis

- Jesus gave Peter, James, and John a vision of His glory. Moses was present for Jesus' transfiguration. God wants us to know that heaven is real and that we will not be “disembodied spirits” but rather will be knowable as ourselves.
- God cares about reassuring us regarding that unknown residence of our souls.

God wants us to seek Him.

- God shows us that the search He wants us to make for Him is not one-sided. He is searching for us all that time. He sent Jesus to show us that over and over.
- Then as Matthew's Gospel progresses, God deals with difficult topics in surprising ways—dealing with offenses from every perspective, dealing with divorce, dealing with material greed and ambition from multiple perspectives.

Then Jesus begins the hardest job

- the series of events leading to His suffering and death. He begins to fulfill strings of prophecies related to those events.
- The Scriptures that predicted events are like a mosaic of little pieces of the events as they took place. They fit together to form a clear profile of Messiah—the TRUE Messiah.
- We also see Jesus overcoming attempts of His enemies to trap Him in words. He is very direct with them about their sins.

Then Jesus begins the hardest job

- Then He talks to His followers about future events.
- Then He begins the time of suffering: betrayal by a friend, unfair trials, scourging, crucifixion. He goes through it all quietly and willingly, suffering for us. Point by point, the prophecies are fulfilled.
- God let us know Jesus really is the Messiah. We really need to place our lives under the protection of His payment for our sins.

We can see God by Example:

LIFE Examples

By studying LIFE examples
in the Bible

1. Jesus Christ's Life,
2. **The Abundant Life
Promise of Jesus,**
3. Jesus as the Way, the
Truth, and the Life

The Abundant Life Promise of Jesus

John 10: 10

¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly. (NKJV)

In the here and now, Jesus promises abundant life. In the middle of persecution, Jesus promises abundant life.

The Parable of the Sower says we must set aside the worries of this life in order to have that abundant life.

We have to take time to see His perspective.

The Abundant Life Promise of Jesus

John 10: 10

¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly. (NKJV)

John 8:51 ⁵¹ Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.“ (NKJV)

This is a perpetual promise that extends into eternity.

His Goals for Us



One of Jesus' goals is to give eternal life to as many people as possible, including freedom from death. This strongly implies that even the process of physical death is different and better for those who receive His eternal life.

His life is so abundant it overwhelms physical death. He was willing to go through death and rise victorious over death to demonstrate that these are not mere words. He is able to come through with action when our time arrives. He is the only one with the right to decide when that time is.

We can see God by Example:

LIFE Examples

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in the Bible

1. Jesus Christ's Life,
2. The Abundant Life
Promise of Jesus,
3. **Jesus as the Way, the
Truth, and the Life**

In John chapter 27 we see both sides of the abundant life promises.

- We see the eternal side, because Jesus talks about Himself as the Way to the Father in heaven.
- We see the temporal side, because Jesus talks about coming to them in the Person of the Holy Spirit to abide with them and empower them to do His work.
- This is an exclusive claim Christ made, but it is not an intolerant claim, because He is available to be Messiah for all who will receive Him.

Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life

John 14:1-27¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know.

" ⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life

⁷ "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

⁸ Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

One basis for saying He is the Way to the Father is that He is our example of the Father. If we see Him we see the Father.

Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life

He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

¹¹ Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

Jesus' life and works and words all led toward belief.

Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life

- ¹² "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.
- This is an amazing promise—that He will empower those who believe in Him to do greater works than what He did on earth—and I think the history of the spread of the Gospel shows the scope of that promise—to reach the world in His name.

Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life

- ¹⁵ "If you love Me, keep My commandments.
¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him;
- but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.
- How can those greater works be done?
Through His Holy Spirit.

Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life

- ¹⁹ "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me.
- **Because I live, you will live also.**
- ²⁰ At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
- ²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life

- ²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"
- ²³ Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.
- ²⁴ He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life

- ²⁵ "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.
 - ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.
 - ²⁷ Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
- John 14:1-27 (NKJV)

The Next Chapter continues with these words:

- ¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. John 15:18-20 (NKJV)

The Abundant Life of Christ

Is able to endure and overcome persecution.
Jesus' conclusion about persecution in chapter 16--

- ³³ These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John 16:33 (NKJV)

Romans 8:1-2

- There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Micah 7:18

- ¹⁸ Who *is* a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?
- He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights *in* mercy. ¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea. (NKJV)

Homework Class 7 Set 2

- Read John 10: 1-18. What goal did Jesus express in verse 10?
- Read John 8:51. What do these verses tell us about Jesus' goal?
- Read John 3:13-21. How is Jesus' goal accessed and what does it accomplish?
- Read John 6:26-63. What does this passage say a person must do to have life from Jesus Christ?

Homework Class 7 Set 2

- Read John 11:25-26. What do these verses say someone must do to receive eternal life?
- Read Ephesians 2:8-10. How is Jesus goal from John 10 received by an individual?
- How does the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ relate to this goal according to Hebrews 2:9-18

Homework Class 7 Set 2

- Begin reading the Acts of the Apostles for this lesson, and see how much you have time for. How was Jesus' promise of abundant life fulfilled in their lives on this earth?

Homework Class 7 Set 3

- Read John 14:1-27. What is the topic of this passage? What did Jesus Christ say He is the way to?
- What is Jesus Christ the truth about? What is this passage saying is the truth we can know through Jesus Christ?
- What did Jesus mean by saying He is the life?

Homework Class 7 Set 3

- What reasons did He list for expecting people to believe what He said in this passage? Some of those reasons are objective and some are subjective, or matters of knowing through personal life events. List the objective reasons in one column and the subjective reasons in another. If a reason belongs in both columns, place it in both.

Homework Class 7 Set 3

- Read Acts 3:1-26 and Acts 4:1-12. How does verse 12 of chapter 4 state the same idea as Jesus claim of being the way, the truth, and the life? ¹² Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12 (NKJV)
- In Acts 3:19-26, what did Peter say God sent Jesus to do?

Homework Class 7 Set 3

- Read Acts 4:13-31. How did Peter and John respond to their mistreatment?
- Read Acts 6:7. How did God answer their prayer and their faith to remain bold in witnessing?

Homework Class 7 Set 3

- Read Isaiah 49:1-7. How does this fact—the church exists throughout the modern world—support God’s blessing to all of us through Jesus Christ?
- Because Jesus Christ truly is Messiah, what does Peter say we must do in Acts 3:22

Homework Class 7 Set 3

- Even though this is an exclusive message, it is NOT an intolerant message, because it is open to all who are willing to search for God with all their hearts. Everyone owes it to themselves to search for the truth about the One who rose from the dead on their behalf. Everyone owes it to themselves to pay attention to Him. His resurrection promises hope of eternal life—what an important thing to check out! No one else offers such a concrete and amazing reason to hope.