

# Jesus: The Author and Perfecter of Our Faith

## Leader's Guide

Our hope for this weekend is that people can have a more intimate knowledge of Jesus, primarily by coming to a deeper understanding of the description of him found in Hebrews 12:1-3. It describes how he is the author and perfecter of our faith or in other words, the one who gave us our beliefs and showed how they could be lived out. Each Bible study will give your group a chance to see Jesus in action (he teaches! he lives out what he teaches!) and to see how it relates back to what Hebrews says about him.

### Study #1 – Saturday Morning

- 1) The study is divided into two parts; a chance to discuss initial impressions of our theme verses in Hebrews 12 and then a chance to study Jesus being tempted in the wilderness.
- 2) In the first part, concentrate on having your group really become familiar with the content of the verses and how Jesus is described.
- 3) Feel free to have this part of your study be more focused on each member's reactions to the passage and their own chance to share where they are rather than it being a more intensive Bible study. If people are quieter during this section, feel free to move on to the other section of this study sooner than the 25-30 minutes allotted.
- 4) In the Matthew 4:1-11, really encourage people to spend time observing the passage before diving into interpretation (you can probably tell this by the questions). Have them describe the people, the setting, the words – have them feel like they are watching a movie reel.
- 5) Help your group to see that by using the scriptures of the Torah, Jesus is teaching us through action the wisdom and value of truth. He is also

showing us that by intimately knowing God's words, it is possible to grow deeper in relationship with the one who created truth.

- 6) During the "going deeper" section, this is the chance for people to make the connection between what Jesus did in the wilderness and the Hebrews passage. Help your group to see how Jesus used truth in order to "throw off the hindrances and sin that so easily entangles."

## **Study #2 – Saturday Evening**

- 1) For the opening exercise, help your group to focus on how the Hebrews passage is being encouraging, inspirational and instructional all at once. Think of it as an inspired "locker room halftime speech". Help them identify how they can relate to this and apply this in the study they are about to do.
- 2) In this study, we are going to focus on one of Jesus' more extensive teaching moments; the sermon on the mount. It is important for your group to observe not only what Jesus is authoring, but also what kind of teacher he is. How does he teach? How does he want to come across to his audience?
- 3) As people summarize the passages, hold them accountable to the strength and decisiveness of Jesus' teachings. At no time does he ask to "just be nice" – he calls for radical obedience that requires attitudinal and active change.
- 4) If your small group has a hard time coming up with examples of how Jesus or his followers lived out the specific commands of this sermon, here are some possible passages you could point them towards: Matthew 17:1-3 (the transfiguration), John 8: 12 – 24 (Jesus stating to the Pharisees he is the light of the world), Mark 8: 28-34 (the greatest commandment), Galatians 2:11-21 (Paul's confrontation with Peter), Genesis 39:6-10 (Joseph refuses Potiphar's wife), Matthew 19:1-12 (Jesus tested by Pharisees about

divorce), Matthew 26: 69-74 (Peters disowns Jesus – this is showing the danger of oaths), Matthew 26: 47-50 (Jesus does not resist Judas or the crowd), Luke 23: 34 (Jesus asks forgiveness for his executioners), Acts 4: 32-37 (humble, giving community of the early church), John 17 (Jesus' prayer before being arrested), Acts 13:1-3 (fasting and worshipping), Luke 19:1-10 (Zacchaeus), Matthew 14:22-36 (Jesus walks on water), John 8:1-11 (the woman caught in adultery), Matthew 15: 21-28 (the Canaanite woman).

- 5) Also encourage them to make larger thematic references. For example, Jesus tells us to not store up earthly treasures and from what we know, Jesus died with no estate and was consistently quite poor during his ministry, thereby showing us how he believed in his message.
- 6) In the “going deeper” section, try to help your group make the connections from this Bible study and Hebrews theme verses. If it helps (and it would be wonderful), use the temptation of Jesus to also more fully help your group understand who Jesus is and who we are in relation to him.

### **Study #3 – Sunday Morning**

- 1) Really encourage your group to try to understand each participant in the story. What do they imagine they look like? Sound like? What are their motives? How much do they understand of what is going on? Again, try to get them really involved in creating a picture of the event.
- 2) This is a very long passage. Don't feel that every question needs to be asked if your group is doing a good job at describing the participants, setting, relevance of words and actions and asking how things relate to

each other. Help your group to move through the passage in the time allotment so that personal/group application can happen.

- 3) Your group may find it interesting to compare/contrast the events of this passage with the teachings of Jesus we have studied previously. For example, what truths in the sermon on the mount were either honored or violated in the account of the crucifixion?
- 4) Again, try to always bring your group back to how this relates to our theme verses in Hebrews 12. How, at the end of these three studies, does Jesus show himself the one who gave us the truth and showed us how it could be lived out?
- 5) It is very important to get to the "taking it all home" section since this is the chance for your group to talk about true life change. Please don't try to accomplish all three application exercises. Pick one and really concentrate on having people share about their experiences, their struggles, what they feel they need to make changes etc...Feel free to stop and pray for individuals if it feels like it is needed. Just help people to know that by the end of the retreat, they have a wonderful opportunity to know Jesus and follow Jesus more closely through living out his words.

God Bless!

We are praying for you!