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Deeper: Real Change for Real Sinners

Author: Dane C. Ortlund

Lesson Title: “Jesus” (pp. 123-136)

Session 9

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The main point of this lesson is: Real change comes only by knowing the real Jesus.

Focus on this goal: To help adults grow deeper in Christ by identifying areas where their Jesus is too small

Key Bible Passage: Matthew 11:29; Ephesians 3:8

Before the Session

Bring a small potted plant to class. (Steps 1 and 7)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

**Display** the potted plant. **Brainstorm** different things you would need to do to make/keep it healthy (watering, sunlight, fertilizer, etc.). **Ask** how you can know when it’s healthy and when it needs special attention. **Observe:** *The only way to truly have a healthy plant is to have a good, strong root system.*

**Use** the Introduction (p. 122) to **explain** that we, like a plant, must develop a strong, deep root system if we’re to grow in our faith. **Read** 2 Peter 3:18 and Ephesians 4:15 to **point out** that spiritual growth is not an option.

**Open** with prayer, **inviting** the Lord to help participants see their need to grow and be willing to put in the time and willingness to grow.

Step 2. Unsearchable

Read the opening paragraph from Day One (p. 123). Challenge learners to begin a journal or notebook with a list of things they observe about Jesus in this study, both from the author’s content and from their own personal study.

Enlist a volunteer to read Ephesians 3:8. Stress the “unsearchable riches of Christ.” Enlist a different learner to read Romans 11:33. Invite learners to hold both passages open in their Bibles and compare/contrast the two. Use the Day One content (p. 124) to give additional insight. Read the Day One paragraph (p. 124) that begins, “When Christopher Columbus” and the paragraph that follows.

Step 3. Seven Facets, Part 1

**Observe:** *If we’re going to grow deeper in faith, we’ve got to start with our understanding of Jesus.* **Explain** that you’ll be exploring seven facets of Jesus’s character that should be prominent in every believer’s belief system. The first is *ruling*.

**Enlist** a volunteer to read Matthew 28:18. **Point out** that Jesus is the supreme authority of the universe. **Use** the opening paragraph of Day Two (p. 125) to **point out** that our lack of awareness of Jesus’s authority can undermine our faith in it.

**Read** Colossians 1:17, **stressing** that Jesus holds all things together: cosmically, nationally, and even individually.

**Invite** a volunteer to read Revelation 1:13-17 as others listen with eyes closed. **Ask:** *How should that image change our perception of Jesus as ruler?*

Step 4. Seven Facets, Part 2

**Enlist** a volunteer to read Luke 7:36-50. **Draw attention** to the second facet of Jesus’s character, *saving*. **Read** the opening sentence from the second paragraph (p. 127) of Day Three, “Every human is five hundred denarii in debt, but we tend to *feel* only fifty denarii in debt.” **Use** the Day Three content (p. 127) to **discuss** the difference in Jesus saving us and Jesus helping us.

**Turn attention** to the third facet: *befriending*. **Invite** a volunteer to read John 15:15. **Ask** rhetorically: *Who is your best friend?* **Invite** responses to: *What does your best friend do when you are in need?* **Read** Matthew 11:19, **pointing out** that Jesus was our friend before salvation and after salvation, because we were—and still are—sinners!

Step 5. Seven Facets, Part 3

Explain that the fourth facet of Jesus’s character is persevering. Enlist a volunteer to read John 13:1. Use the opening paragraph of Day Four (p. 129) to point out Jesus’s unending, non-vacillating love for us.

Emphasize the fifth facet of interceding. Enlist volunteers to read Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25. Stress both verses point to Jesus’s current activity: interceding for us! Read the last paragraph (p. 130) of the “Interceding” section.

For the sixth facet, returning, read 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8, encouraging learners to make the truth of Jesus’s return a daily focus as they seek His kingdom and His will.

Step 6. Seven Facets, Part 4

**Point out** the seventh facet, *tender.* **Ask** for a show of hands of those who would have listed this in a personal list of “Top Seven Characteristics of Jesus.” **Enlist** a volunteer to read Matthew 11:29.

**Use** the beautiful, moving Day Five content (pp. 131-132) to explain what Jesus’s tenderness means to us: He embraces us in our mess, He is accessible, and He is drawn toward us when we are at our worst.

**Read** the paragraph at the top of page 133.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

**Direct attention** back to the potted plant you displayed in Step 1. **Re-emphasize** every believer’s need to grow deeper in our faith and our relationship with the Lord.

**Invite** volunteers (or the group as a whole) to try to list from memory the seven facets of Jesus’s character addressed in today’s session.

**Read** “The Real Christ,” the last two paragraphs of Day Five (p. 133).

**Close with a prayer** of commitment.

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