

LEADER'S GUIDE



BARRY ST. CLAIR
& STEVE MILLER

JESUS NO EQUAL

A PASSIONATE ENCOUNTER WITH THE SON OF GOD

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

BARRY ST. CLAIR



Barry St. Clair has a passion for Jesus and a love for teenagers. He speaks to, writes for, and equips youth leaders, parents, and students to influence as many teens as possible to follow Jesus. For more than thirty years, Barry has been on the cutting edge of youth ministry nationally and globally as founder and president of Reach Out Youth Solutions. Barry played basketball for Davidson College when it had the third-ranked team in the nation, and he has run the Boston Marathon. The author of more than twenty books, including *Parent Fuel*, Barry and his wife, Lawanna, have nine children and eight grandchildren and live in Atlanta, Georgia.

STEVE MILLER



Steve Miller is founder and president of Legacy Educational Resources, providing resources for youth workers (www.youth-ministry.info) and teachers (www.character-education.info). He wrote *The Contemporary Christian Music Debate* and is currently writing a book for young adults on handling their money. Steve lives in metro Atlanta with his wife Cherie, and their seven sons.



LEADERS GUIDE

J E S U S N O E Q U A L

A PASSIONATE ENCOUNTER WITH THE SON OF GOD

JESUS NO EQUAL

A PASSIONATE ENCOUNTER WITH THE SON OF GOD

LEADER'S GUIDE

Barry St. Clair
and
Steve Miller

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION[®]. NIV[®]. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked TLB are taken from *The Living Bible*, copyright © 1971, by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked THE MESSAGE are taken from *The Message*, copyright © by Eugene H. Peterson, 1993, 1994, 1995. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Edited by Dale Reeves and Leslie Durden

Cover and inside design by Brand Navigation, LLC – DeAnna Pierce, Terra Petersen, Bill Chiaravalle, www.brandnavigation.com

Copyright © 2007 by Barry St. Clair.

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN: 0-7847-1042-2

Dedication

To Carol and Laurene, our faithful wives, who left this world
and now behold Jesus in all His unequaled majesty.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Dale Reeves, whose oversight and editorial advice
kept us on track.

Most importantly, praise to Jesus, to whom belongs all the glory.
Without Him we can do nothing.

Contents

Introduction	
Getting Ready	5
No Equal to His Claims: Who Does This Guy Think He Is?	8
No Equal to His Humility: He Did What?	13
No Equal to His Servanthood: You Want Me to Love <i>Them</i> ?	18
No Equal to His Sacrifice: You Want Me to Die?	21
No Equal to His Resurrection: How Can I Have That Kind of Power?	24
No Equal to His Lordship: What Should I Do Until Jesus Returns?	28

Introduction

Getting Ready

There is no equal to Jesus – not even a close second. And the more clearly we see the great chasm that separates Jesus from everyone and everything else that competes for our allegiance, the more fully we can submit to His lordship over every aspect of our personal lives.

The purpose of these sessions is to lead students to know Jesus more intimately and follow Him more passionately. This leader's guide will help you achieve that purpose.

How the Materials Fit Together

For the greatest impact, use all three of the *JESUS NO EQUAL* resources. Here's how the *JESUS NO EQUAL* book, the *JESUS NO EQUAL* Journal, and this leader's guide work together:

During the week prior to each session, encourage students to read the corresponding chapter in the *JESUS NO EQUAL* book, by Barry St. Clair.

At the beginning, middle, or end of the six sessions, challenge every student to go through every devotional in the *JESUS NO EQUAL* Journal every day. That's 42 consecutive days of focusing on Jesus. That's quite a challenge and quite an encounter with Jesus!

Although the *JESUS NO EQUAL* Journal is designed for high-school students, you can tailor it to either college students or middle-school students. A high-school student should be able to complete a devotional in 20-30 minutes. Middle-school students may wish to go through one-third or one-half of a devotional each day. A college student can complete one devotional in 20 minutes.

This leader's guide is designed to help you direct your students' learning. You get six complete sessions, filled with illustrations, discussions, messages and more ideas than you can use in one session. It does not duplicate the material presented in either the book or journal, but takes a new angle on each basic theme.

You can use *the JESUS NO EQUAL* resources in several settings:

- Youth Group: Teach the material from the leader's guide during your weekly meetings. We include ideas for the large group setting.
- Summer Camp: Use the six sessions in the leader's guide as your camp curriculum.
- Small Groups: Provide your students the opportunity to meet in small groups to discuss their discoveries from the book. Use the study to make disciples and build leaders by using parents and college students to lead the groups. You can use ideas from the leader's guide to lead the groups effectively.
- 1-2-1: Challenge your students to invite one non-Christian friend to meet and go through the book together. Point students to page 11 of the *JESUS NO EQUAL* book and page 9 of the *JESUS NO EQUAL* Journal for a quick explanation that will encourage your students to be missionaries to their friends and their school.
- Campus Ministry Meetings: The materials are designed so that if students use just one devotional from the Journal per week, they will have enough material for a whole year in their campus ministry meetings!

The *JESUS NO EQUAL* book, Journal and leader's guide provide enough material for you to customize your approach to your situation.

If you need to order additional copies of the *JESUS NO EQUAL* book and/or the *JESUS NO EQUAL* Journal, check out your local Christian bookstore or visit www.reach-out.org.

Hints for Leaders

1. Plan Ahead

Six Weeks in Advance

Begin building expectation for the upcoming series. Challenge students to purchase the *JESUS NO EQUAL* book and *JESUS NO EQUAL* Journal. (If students pay for the book, they will take the challenge more seriously.)

Four Weeks in Advance

Order enough *JESUS NO EQUAL* books and *JESUS NO EQUAL* Journals for your students and leaders. Download enough leader's guides for each leader. Read through the sessions well in advance, so that you can plan ahead for video clips and students' involvement.

Session Three recommends that you follow up with some type of service project to give students the opportunity to live out the lesson. Begin now to plan for that project.

Session Four includes a presentation of the gospel. Your church may use a booklet that includes your special presentation of the gospel. Have plenty and give them away.

2. Be Authentic

Often, the most important ingredient in a life-changing message is that the teacher is being transformed by the message. A youth ministry hero of mine used to say, "If you want your students to bleed, you've got to hemorrhage!" In that light, apply these messages to your own life first.

"But I'm just not there," some of you may object. "I know Him, but not intimately. I follow Him, but I'm not sure how passionate I am about it. How can I guide my students to a place I've never been?" Our answer? Walk with them. Rather than put up a front that students can see through, be authentic with them. You might need to say something like this: "Hey, the more I get into this stuff, I realize how much further I have to go. But I'm motivated. I desperately want a closer walk with Jesus. So pray for me as we pray for each other. We're walking through this one together." Kids love authenticity. Be real! Your students will respect you for it.

3. Get Your Students Involved

The smaller the group, the more conversational you will want to make the sessions. Ask open-ended questions, the kind that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer. Remember, the

students who read the *JESUS NO EQUAL* book and *JESUS NO EQUAL* Journal have reflected on the subjects during the week prior to your teaching. Make sure to give them opportunities to share what they have learned and applied.

4. Expect Opposition

According to the apostle Paul, our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces of exceeding power. So don't be surprised when everything seems to fall apart. Don't get discouraged. One fighter pilot said that he never once flew over the right target without return fire. So be encouraged! If the enemy's firing away, you must be on the right track! Just remember that the solution lies not in simply silencing the rowdy kids and fixing the feedback in the speaker system. Fight the spiritual battle with spiritual weapons, like prayer, the Word and faith.

5. Pray, Pray, Pray

Samuel Chadwick once said, "Satan laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray." Pray that you can apply the material to your own life before teaching it to others. Pray for protection. Pray for a spiritual awakening. Pray for your students by name. Pray for the eyes of students without Christ to be open to the gospel.

The Students' Creed, which you will find at the beginning of each session, gives a thumbnail sketch of some beliefs that unite believers. Creeds have been significant historically to clarify important truths and guard against heresy. Put this on a screen and repeat it in unison with your students each week, emphasizing the portion that comes out of the current session. By the final session they will have it memorized. Have them repeat it from memory.

Students' Creed

JESUS CHRIST:

REVEALED UNIQUELY

BORN A VIRGIN BIRTH

LIVED A SINLESS LIFE

DIED A SINNER'S DEATH

RAISED FROM THE DEAD

RETURNING TO RULE

Note: Groups with access to media will want to plan ahead to secure videos. The United States Copyright Act treats displays or performance of multimedia presentations, films, and videotapes by nonprofit organizations (including churches) to a small group of individuals as "public performances" even if no admission fee is charged. The fact that the church or one of its members may have purchased the copy of the film or videotape makes no difference. To avoid running afoul of the "public performance" prohibition in the Copyright Act, you must in each instance secure the copyright owner's permission or alternatively obtain an "umbrella license" from the Motion Picture Licensing Corporation. To learn more about the umbrella license, contact the MPLC at 1-800-462-8855 or visit them on the web at www.mlpc.com. You may also want to visit <http://fairuse.stanford.edu/> for additional information on the Copyright Act and the "Fair Use Doctrine."

No Equal to His Claims

Who Does This Guy Think He Is?

The Hook

The purpose of the *JESUS NO EQUAL* series is to focus on Jesus Christ. He wants us to know Him for who He is. And who He is will surprise you!

Let's read this piece inspired by the Columbine tragedy in 1999. It will show you what I mean.

"The Outsider"

By Dave Tippett

*He was a dweeb in the eyes of some.
A loner.
Strange.
Unpredictable.
He was different.
Spoke of strange things.
Weird things.
Things that no one had heard before.
His dad had a bad reputation with some.
He tried to talk about his relationship with his father.
Few of the teachers listened. Or cared.
He belonged to a gang.
A gang that was considered dangerous.
It roamed the town, causing local authorities trouble.
He got in people's faces.
He hung out with losers.
Rich kids hated him.
Some said Satan was in him.
He called the teachers names.
To their faces.
He lived on the streets.
He called himself God.
He got violent once. He was expelled for it. But he came back.
He talked about his own death calmly.
He promised to come back from the dead.
One of his gang got him arrested.
He defended himself in court. He lost.
The state executed him. It was a horrible death.
On the third day, he kept his promise.¹*

session one

the main point

By the end of this session, students can become intrigued with Jesus Christ and choose to follow Him each day.

Students' Creed

JESUS CHRIST:

REVEALED UNIQUELY

BORN A VIRGIN BIRTH

LIVED A SINLESS LIFE

DIED A SINNER'S DEATH

RAISED FROM THE DEAD

RETURNING TO RULE

Preparation :

- Ask a student or two ahead of time to prepare a short description of their impressions of Jesus before they became Christians.
- Use the PowerPoint designed for this session.

The last person we might think this is referring to is Jesus. Maybe that's because people picture Jesus in a way that bears little resemblance to that Man who made such an impact on the world that His birth split all of human history between B.C. ("Before Christ") and A.D. ("Anno Domini - in the year of our Lord").

The Message

The Jesus Who Never Lived

Ask the students you prepared beforehand to share the impressions they had of Jesus before they became Christians.

Many people have a warped picture of Jesus. Here are a few:

1. "Mr. Nice Guy"
Some people perceive Jesus as sort of a first-century Mr. Rogers. He always spoke kindly, made everyone happy and would never get upset with anyone. Each morning He would wake His disciples by singing, "It's a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood."
2. "The Party Hater"
A solemn religious figure, Jesus sought out fun-loving people so that He could tell them to quit having fun.
3. "The Wimp"
Jesus probably told people to turn the other cheek because He knew He'd get pounded if He confronted anyone.
4. "The Conformist"
A first-century preppie, Jesus related well to church people who desire to look right and act right.
5. "Teacher of the Year"
He was not the Son of God, but just a good teacher who taught things in an interesting way.

If Jesus was not like this, then ...

Will the Real Jesus *Please Stand Up?*

How could Jesus leave such a mark on history that almost 2000 years after His death, millions of people continue to follow Him? That means something is seriously wrong with the way most people perceive Jesus. So let's take a look at the Bible to discover the real Jesus.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

Pictures of Jesus
Many people don't want to become Christians because their picture of Jesus is warped. Break your students into groups of four or five and have them try to describe how non-Christians view Jesus. After a few minutes, have someone from each group report what they have discovered.

Large Group Activity

Weird ideas abound about Jesus. To get a better picture of the real Jesus, imagine you are a newspaper reporter trying to write an article on this controversial figure named Jesus. What kind of people would you want to interview to get the facts? (*Eyewitnesses.*)

Let's read several eyewitness accounts to find out more about Jesus. How do these conflict with one of the previous warped views of Jesus?

Eyewitness View #1

"Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. 'It is written,' he said to them, 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'" (Matthew 21:12,13)

How does this conflict with #1 warped view of Jesus?

Eyewitness View #2

"Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, 'Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and "sinners"?"" (Luke 5:29 – 30)

How does this conflict with #2 warped view of Jesus?

Eyewitness View #3

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are ... you are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean." (Matthew 23:15, 27)

How does this conflict with #3 warped view of Jesus?

Eyewitness View #4

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of

hypocrisy and wickedness." (Matthew 23:27 – 28)

How does this conflict with #4 warped view of Jesus?

Eyewitness View #5

"I and the Father are one." (John 10:30)

How does this conflict with #5 warped view of Jesus?

Jesus was a lot different than most people think.

Illustration

Imagine that Jesus enrolls in your school and you decide to show him around. While you're eating lunch, the girl with the worst reputation in the school strikes up an intense conversation with him. Jesus looks her in the eye and says, "Your sins are forgiven."

In history class, your teacher is in the middle of covering the exploits of Alexander the Great when Jesus passes you a note that says, "Before Alexander the Great was born, I was alive."

At your locker, some jocks confront him. "Hey, just who do you think you are?" Without missing a beat, he looks at them and says, "I and my Father, God, are one. If you've seen me, you've seen my Father, God."

The bread truck misses its delivery, so at lunch in the cafeteria, Jesus takes a dinner roll from someone's lunch box and divides it to feed the entire student body.

Later you and your friends gasp in amazement as Jesus gives sight to a ninth grader everyone knew was born blind.

Then after school you notice him standing by the pool at swim practice. With everyone's eyes on him, he casually walks across the pool lengthwise.

The next day at school the halls are a beehive of conversation about this guy. Then, a hush comes over the crowd as he enters. Following him are the two seniors who died in the car accident last weekend! They claim that he raised them from the dead!

"Now," says Jesus, "are you ready to consider who I am?"

Jesus did things like this to show who He is. C.S. Lewis, the former skeptic who became a Christian while teaching at Oxford, described our choices about who Jesus is.

*"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic, on a level with the man who says he is a poach egg, or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool; you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense at His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."*²

The Application

So what do you conclude about who Jesus is?

Reminder

Some of us have already begun a six-week quest for the real Jesus. We'll get to know more intimately the most unique person in all of human history. If you missed last week, it's not too late to get in on this adventure. To catch up: Read two chapters this week in the *JESUS NO EQUAL* book. For a daily devotional, use the *JESUS NO EQUAL* Journal. Next week you can tell us what you discovered.

No Equal to His Humility

He Did What?

The Hook

In the mid-1980's a teenager named Brian Warner began attending a local youth group. He was sort of an awkward kid, and no one really wanted to talk to him. The youth leader approached him, asking "How are you? How's your day?" and then moved on to talk to other kids.

One day the youth group went to an amusement park, and the youth leader paired kids up for safety, but no one wanted to pair with Brian. So he walked around the park by himself.

While he attended the youth group no one thought they needed to talk to Brian about God because Brian had gone to a Christian school.

Brian attended church for about 3 ½ months, but one day he just stopped coming.

A few years later, the youth leader received a call from one of his former high school students. The young man asked if he remembered a student named Brian Warner. After some description, he remembered him. The guy asked, "Do you know who he is now? He doesn't go by Brian anymore. Brian Warner is now known as Marilyn Manson."

No other person has represented and promoted a rebellious, godless lifestyle more effectively than Marilyn Manson. But you have to wonder: What if some Christians in Brian Warner's youth group or school had reached out to him, made the choice to sit with him on the bus and then hung out with him? You have to wonder: Would there ever have been a Marilyn Manson?

Jesus loves people like Brian Warner and people like Brian can relate to Jesus. Why? Instead of climbing up the social ladder, Jesus made a conscious decision to climb down the social ladder.

The Message

From Heaven to Earth

session two

the main point

By the end of this session, students will know how Jesus humbled Himself for them, and see how they can humble themselves for others.

VIDEO SUGGESTION

To begin show a 30-second clip of a Marilyn Manson video that would be appropriate to use in your setting. Then ask, "Does anyone know who is singing? What do you know about his life?"

Students' Creed

JESUS CHRIST:

REVEALED UNIQUELY

BORN A VIRGIN BIRTH

LIVED A SINLESS LIFE

DIED A SINNER'S DEATH

RAISED FROM THE DEAD

RETURNING TO RULE

Preparation:

- Bring note cards ,pencils and copies of "The Snoot Exam" for each student.
- Use the PowerPoint designed for this session.

Let's all read Philippians 2:5 – 8 aloud from the screen. From these verses, let's find out how Jesus climbed down the social ladder.

In your small groups discuss these questions. A few of you report to the entire group.

- What was life like for Jesus before He came to earth?
- How do you think He was treated by His Father and the angels in heaven?
- In what ways did He humble Himself?
- What's especially humbling about becoming a servant and dying by crucifixion?
- What does this passage say to those who feel insignificant?
- .In what ways did He humble Himself?
- What's especially humbling about becoming a servant and dying by crucifixion?
- What does this passage say to those who feel insignificant?

The Great Reversal

What if, instead of climbing up the social ladder, we started climbing down it?

What if we began to think of ourselves the way Jesus thought of Himself? He had equal status with God but instead of thinking of Himself and His status as the Son of God

- He made Himself nothing;
- He took on the form of a servant;
- He identified with other people; and
- He died on a cross.

Jesus did something totally countercultural. And He challenges us to do the same. While everyone else is climbing up the ladder, He asks us to climb down the ladder.

The Snoot Exam

Take "The Snoot Exam." As you do, ask yourself: "Why is it so tough to reach down the ladder?"

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

Divide into groups of four or five. Ask students to read Philippians 2:5-8 again. Ask them to think about how this passage challenges cliques at school.

ILLUSTRATION:

People respected Albert Einstein because of his genius, but they loved him because of his total disregard of people's social status. One day, a nine-year-old girl came to his house, needing some help with her math homework. Gladly, he let her in and helped her each day over a period of time with her work. Now think about it. Here was a man who was considered the most brilliant man of his time, who had piles of mail from "important" people that he didn't have time to answer, and invitations to go anywhere and do almost anything he wanted. But he often preferred the company of the "little" people of the world, and people loved him for it.

The Snoot Exam

Let's take an imaginary trip to the doctor, not for a physical exam, but a pride exam. No one else will see your responses, so answer honestly. In case you don't know what a "snoot" is, it's someone who thinks he/she is cooler than you, who turns up his/her nose or makes it obvious that he/she doesn't want to be seen around you.

So, are you a snoot? Here's the test. Remember, it's just for you, so be honest. Circle the correct number in each instance.

1 = Never 2 = Seldom 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Always

1. Are there certain cars you would not be caught dead in?
1 2 3 4 5
2. Do people ever have to dress a certain way to be in your group?
1 2 3 4 5
3. Do you make jokes about people who aren't as smart or as sharp as you?
1 2 3 4 5
4. Do you make jokes about people who don't have as much as you?
1 2 3 4 5
5. Do you use words like geek, dweeb, etc. to refer to others?
1 2 3 4 5
6. Do you avoid certain people because of the color of their skin?
1 2 3 4 5
7. If you're with a certain group and an acquaintance who doesn't fit with that group walks up, do you ever ignore or brush off that person?
1 2 3 4 5

Now, tally up your score. Here's how the results look:

Score:

- 30 - 35 You're a major snoot!
- 15 - 29 You need to swallow your pride.
- 8 - 14 You still need a little work on your pride.
- 1 - 7 You are humble!

What did you decide? Why is it so tough to reach down the social ladder? (*Give time for responses.*)

From Earth to Heaven

What happened to Jesus after His dramatic dive to the bottom of the social ladder?

Let's all read Philippians 2:9 – 11 aloud from the screen.

- How did Jesus' journey down the ladder pay off in the end?
- Was it worth it?
- How did Jesus' journey down the ladder help others? Why is it worth it for you to go down the ladder to help others?

Large Group Activity

What if you invited Steven Spielberg or George Lucas to your next party? Now that they're famous, there's no way they're coming. But if you had been their classmates in school and had invited them over, they probably would have come. You know why? Because they weren't getting much attention back then.

Spielberg didn't dress right in middle school. And he wasn't good at sports. Lucas was a little shrimp who made 'D's' and was considered a loser. Neither was popular. They wouldn't have gotten you anywhere by sitting with them at lunch. And some of you might have snooted them. Just think, those students that your classmates have labeled 'geeks' and 'dweebs' may be tomorrow's Lucases and Spielbergs!

So how do you respond to these questions:

- What do most people think of snoots?
- What do you think when you see someone get "snooted"?
- How can befriending the lowly help us?

The Application

Do you know anyone like Brian Warner?

Draw a ladder on this card, and on each rung put the initials of people you think God wants you to "reach down to" this week.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

Divide into groups of four or five. Ask students to read Philippians 2:9-11 again. Ask them to think about the benefits of humbling yourself.

Those initials represent people with hurts, fears and dreams – just like you. But nobody seems to care what’s going on inside of them. Will you care? Start by looking them in the eye and asking, “How are you doing today?” and mean it.

Reminder

This week read chapter three in the book *JESUS NO EQUAL*. For a daily devotional use the *JESUS NO EQUAL* Journal. Next week you can share what you discovered.

No Equal to His Servanthood

You Want Me to Love *Them*?

The Hook

Sometimes people put up posters in their bedroom just because they like the posters. But for others, their bedroom reveals their real heroes, celebrities they admire and want to be like. What posters do you have up in your bedroom? How do you think you are impacted by the heroes on these posters?

What kind of pictures do you think Arnold Schwarzenegger had in his bedroom as a teenager? As you listen to Arnold's story, think what the world would be like if only we could follow our spiritual hero with the same intensity that Schwarzenegger followed his bodybuilding hero.

At 15 years old, Arnold Schwarzenegger decided to become the best bodybuilder in the world. When he saw a movie with well-known bodybuilder Reg Park in it, he knew he had found his hero. In Schwarzenegger's own words, "From that point on I found out everything I could about Reg Park. I bought all the magazines that published his programs. I learned how he started training, what he ate, how he lived, and how he did his workouts. I became obsessed with Reg Park; he was the image in front of me from the time I started training ... I pasted his pictures on all the walls of my bedroom ... I studied every photograph of him I could get my hands on – noting the size of his chest, arms, thighs, back and abdominals. This inspired me to work even harder. When I felt my lungs burning as though they would burst and my veins bulging with blood, I loved it. I knew then that I was growing, making one more step toward becoming like Reg Park."¹

What would happen if Christians followed Jesus as passionately as Schwarzenegger followed Reg Park? If we could catch that vision, we would change the world.

Large Group Activity

What Makes a Hero?

Let's say that one day you walk into a restaurant and see your hero, a professional ball player, sitting at a table with friends. All

session three

the main point

By the end of this session, students will understand the value of following Jesus into servanthood by volunteering for specific service opportunities.

Students' Creed

JESUS CHRIST:

REVEALED UNIQUELY

BORN A VIRGIN BIRTH

LIVED A SINLESS LIFE

DIED A SINNER'S DEATH

RAISED FROM THE DEAD

RETURNING TO RULE

Preparation:

- At least a week ahead of time, look over the application section to determine how your students will serve.
- Use the PowerPoint for this session.

VIDEO

SUGGESTION

Show a clip of Arnold Schwarzenegger with his muscles showing.

your life you've wanted to be like him, dreamed of meeting him, rehearsed in your mind what you would say to him if you did. You've dreamed of getting his autograph. As he gets up to leave the table, you grab your napkin and a pen, walk up to him and introduce yourself as his greatest fan. Before you can say anything else, he looks down at you with a smirk and says, "You wimp. You'll never make it in the pros." Then he laughs and walks away. Do you think your opinion of him would change? Why?

Since our heroes influence us, it's important to choose the right ones.

What ingredients does it take to make good heroes?

- Is it merely coolness and talent, or does their character make any difference?
- What aspects of their character matter? Why?

The Message

The Ultimate Action Hero

Why is Jesus Christ the greatest hero of all time?

Let's look at five Scriptures.

- Matthew 9:36 – How did Jesus treat people?
- Luke 4:18, 19 – What four types of people did Jesus come to help?
- Luke 19:10 – For what reason did Jesus come to this planet?
- Matthew 20:26 – 28 – How did Jesus measure greatness? How did He, personally, demonstrate His own greatness?
- John 10:10 – What benefit do we receive as a result of Jesus' love for us, saving us and serving us?

Contrast the heroes that decorate your bedroom walls with Jesus.

- What did those people ever do for you?
- What did Jesus do for you?

The Application

Choose one or more of the following options for maximum impact of this session on your students.

Option 1

Conduct a foot-washing service patterned after Jesus' example in John 13:1-17.

Option 2

Read James 1:27 and comment on the importance of "looking after orphans and widows." Then have students sign up to visit either a local nursing home, do yard work, clean windows and gutters or whatever else is needed for some elderly members in your church.

Option 3

Ask your students to bring non-perishable food items. Challenge them to sacrifice something in order to buy the food, rather than just raiding their families' cupboards. Gather the groceries in several bags, and enclose a note in each bag that simply says, "In the name of Jesus." After reading Matthew 25:35, have students get in small groups to go out and deliver the food secretly. Instruct them to make their food drops on the porch, then slip away without being discovered.

Option 4

Hand out cards and envelopes so that students can write a note of encouragement to a distant relative, sick friend or someone else who might be lonely.

Option 5

Encourage them to ask their parents when they get home, "What could I do to help more around the house, or help you with my younger brother/sister?"

Reminder

This week read chapter four in the book *JESUS NO EQUAL*. For a daily devotional use the *JESUS NO EQUAL* Journal. Next week you can share what you discovered.

No Equal to His Sacrifice

You Want Me to Die?

The Hook

What do the following people have in common?

This professional football player held the NFL rushing record. Once a magazine interviewer asked him what he feared most - an interesting question for a player so powerful that his opponents feared him. His answer, "Dying and going to hell. But I hope I don't because I've been a good person."

"Saturday Night Live" comedian Chris Farley starred in many movies, including *Tommy Boy*, *Beverly Hills Ninja* and *It's a Dog's Life*. He died at 33 years old. Farley once admitted, "Lust, gluttony, booze and drugs are most of the things I confess to. I can't help it. I hope to God that God will forgive me my sins. I don't know."¹

In a private conversation, a confident and cool high school student was asked if he gave any thought to spiritual things. He answered, "You know, I often stay up nights just wondering if I'm going to heaven when I die."

So, what do these people have in common? (They voice a concern for which all people want an answer. *"Is there a way to know that God loves me and wants to have an intimate relationship with me?"*)

The Message

We're pursuing several sessions on *JESUS NO EQUAL*. We're discovering Jesus Christ for who He really is. Three weeks ago we saw that what He did proves that He was more than just a mere man. Then we saw the amazing humility Jesus showed by coming down from heaven to become a human being. Last week we discovered that Jesus came as a servant.

Now in order to understand how we get hold of life instead of just exist, we've got to get a grip on what Jesus did on the cross.

What Jesus Suffered on the Cross

As your friends read Matthew 27:24 – 50, one account of Jesus' final hours, remember that this is the Son of God who is

session four

the main point

By the end of this session, students can understand what Jesus did on the cross, and then live in an intimate relationship with Him.

Students' Creed

JESUS CHRIST:

REVEALED UNIQUELY
BORN A VIRGIN BIRTH
LIVED A SINLESS LIFE
DIED A SINNER'S DEATH
RAISED FROM THE DEAD
RETURNING TO RULE

Preparation:

- At least a week prior to this session, ask a student to prepare to give a five-minute personal testimony for your group. If the student has never been trained to do this, you will need to assist him or her in preparing one that is clear, but brief and effective.
- Prepare three or four mature students to read dramatically Matt. 27:24-50.

Continued on next page.

suffering for you and me.

Identify the kinds of suffering Jesus experienced.

Put these on the PowerPoint as students call them out.

- *flogged (v. 26)*
- *stripped (v. 28)*
- *wore a crown of thorns (v. 29)*
- *mocked (v. 29)*
- *spit on (v. 30)*
- *struck repeatedly on the head (v. 30)*
- *crucified (v. 35)*
- *insults hurled at Him (v. 39)*
- *insults heaped upon Him (v. 44)*
- *forsaken by His Father (v. 46)*

When we understand the extent of Jesus' suffering on the cross, we realize even more how much He loved us, and how much He deserves to be our hero. But we miss the point of Jesus' death if we don't answer the BIG question that the people in our introduction couldn't answer: *How can I know God and have an intimate relationship with Him?*

What the Cross Means for You

The answer to the BIG question comes from the cross.

Let's read these Scriptures that describe the meaning of the cross. After each passage, tell what Jesus did for you on the cross.

- Romans 5:6 – 10
- 2 Corinthians 5:20, 21
- 1 Peter 3:18

Jesus came to die on the cross so we can come back into a right relationship with God and enjoy an intimate relationship with Him.

If our biggest problem were a lack of friends, God would have sent us a companion. If our biggest problem were a lack of education, God would have sent us a tutor. But since our biggest problem is that we are spiritually dead, God sent us Jesus to give us life. When He gives us His life, He gives us a relationship.

Large Group Activity

From these verses what do you understand about the

Preparation continued:

- If you have trained some of your students to share the gospel, talk to them a week ahead of time about doing so in small groups this week.
- Use the PowerPoint created for this session.
- A copy of the Four Facts for each student; elements for the Lord's Supper, or nails; cards and pens placed under each seat.

VIDEO

SUGGESTION:

Play a clip of Jesus' crucifixion from the movie *The Passion of the Christ*.

MUSIC SUGGESTION:

Play the song “It Is Well.” Before playing it, introduce it with these words: “A successful Chicago lawyer wrote a song about the peace and assurance that comes from trusting in Jesus’ death on the cross. His wife and four daughters were on a ship to Europe when they struck another ship. It sank in only twelve minutes, taking the lives of his daughters. He took a ship out to meet his wife, and when they neared the spot where the tragedy had occurred, he wrote this famous hymn.² Listen to the confident relationship with Jesus that this man found even in a tragedy.”

Closing Activity Options

1. Communion
Conclude by taking the Lord’s Supper. Use this special time to further explain the death and resurrection of Jesus.
2. Nail
Hand out a nail to each student. Encourage each one to keep the nail in his or her pocket, make it into a necklace or put it somewhere to serve as a reminder of what Jesus did on the cross.

cross that you have never understood before?

How To Make the Cross Personal

I have asked several people to tell in their own words what the cross of Jesus means to them.

Introduce the Students

The Application

There are three kinds of people in the audience: lost, confused and hungry. What do I mean?

Lost: Some of you have never received Jesus into your life. Perhaps you’ve admired Jesus or even hated Him, but you have never taken the step to make Him your personal Savior and Lord. You can make that decision now.

Confused: Some of you have doubts about your relationship with Jesus. You can remove those doubts.

Hungry: Some of you have received Jesus and know for certain that He lives in you. But you hunger for more of Jesus.

Whatever your relationship to Jesus, you can count on this:

- Jesus stretched out His arms on the cross to show you how much He loves you.
- No matter how much you have done right, He cannot love you any more.
- No matter how much you have done wrong He cannot love you any less.

Look under you seats and find the card and pen. Write one of these responses:

- Lost, but I’m looking for Jesus.
- Confused, but I’m asking Jesus to clear up my doubts.
- Hungry, and I’m asking Jesus for more of Himself.

As we take communion [and/or hand out nails], let’s reflect on how Jesus demonstrated His love for us on the cross and has given us life and a relationship to Him. Then, seriously ask Jesus this question: “How can I love You and live for You more passionately?”

Reminder

This week read chapter five in the book *JESUS NO EQUAL*. For a daily devotional use the *JESUS NO EQUAL* Journal. Next week you can share what you discovered.

No Equal to His Resurrection

How Can I Have That Kind of Power?

The Hook

Dead fish float downstream. Only live fish swim upstream. All of us want the power to swim upstream. We all desire the strength to face the crowd or our friends and make wise choices. But where do we find the strength to swim upstream?

While many students lack the willpower to withstand the slightest pressure to drink a beer or take drugs, other students have learned to draw on a power that helps them swim upstream under incredible pressures – even in the face of death. Let me introduce you to a couple of 17-year-olds who discovered that power.

Cassie Bernall

You have to go back to Cassie's ninth-grade year to discover where she first tapped into God's resurrection power. Back then she lived on the dark side. She had a dark view of life, with interests that included witchcraft, drugs, drinking and suicide. When her parents found out, they took radical action, moving her to a different school, cutting her off from her negative friends, and introducing her to a youth minister. You can imagine how excited Cassie was about that turn of events. But one weekend, she went on a retreat with the youth group. According to her dad, the Cassie that left for the retreat was gloomy, with her head down and nothing to say. But the Cassie that returned was a different person – her eyes bright and excited about life. Her father said, "It was like she was in a dark room, and somebody turned the light on, and she saw the beauty that was surrounding her. She told her mom she'd totally changed, and she'd prove it to her."

Cassie, a 17-year-old junior at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, was reading her Bible in the school library when a fellow student pointed his gun at her and asked, "Do you believe in God?" She calmly responded, "Yes, I believe in God." Those words were her last. The gunman shot her. A classmate described the scene to Larry King on CNN: "She completely stood up for God. When the killers asked her if there was anyone

session five

the main point

By the end of this session, students will know that because Jesus rose from the dead, they can live today in His resurrection power.

Students' Creed

JESUS CHRIST:

REVEALED UNIQUELY
BORN A VIRGIN BIRTH
LIVED A SINLESS LIFE
DIED A SINNER'S DEATH
RAISED FROM THE DEAD
RETURNING TO RULE

Preparation:

- Prepare several students to tell how the power of Jesus has changed their lives.
- Bibles; CD Player
- Use the PowerPoint created for this session.

VIDEO SUGGESTION:

Play a clip of Jesus' resurrection from *"The Passion of the Christ"* movie.

who had faith in Christ, she spoke up and they shot her for it."¹

Ben Strong

Ben, a senior, attended a before-school prayer meeting at Heath High School in Paducah, Kentucky. A fellow student walked in and began shooting students. At a time when most people would have desperately begged for mercy or scrambled behind the nearest desk, Ben Strong swam upstream. He asked the killer to drop his weapon. But the gunman kept firing. Ben walked right up to him, looking straight into his eyes and said, "What are you doing? Don't shoot. Just put the gun down." Then he grabbed the gunman by the shoulders, and the weapon, which still contained ammunition, dropped to the floor. The principal, who just then came on the scene, stated that Strong almost certainly saved his life from taking the next bullet.

How does a person possess that kind of courage? We can have it by living in the power of Jesus' resurrection.

The Message

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has everything to do with living a powerful Christian life today. Let's read Ephesians 1:18-20 to find out why.

What does Paul tell the Ephesians that they need to do to get this power? Consider this: He says nothing because he assumes that the power already resides within them as Christians.

- And just how great is that power? Consider this: It is "incomparably great" and "mighty," like the power that raised Jesus from the dead.
- Is this power available to us? Consider this: In Ephesians 1:1, Paul wrote to the "saints" at Ephesus, which means all Christians. In Ephesians 1:19, we discover that God's "incomparably great power" isn't for everyone. Only believers can have this power.

Many students live without the resurrection power of Christ. But we don't have to live that way.

Let's read Ephesians 1:18 – 23 again to find out how to live in that power. In these verses, let's see if we can find at least ten ways Jesus demonstrated His "incomparably great power."

Now let's find out how we can live in that power. Let's read Ephesians 2:1, 4 – 10. Let's see if we can find ten expressions of God's power to us when He "made us alive with Christ."

Illustration

Bill Gates is the wealthiest man in America. He's also extremely intelligent. Whenever you use Microsoft® Windows, or Microsoft® anything, you're looking at the name of his company Microsoft Corporation. People who know Bill Gates say his mind is absorbed by the world of computers. So he often overlooks the little details of life, like his gas gauge and his wallet.

In the middle of the night in the middle of winter, Gates ran out of gas on a freeway somewhere near Microsoft's headquarters. He coasted off the side of the road, walked back to a Ramada Inn and requested a room. But when they asked for his ID and a deposit, he couldn't find his wallet. He tried to convince the desk clerk that he was Bill Gates, that he worked down the street at Microsoft and that an assistant would pay in the morning. The skeptical clerk stood her ground. No money? No room. So that night, the CEO of Microsoft, who would make around \$100 million that year, took a cold and lonely walk to his office.²

It didn't matter how much money Bill Gates had in the bank if he couldn't access it. Similarly, it doesn't matter how much we know about God and His power. It only becomes available to us when we access it.

Now several people will tell you how they have accessed the power of God.

Have the prepared students tell how the power of Jesus has changed their lives.

The Application

Do you want to experience the power of God? If so, I want to give you the opportunity to die to yourself and to live to God.

Let's read Philippians 3:10 – 11, *TLB*. These words meant so much to Cassie Bernall that she wrote it out word for word just two days before her death. Read it silently first. Don't feel pressured. But if you want to experience God's power, then read this prayer with me out loud and make it your prayer.

"Now I have given up everything else. I have found it to be the only way to really know Christ and to experience the mighty power that brought Him back to life again, and to find out what it means to suffer and to die with Him. So, whatever it takes, I will be one who lives in the fresh newness of life of those who are alive from the dead."

SMALL GROUP PRAYER:

We all have issues in our lives that we just don't have the power to deal with on our own. Maybe it's dealing with ridicule at school, pressures at home, getting along with your parents. Whatever the problem, let's get in groups of three and get on our knees and call on the power of the resurrected Christ. If it's a private issue, then pray privately about it. But if you want your group to add their prayers, then pray aloud so they can pray with you.

Microsoft is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

Reminder

This week read chapter six in the book *JESUS NO EQUAL*. For a daily devotional use the *JESUS NO EQUAL* Journal. Next week you can share what you discovered.

No Equal to His Lordship

What Should I Do Until Jesus Returns?

The Hook

Anyone who has seen the old *Star Wars* series or the *Indiana Jones* trilogy knows the incredible excitement that producer George Lucas can pack into a movie. But it's doubtful that Lucas would have made anything at all of his life, had he not first given up his old dreams. During his teenage years, a lot of people considered him a loser going nowhere in life. He never applied himself in school and dreamed only about racing cars. But his dreams all ended just a few days before high school graduation. While driving home from the library in his Fiat, he prepared for a left turn by glancing in his rearview mirror. But, as he started the turn, he heard the sound of another car, a blowing horn and the impact of a speeding Chevy crunching into the driver side of his car. The impact should have killed him. The little Fiat turned over four or five complete flips before it wrapped around an oak tree. The impact was so great that it actually moved the entire tree a couple of feet, leaving a huge hole in its former position.

Miraculously, George survived. Get this: during the Fiat's third flip, his regulation racing seat belt snapped, throwing him out of the open top and onto the ground. He was close to death, but recovered slowly through two weeks in the hospital and months of physical therapy. His Fiat didn't survive, ending up in the junkyard.

After the accident, George Lucas was a changed person. He decided there must be some reason he survived, and he set his mind to get his act together and make something out of his life. He left his racing dreams behind and decided to go to college. There, he developed an interest in literature and writing. And instead of *driving* race cars, he began *filming* them. He let his old life and his old dreams die, so that he could go a new direction. Without giving up his old life, he would have never found his niche in the film industry, and no one would have ever seen *Star Wars*.¹

Many students - and adults as well - are unwilling to give their lives totally to Christ, because they're afraid of what they will have to give up. So they never let go of their old lives. Are we holding back when we could be living a life that we never dreamed possible?"

session six

the main point

By the end of this session, students will understand how to live with Jesus as Lord of their lives.

Students' Creed

JESUS CHRIST:

REVEALED UNIQUELY
BORN A VIRGIN BIRTH
LIVED A SINLESS LIFE
DIED A SINNER'S DEATH
RAISED FROM THE DEAD

RETURNING TO RULE

Preparation:

- Bibles; CD Player; pen and blank paper for each student
- Use the PowerPoint created for this session.

VIDEO

SUGGESTION:

Show a clip from *The Last Crusade* (the final movie of the *Indiana Jones* trilogy). After the explorers find the Holy Grail, they are trying to escape the cave before everything falls apart. A girl dies while trying to retrieve the cup, then Indy tries to recover it from a ledge that he can almost reach. But his father realizes that Indy will lose his life trying to get the cup. "Indy, give it up," he yells. You can tell that Indy wants the cup more than anything, but with great struggle he gives up the cup and saves his own life. We desperately want to hold on to some things, but God knows they will kill us. Because God knows what is best for us, He urges us, "Give it up."

SMALL GROUP

DISCUSSION:

Divide students into groups of five or less. Ask them to talk about "Why do many people today refuse to submit to the lordship of Christ? What holds them back from totally giving their lives to Jesus?" Give them sufficient time, then ask students to appoint someone from their group to report their answers to everyone else.

The Message

This session wraps up our series on *JESUS NO EQUAL*. We've seen that compared to Jesus there is:

- *No Equal to His Claims*
- *No Equal to His Humility*
- *No Equal to His Servanthood*
- *No Equal to His Sacrifice*
- *No Equal to His Resurrection*

Over the last few weeks, we have seen how Jesus humbled Himself by coming from Heaven to earth to live as a servant, die as a criminal, and then was raised from the dead. Now let's see what happened next.

Let's read out loud Philippians 2:9-11.

These verses tell us that there is *No Equal to His Lordship*. Jesus is worthy of our worship and our allegiance. He's worthy to be our Lord, the one who leads our lives. Jesus' first-century followers understood this. That's why they set aside their own hopes and dreams in order to embrace God's hopes and dreams for their lives.

But people struggle to give up their lives and let Jesus be Lord. Here are some reasons that people, and probably some of us here, hesitate to give Jesus full control of our lives.

1. *"I'm still not convinced that it's all true."*

Some of you may be thinking, "Well, I've still got my doubts about whether this whole Jesus thing is true or not." If this is what's holding you back, even after reading all the evidence presented in *JESUS NO EQUAL*, I've got a challenge for you: Explain why Jesus' disciples died for a lie.

If anyone would have known that the resurrection was a hoax, it was Jesus' disciples. Remember, they claimed to have talked with Him and eaten with Him after He rose from the dead. They said that they touched His resurrected body, and they confirmed the nail prints in His hands.

Imagine yourself as one of Jesus' disciples following His cruel death. Imagine that Jesus never rose from the dead. But people are saying that He has and the authorities are after His followers. If you identify yourself with Jesus, you could be the next prospect to hang on a cross. So what would you do? Probably lay low about this Jesus stuff. Go back home. Keep a low profile.

You would have no reason to concoct some wild story about Jesus rising from the dead. And you would be crazy to dedicate

the rest of your life to spreading a lie that would cause you to suffer, go to prison, and possibly die.

Some people in history have died for ideas that were untrue. But martyrs for a cause believe that their ideas are true. If Jesus' resurrection and miracles did not happen, then, of all people, the disciples knew they didn't happen. It would be incredible to believe that they gave up their lives for something they knew was a lie.

Do you remember how each of Jesus' disciples died? Their deaths tell us how much they believed that Jesus was Lord.

- Andrew: *death by crucifixion*
- Bartholomew: *death by crucifixion*
- James, the brother of Jesus: *death by stoning*
- James, the son of Alphaeus: *death by crucifixion*
- John: *banished to a small island, sentenced to hard labor in the quarries, died a natural death*
- Matthew: *death by sword*
- Peter: *death by crucifixion (upside down)*
- Philip: *death by crucifixion*
- Simon: *death by crucifixion*
- Thaddaeus: *death by arrows*
- Thomas: *death by a spear*

If you're still not sure that Jesus rose from the dead, then why did all these people die for something that they knew was a lie?

2. "I'm afraid Jesus will mess up my life."

For most people, the real issue is not that they have sincere doubts. Jesus has the solution for sincere doubters. He says, 'Seek and you shall find.' Sincere seekers ask questions, trying to get answers any way they can. The real barrier to submitting to the lordship of Christ is that people don't want Jesus interfering with their lives.

So, intellectual doubts aren't your problem. The problem may be that you are afraid Jesus will mess up your life. Is that the real issue? We're afraid that if we give our lives completely to Jesus, He'll make us give up a friend we like, hang around the house and do chores all the time, watch religious television and become a missionary.

Continue this discussion by asking students what they would say to those who are afraid God will mess up their lives. As they share their responses, have someone record them on a screen. Follow up the discussion making these points:

- *People who fear that God will mess up their lives have misunderstood God's heart. He loves them.*

Romans 5:8 says, *"But God put his love on the line for us by offering his Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him."* (The Message)

Once we understand how much God loves us, we can move beyond our fear and make that commitment.

- *God wants what's best for us.*

Jesus said in Matthew 7:11: *"If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"*

One student declared when he finally understood this, *"What am I doing fooling around outside of God's will and missing out on God's best for my life?"*

- *Being one's own boss is an illusion.*

In 1 John 5:19, we find these words: *"We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one."*

People who don't want to submit to Jesus would rather call their own shots. What they don't understand is that nobody completely calls his own shots. You've got to serve somebody. If you're not a slave to God, you're a slave to sin. If God is not in control, then Satan is. And just as God has a plan for your life, so does Satan. Here are the two plans. God gives you the freedom to choose the one you want.

Satan's Plan for Your Life

"Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8)

Jesus' Plan for Your Life

"I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of." (John 10:10, The Message)

There's no plan 'C.' You can only choose 'A' or 'B'.

Jesus didn't sugarcoat the Christian life. He spoke clearly to His disciples: *"If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also."* (John 15:20) *"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33)

Let's shoot straight. There will be sacrifice. God may ask you to give up some things that are dear to you. You may be called on to give up your life for Him. But it's worth it. To be sure, Satan wreaks a lot of havoc in the world today. Often, it looks like his team is winning. But that's temporary. The book of Revelation is complex in many ways, but the main point is crystal clear: *our side wins!* Sometimes Christians look like the losers. But God never said that it would appear that we were ahead at halftime. It's enough to know that we're on the winning team. And in the end, everyone will acknowledge that Jesus is Lord.

The Application

For six weeks, we've seen that there is no equal to Jesus. No one else even comes close. Look through human history, and you'll find lots of men who wanted to become gods. But only one God wanted to become a man.

How do you respond to these questions?

- Do you think Jesus deserves your allegiance?
- Are you ready to give Him total control of your life?
- Are you prepared to give Him that one area that you want to keep?
- Are you ready to pursue Him and all that He wants for you?

We all serve somebody, either ourselves, the evil one or Jesus. There is no in-between. No compromise.

I hope that this series has convinced you that there's *no equal* to Jesus!

THE FOUR FACTS

Fact #1: God Loves Us and Created Us to Know Him.

- God loves us.

Jesus said, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”* (John 3:16)

- God created us.

We read in the Bible, *“for you [God] created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.”* (Psalm 139:13)

- God wants us to know Him.

God’s Word tells us, *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”* (John 17:3)

Fact #2: Our Sins Keep Us From Knowing God.

Some people think of sin as getting drunk or telling lies. True, but sin involves much more.

- What is sin?

We choose to disobey God and go our own way. *“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way.”* (Isaiah 53:6)

- Who has sinned?

Everyone. In the Bible we read, *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* (Romans 3:23)

- What happens when we sin?

Sin results in separation from God, leading to death and judgment. *“For the wages of sin is death”* (Romans 6:23) and *“Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment”* (Hebrews 9:27).

As long as sin separates us from God, we cannot know Him. What, then, is the solution to our separation from God?

Fact #3: We Can Know God Only Through Jesus Christ.

- Jesus died for our sin.

The Bible says, *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Romans 5:8)

- Jesus rose from the dead to give us life.

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Romans 6:4)

- Jesus opened the way for us to know God.

“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” (1 Peter 3:18)

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ bridged the gap from God to us. How can we know Jesus Christ personally?

Fact #4: To Know God We Must Receive Jesus Christ.

Many people know *about* God, but don't know Him *personally*. The only way to know God personally is to receive Jesus Christ. So how can we receive Him?

- Turn away from our sin.

Jesus said, *“The time has come ... Repent and believe the good news!”* (Mark 1:15) To repent means to *turn away* from sin.

- Believe in Jesus.

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31)

To believe means to *turn to* Jesus.

Jesus promises, *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me.”* (Revelation 3:20)

Is there any reason why you cannot choose Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

Session 1

- ¹ Used by permission of Dave Tippett.
- ² *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis, 1960, The MacMillan Co., New York, NY. Used by permission.

Session 3

- ¹ *Arnold: The Education of a Bodybuilder* by Arnold Schwarzenegger and Douglas Kent Hall, 1977, New York. Reprinted with permission of Simon and Schuster, Inc.

Session 4

- ¹ "SNL Alum's Death Echoes Belushi's," *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution* by Lyle V. Harris, December 19, 1997.
- ² Facts from *Companion to the Baptist Hymnal* by William J. Reynolds, 1976, Broadman Press, Nashville, TN.

Session 5

- ¹ "Littleton's Martyrs," "Breakpoint Commentary," Charles W. Colson, April 26, 1999.
- ² Facts gathered from *Gates* by Stephen Manes and Paul Andrews, 1993, 1994, Simon and Schuster, New York.

Session 6

- ¹ *Skywalking: The Life and Films of George Lucas* by Dale Pollock, 1983, Harmony Books.

About the Authors



Barry St. Clair

Barry St. Clair has a passion for Jesus and a love for teenagers. He speaks to, writes for, and equips youth leaders, parents, and students to influence as many teens as possible to follow Jesus. For more than thirty years, Barry has been on the cutting edge of youth ministry – nationally and globally – as founder and president of Reach Out Youth Solutions. Barry played basketball for Davidson College when it had the third-ranked team in the nation, and he has run the Boston Marathon. The author of more than twenty books, including *Parent Fuel*, Barry and his wife, Lawanna, have nine children and eight grandchildren and live in Atlanta, Georgia.



Steve Miller

Steve Miller is founder and president of *Legacy Educational Resources*, providing resources for youth workers (www.youth-ministry.info) and teachers (www.character-education.info). He wrote *The Contemporary Christian Music Debate* and is currently writing a book for young adults on handling their money. Steve lives in metro Atlanta with his wife Cherie, and their seven sons.

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.