

**Twelve Ordinary Men**  
**Scott Chafee**  
**King's Grant Baptist Church**  
**Discipleship Ministry**

- Why do people find the disciples so fascinating?
  - They were perfectly ordinary men.
    - Not scholars or theologians: they were more outsiders to established religion.
    - Not outstanding with natural talents or intellectual abilities: they were prone to mistakes, misstatements, wrong attitudes, lapses of faith, bitter failure.
    - Jesus even mentioned they were slow learners and somewhat dense (Luke 24:25).
  - They spanned the political spectrum.
    - A Zealot determined to overthrow the Romans.
    - A tax collector hated by Romans and Jews alike.
    - At least four were fishermen.
    - Others may have been tradesmen or craftsmen.
    - Most from Galilee, an agricultural area and an intersection of trade routes.
- As ordinary as they were:
  - They carried on the ministry of Jesus after the resurrection.
  - They turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6).
  - They were personally selected by Jesus.
    - He knew them only as the Creator could (John 1:47).
    - He knew their faults long before He chose them, even about Judas (John 6:70, 13:21-27).
  - They were trained in months, more than years.
    - They learned Scripture and theology.
    - They learned how to pray, forgive and serve.
- After all this intensive discipleship training:
  - On the night He was betrayed, they all fled.
  - They appeared to be a monumental failure.
    - They believed they had failed, and apparently went back to fishing.
    - And they were not very good at it (John 21:3-4).
  - Yet they returned to their apostolic calling.
    - They were empowered at Pentecost.
    - Their legacy is with us today.
    - They were living proof that God's strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor 2:16).
- What about the length of time with Jesus?
  - By the time Jesus identified and called the Twelve from the larger group of followers, half of His earthly ministry was over.
    - First half – ministry with the crowds.
    - Second half – investment in the disciples.
  - Eighteen months, and there was no plan “B”
    - Jesus had a mission that could not be stopped.
    - “But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong” (1 Cor 1:27).

- The Twelve were often called disciples.
  - Mathetes* – Mt 10:1, 11:1, 20:17, Luke 9:1.
    - Meaning – learner of student, of which there were multitudes.
  - The Twelve were chosen for a unique office.
    - Apostolos* – messenger or sent out ones, as ambassadors or spokesmen for Christ.
    - Luke loves the term, exclusively uses the Twelve.
    - Matthew writes it only once (10:2).
    - Mark writes it only once (6:30).
    - Otherwise Mark uses the Twelve (3:14, 4:10, 6:7, 9:35, 10:32, 11:11, 14:10, 17, 20, 43).
- Luke 10 – the 70 were sent out 2 by 2.
  - Literally *sent out ones*, word *apostle* not used.
  - Only Luke records this mission.
- The apostolic office:
  - Acts 14:14 and Pauline epistles make it clear about Paul having this same office.
  - He was the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom 11:13, 1 Tim 2:7, 2 Tim 1:11).
  - Paul had the same authority (2 Cor 11:5).
  - Paul – apostle born out of time (1 Cor 15:8).
- Is the number 12 significant?
  - After the resurrection, the apostles chose Matthias to fill the vacancy of Judas.
  - What were the qualifications? (Acts 1:23-26).
    - Leadership and exclusive teaching authority.
  - From Pentecost, all believers looked to the apostles’ leadership (Acts 2:37).
  - They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching (Acts 2:42).
- Supernatural power?
  - Signs / wonders (Mt 10:1, Mk 6:7, 13, Lk 9:1-2, Acts 2:3-4, 5:12).
  - Authentication of the gospel truth, verification it received from Christ himself.
  - The Twelve were the foundation of the church, Christ being the cornerstone (Eph 2:20).
- Key passages to start:
  - Mt 10:1-4, Mk 3:13-19, Lk 6:12-16, Jn 6:60-71
- Matthew 4:17-22
  - What was the message of Jesus?
  - What is the relation between repentance, the kingdom of heaven and the light?
  - How has coming to know Jesus been like coming from darkness into light?
- Matthew 4:17-22
  - What invitation does Jesus give these fishermen?
  - What seems unusual about their response?
  - What prior knowledge of Jesus do you think they had (4:13, 17)?
  - How might have Zebedee have felt (4:22)?

•Matthew 4:17-22

–In what ways does God’s Kingdom seem present now for you? In way ways does it seem “not yet?”

–Spiritually, where are you?

- Preparing the nets?
- Leaving the boat?
- Following hard after Jesus?
- Feeling left behind?

•Matthew 10:1-4

–What did Jesus do before sending out His men?

–Why did Jesus choose a Zealot (guerrilla fighter committed to overthrow Rome) to be on His team with a tax collector (who worked with Rome)?

•Mark 3:13-19

–What qualities did the Twelve possess which might have caused Jesus to select them?

–What are they to do?

- Be with Jesus – what does this mean for you?
- Then go out to preach – what does this mean to you?

–What motivates you to seek after Jesus?

•Luke 6:12-16

–In the context of chapter six, what is significant about Jesus calling these men?

- A Sabbath controversy: the Twelve eating grain, the man with a withered hand.
- The Twelve may have been counter-culture?

–Choosing them was a renunciation of formal Judaism; a judgment on its spiritual leaders.

•These men were FAT: Faithful, Available, and Teachable.

•John 6:60-71

–What teaching do Jesus’ followers find so unacceptable (6:54-56)?

- Why do you think Peter and the others decided to stay? How does this relate to 6:65?
- What words of Jesus do you find hard to accept?
- Have you known anyone who stopped following Jesus? How did their action affect you?
- How do people today make Jesus into an errand boy for their own personal agendas?

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•The Master Who Called Them

•*Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God. (1 Cor 1:26-29)*

•Another Look

- If Jesus walked by the spot where you are seated right now, what three things would you observe about Him almost immediately?
- As you consider the Twelve, which one do you already identify with most closely? Why?
- Quote from page xiii – What observations about Jesus occur to you based on the way He chose His apostles?

•Their Teacher:

- What are the primary characteristics about Jesus' relationship with His disciples (the group) and His apostles (the Twelve)? pp.14-21.
- The difference between a student and an apostle.
- He knew that His earthly end was near, His impending death, resurrection and ascension.
- At this time, His focus changed from the multitudes to the Twelve.
- Top priority would be given to the ones He would leave behind to carry on the work.

•Their Uncommon Calling:

- Notice the chapter title. Why is Jesus' call an *uncommon calling*?
  - They found the church; They provide vital leadership; They are the channels for the N.T.
  - They were the only source for doctrine (Acts 2:42).
  - They were given to edify the church (Eph 4:11-12).
  - They were examples of virtue (Eph 3:5).
  - They had power to perform miracles to confirm their message (Heb 2:3-4).

•Quote from page 14

•Matthew 17:1-9 (ordinary men and extraordinary opportunities given to them).

- How does this passage illustrate the degree to which Jesus revealed Himself to His apostles?
  - He was with Moses (Law) and Elijah (Prophets).
  - They witnessed His glory (as from the beginning).
  - They heard the voice of the Father.

- They were not able to remain there, they had a task.
- They were told to remain quiet about this.
- The event did not really have a lasting effect upon His disciples, until much later.
- 1 Corinthians 1:26-29
  - What does this passage tell you about God and His purposes?
  - We do not need to be wise, powerful or wealthy.
  - God uses those the world considers foolish.
  - God uses the powerless to bring about His purpose.
  - No one then can boast in the presence of God.
- Apparent contradiction of callings?
  - What four “phases” does MacArthur use to explain the different texts (pp. 3-5)?
    - Calling to conversion (Jn 1:23-51); not yet into full time discipleship, remained in their jobs.
    - Calling to ministry (Lk 5:3-11); The timing was wrong, The place was wrong, Peter was exhausted.
    - Calling to apostleship (Matt 10:1-4, Lk 6:12-16); sort of internship, 2 X 2.
    - Calling to martyrdom (after the resurrection).
  - The first chapter deals mainly with phase three.
- Spending all night in prayer?
  - How does MacArthur describe the phrase, He “continued all night in prayer to God” (Lk 6:12)? (page 15)
  - Enduring a task through the night, remaining awake, immense weight upon Him (10-12 hours).
  - The whole night in the “prayer of God” in inter-Trinitarian communion.
  - Praying not for clarity on whom to choose; omniscience issue.
  - Praying for the men He would appoint; the absolute wisdom of His choice; acting as Mediator of their behalf.
- Cleansing of the Temple (Jn 2:13-16)
  - How did this event define the relationship with the religious establishment in Israel (p. 8)?
    - A devastating blow to institutionalized Judaism.
    - Religious nobility as thieves and hypocrites.
    - Condemned them for spiritual bankruptcy.
  - According to John, Jesus began His ministry in an all-out assault on the Jewish establishment.
  - Choosing the Twelve was also a judgment on institutionalized Judaism; common men rather than a Pharisee, Scribe or Sadducee.
  - What similarities do you see between the conditions in the early Temple and the present state of the church?

- Unconventional Wisdom?
  - Jesus violated modern conventional wisdom many times in His ministry. How did He do that (p. 2)?
    - He could have played off His popularity more.
    - Perhaps He could have exploited His fame.
  - He chose feeble men rather than advance His agenda through mob force, military might, personal popularity or a public relations campaign.
- Instruments in God's hands?
  - “Those men were instruments in God's hands – just as you and I can be God's instruments today.” (p. xv).
  - How would you explain that claim to a brand new believer who wonders where he or she fits in the church?
- Questions from John 1:47-49
  - Who brought Nathaniel to Jesus?
  - What was Nathaniel's reaction to Jesus' background?
  - What did Jesus' comment to Nathaniel reveal about the Savior's insight?
  - How did Nathaniel respond to Him?
  - How would you have responded?
  - It the fact of Jesus' complete knowledge of you a source of comfort or concern to you?
- Questions from Luke 6:12-16
  - What did Jesus do all night on the mountain?
  - What clue do you see in these verses that not all who follow Jesus will do so in the same way?
  - What are the main differences between how Jesus prayed and how you pray?
  - What keeps you from praying like Jesus?
  - If you were one of the Twelve, how would you want Luke to describe you?
  - Jesus spent the night interceding for the Twelve, how does this make you feel about His intercessory role in your life?
- Questions from Luke 5:17-39
  - What kind of response is Jesus receiving from those who observed His ministry?
  - Who were His opponents?
  - For what was Jesus criticized?
  - What is the motive behind the criticism?
  - Why did this recruitment come on the heels of this building opposition?
  - How can you learn from the way Jesus dealt with opposition that came His way?
- Questions from John 2:13-16
  - What did Jesus do upon entering the Temple?
  - How would you describe the place Jesus went to pray?
  - How were His actions received?
  - Does Jesus' behavior trouble you?

- When would it be appropriate to take such physical action to something or someone?
- If Jesus walked into your life today, what actions would He take to “clean house?”
- Questions from Luke 22:39-40
  - What was Jesus accustomed to doing?
  - How would you describe this place of prayer?
  - What did Jesus ask His disciples to pray about?
  - How did they respond to the request?
  - How would the place you regularly pray compare to the Mount of Olives?
  - Who might be observing your prayer routine?
  - What would happen if you invited them to join you?

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- The Men Jesus Called
- Another look:
  - These men were perfectly ordinary. What examples did MacArthur give? (p. xii)
    - None was renowned for scholarship.
    - No track record as theologians.
    - No outstanding abilities or intellect.
  - “One of the main things that motivated Tyndale to translate the Scriptures into the common language was a survey of English clergy.” What did that survey reveal? (p. 9)
    - Most did not know who the Twelve were!
    - Only a few could name four or five of the leaders.
  - “It’s not amazing that He drew so many disciples. What is amazing is that anyone rejected Him.” (p. 17) How does MacArthur explain why the masses quit following Jesus?
    - The message was more than they could bear.
    - They were following Him for the wrong reasons.
  - Explain what MacArthur says is the significance of the number twelve. (p. 19)
    - Symbolic importance – 12 tribes in Israel.
    - But Israel was apostate.
    - In choosing 12, he sought new leadership for a new covenant.
- Biblical connections:
  - Take a look at 2 Cor 2:16 as an observable strategy for God to use people (p. xiv). How does that text relate to the individuals Jesus chose as disciples? To what does this text ultimately point?
    - God uses weak vessels to accomplish His plans.
  - Zech 4:6 explains why Jesus chose a ragtag team of imperfect individuals instead of relying on a slick PR campaign or brute force. What does this verse suggest is more important than might or power? (pp. 2-3)
  - The third phase of the calling was to apostleship, when they were sent out 2x2 (Mk 6:7). Perhaps they were not ready to go it alone. What are four benefits of companionship (Ecc 4:9-12)?
    - Results in good reward for one’s work.
    - If one falls the other can help him up.
    - They will warm each other.
    - There is strength in numbers.



- Compare the qualities of leadership recorded in 1 Tim 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
  - What are the common elements?
    - Above reproach, temperate, self-controlled, respectable.
    - Husband of one wife, hospitable, teachable.
    - Not given to drunkenness, or lovers of money.
    - Manages one's own house.
  - Based on what you know of the Twelve, are ordinary individuals capable of these qualities?
    - They proved that you can be ideal without being perfect!
- According to Mark 3:14, what was the two-step process used in commissioning the Twelve?
  - To be with Him – being vs. doing; living in our strength or His? producing vs. abiding?
  - To be sent out to preach.
- Lesson highlights:
  - In what practical ways did the Twelve assist Jesus' growing ministry? (pp. xiv-xv)
    - Administrative assistance.
    - Division of labor.
    - Ministered to Jesus' daily needs.
  - Why did Jesus not choose the Twelve from the religious establishment? What elements of hypocrisy and hierarchy do you see today?
    - The leaders repudiated everything Jesus stood for.
    - They hated Him and His message.
    - He was a threat to their power.
  - The Twelve were Galileans. What conclusions may be drawn from that characterization? (p. 10)
    - Looked down upon them.
    - Unfair discrimination.
  - If Jesus chose Galileans today, from what people group in our culture might He draw?
  - The fact that Jesus chose these twelve from possibly hundreds of followers underscores what theological doctrine?
    - Divine sovereignty.
  - Why is election helpful to describe this reality? Or is it helpful?
    - In an election the person is free to choose whom they want.
    - That is the way it is with God. Under no obligation, He freely chooses who he wants.

- What four roles comprised their apostolic task? (pp. 22-23)
  - To be an ambassador – *Shaliah*, having authority; first preachers of the New Covenant & church leaders.
  - To edify the church – the foundation stones of the church, inspired by the Spirit to write God’s word.
  - To be examples of virtue (Eph 3:5 – holy apostles).
  - To perform miracles to confirm their message.
- Have you ever sensed that you were being used by God as an “instrument in His hands?”
- William Tyndale’s survey of 16<sup>th</sup>-century clergy revealed that few knew who the Twelve were. How many can you name without looking them up? (*Mt. and Mk. are different from Lk and Acts*)
  - Peter, Andrew, James and John.
  - Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew.
  - James (son of Alpheus), Thaddeus.
  - Simon (the zealot), Judas (Iscariot)
  - Judas (son of James – *is in Luke/Acts, no Thaddeus*)
- The apostles did not measure up in what five areas? (pp.25-26)
  - They lacked spiritual understanding (Matt 15:16-17, Lk 24:25).
  - They lacked humility (they were self-absorbed – Matt 20:20-28, Mk 9:33-37, Lk 9:46).
  - They lacked faith (four times, “O you of little faith” – Matt 6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8).
  - They lacked commitment (with Him when the crowds cheered, but fleeing when it got tough – Mk 14:50).
  - They lacked power (like unable to cast a demon, but Pentecost was on the way – Acts 1:8).
- Questions from 1 Cor 1:26-29
  - What does this text reveal about the kind of people God uses to do His work?
  - Identify the categories that are listed.
  - How do the Twelve qualify as fooling and weak?
  - Who comes to mind when you think of unlikely people God has used in your life?
  - What parallel “lack of qualification” similar to the Twelve do you see in your life?
  - Based on His track record with the Twelve and others, how does Jesus view your abilities and lack thereof?

•Questions from Matt 4:18-20

- What are the circumstance surrounding this encounter with Jesus?
- What did Jesus say to them? How might have Jesus tweaked his invitation to you?
- What thoughts are going through your head as you consider the invitation?
- What would have been your response?
- Describe the moment when you decided to “follow” Jesus?
- What caused you to respond the way you did?

•Questions from 1 Tim 3:2-7

- List the qualifications for a bishop or overseer.
- Circle those that the Twelve would not been good at when Jesus first chose them.
- How can you reconcile that God can choose nobodies but also has high expectations?
- Which qualifications in this passage are easy for you? Which are more difficult?
- What was the means by which the apostles grew in their grasp of these qualities?
- In what ways are you following through as a potential leader in the church?

•Questions from John 15:16

- Based on this verse, who deserves credit for your being in the family of God?
- For what purpose did Jesus choose you?
- Who bears the responsibility for accomplishing this purpose?
- What fruit does God want to grow in your life?
- Looking back on your life, what fruit has remained and what is no longer observable?
- What actions might God take with you so that you will bear more or much fruit?

•Questions from Acts 4:13

- What is it that stood out about the apostles?
- What two words describe their ordinariness?
- Besides the dialect, what else was apparent to the observers?
- How did “being with Jesus” affect the Twelve?
- What would it take for people to notice today that we have been with Jesus?
- How important is spiritual maturity in gauging personal effectiveness?
- What would it take to make maturity your most important measurement of progress?

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Leader of the Lot

•Another look:

- Quote on p. 29 about the four lists: Peter's name at the top, What does MacArthur suggest that means?
- Simon was a common name: what is the literal Greek meaning of Simon?
  - Literal Greek – *flat-nosed*. Similar name to to Simeon in the Hebrew OT.
- MacArthur mentions two distinct contexts where Simon was used (p. 35).
  - Secular – house, mother-in-law, fishing business.
  - Other times when he displayed unregenerate characteristics.
- In John's gospel, he refers to his friend fifteen times as Simon Peter; why both names (p. 36)?
  - Very good friends, saw both sides of the man.
  - Peter used the term for himself (2 Peter 1:1).
- Quote of J.R. Miller on p. 47: What six characteristics does MacArthur uncover in Peter's life?
  - Submission – ex. Temple tax (Mt 17:24).
  - Restraint – self-control and discipline.
  - Humility – tremendous self-confidence (Mt 26:31).
  - Love – loving service to one another (Lk 7:44, Jn 13).
  - Compassion – Strengthen your brothers (Lk 22:32).
  - Courage – knowing of his death (Jn 21:18).
- How are leaders often tempted by the sin of pride? – Humility must be learned.

•Biblical connections:

- Note the various “Simons” in the NT. What makes each person unique?
  - Matt 13:55 – Brother of Jesus.
  - John 6:71 – Father of Judas Iscariot.
  - Matt 26:6 – Leper who hosted Jesus.
  - Luke 7:36-40 – Pharisee who hosted Jesus.
  - Matt 27:32 – From Cyrene, who carried the cross.
  - Matt 16:17 – Son of John.
  - Luke 6:15 – The Zealot.
  - Acts 8:9 – The magician in Samaria.
  - Acts 9:43 – The tanner from Joppa.
- Peter's unique wiring from the womb to the tomb. What God-given fabric would you say he wove into your personality (Ps 139:13-16)?
- Read John 13:36-38 and John 21:15-17. What similarities do you see in these two texts?
  - Peter would deny Jesus three times (as predicted).
  - Jesus allows the opportunity to affirm his love for Him, perhaps making peace with himself.

- Look up 1 Peter 2:21-23.
- These words are written by the same person who tried to decapitate a man that ambushed Jesus in the Garden.
- How does this knowledge change your perspective on his sincerity?
- Look up 1 Peter 5:8-10.
- Preaching from the pulpit of personal experience, what is Peter saying about suffering?
  - He experienced the paw prints and claws of the lion.
  - He suffered from poor choices & personal ambition.
  - He reminds then that this type of suffering is a result of being a follower of Jesus in a fallen world.
  - It is to be expected.
- Highlighting the lesson:
  - Why did MacArthur suggest Jesus gave the nickname of “the Rock” to Peter? (p. 34)
    - Jesus may have been reminding Peter of his potential as a rock-solid leader.
    - By using this name Jesus wanted to challenge Peter’s tendency to be unreliable and shifty.
  - What three ingredients does the author suggest made up the raw material that contributed to Peter’s leader-like qualities? (pp. 40-43)
    - Inquisitiveness – curiosity, hunger for knowledge, problem-solver, asked to explain the hard sayings.
    - Initiative – drive, ambition, energy; to make things happen, he asked questions but also wanted to answer them, bold, decisive.
    - Involvement – in the middle of the action, you can’t follow a person who is not moving, Peter’s desire was to be were the action is.
  - Leaders are shaped by their experiences. What about Peter do you remember that suggest he graduated from the school of hard knocks?
  - How did Jesus prepare Peter to strengthen his brethren? (Lk 22:32).
    - Allowing Peter to learn by trial and error.
    - His experience gave him empathy for others.
    - He could also model personal and spiritual growth.
  - Read Galatians 2:7-14 – Paul relates an encounter with Peter where he appeared to be foolish. Which expression fits Peter best?
    - A double-minded man is unstable in his ways.
    - Once a Jew always a Jew.
    - Give me that old-time religion.
    - I don’t believe in breaking the law.

- Lasting implications:
  - Quote from p. 31 – based on this observation, how would you evaluate the effectiveness of your people management skills?
  - Remember Tommy Lasorda and Orel Hershiser (Bulldog). In what ways have others motivated you to actualize your God-given potential?
  - Most Christians are a combination of carnal and spiritual. Which of your behaviors and attitudes fit each category?
  - Peter had to learn of a new kind of love. (p. 55) Jesus demonstrated a love not based on feelings or reserved for loveable people. When has someone demonstrated that sort of love for you?
  - Peter refused to let Jesus wash his feet. (p. 54) Here is a picture of daily forgiveness that Jesus wants us to seek (Lk 11:4). How can you go about allowing the Lord to “wash your feet” each day?
- Questions from Luke 6:13-16
  - Whose name appears at the top of the list?
  - What clues do these verses provide you about those who made up the Twelve?
  - What significance should be placed on the order of names?
  - How do you feel about the fact that the apparent leader was such an impetuous person?
  - In what setting are you viewed as a leader?
  - Why did Jesus limit our information about most of these men?
- Questions from 2 Peter 1:1
  - How does Peter refer to himself here?
  - To whom is Peter writing?
  - If “Simon” is a formal reference or self-deprecating, which does it appear to be here?
  - Who is someone who has impacted your life in a positive way, and was not opposed to showing his imperfections?
  - What is a weakness you are willing to admit to others when you are trying to influence them?
  - Even with some “Simon” qualities, what is a “Rock” in your spiritual life?
- Questions from Luke 22:47-51
  - How did Peter react to the arrest of Jesus? (see also Jn 18:10)
  - How did the other disciple react at first?
  - What was Jesus’ response to Peter’s action?
  - In what way does Jesus make a case for His own death by what He says?
  - Motivated by love – when have you done the wrong thing for the right reason?
  - What is an area in your life where you are tempted to strike out rather than trust Jesus?

- Questions from Matt 16:16-23

- What does Peter do that warrants Jesus commendation?
- What does Peter do to warrant His rebuke?
- How is Peter’s response to Jesus’ talk about His death consistent with his understanding of Jesus’ identity or mission?
- Why do you think most Christians balk at “suffering and problems?”
- How do you respond to them in your life?
- Write a definition of “abundant life” that includes hardship and hurt, with God still in charge?

- Questions from John 13:3-17

- What did Jesus do as the Last Supper began?
- Why did He do that servant task?
- What was Peter’s initial reaction to foot-washing?
- What did he do when he understood that the water stood for spiritual cleansing?
- How would you respond to Jesus kneeling at your feet right now?
- What is Jesus’ attitude toward our pride?
- If foot washing signifies the grit and grime of sin, what is something that you need to confess?

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- Brother in the Background
- Another look:
  - The brothers were from Bethsaida (Jn 1:44, pp. 61-62), but that's not where they meet Jesus. Where are they located and what do you know of this place?
    - Capernaum, near Bethsaida.
    - Good fishing area.
    - North side of Galilee.
    - Junction of key trade routes.
  - Of the four in the inner circle, why is Andrew less conspicuous? (p. 63)
    - Scripture doesn't tell us a lot about him.
    - Limited references in the gospels.
    - He is mentioned only nine times, a part from the lists.
    - Most of these are insignificant references.
  - What indication is there that Andrew was a devout man before he met Jesus? (p. 64)
    - He traveled a great distance to hear John the Baptist preach in the Judean wilderness.
  - Why does MacArthur spend so much time introducing a Boston Sunday school teacher named Edward Kimball? (p. 69)
    - He was not an up-front leader guy.
    - He made significant contribution to Christianity by introducing Dwight L. Moody to Christ.
    - Moody influenced millions for the kingdom.
    - Like Andrew bringing Peter to see Christ.
  - What does tradition say about Andrew's death? (p. 74)
    - Lashed to a X shaped cross, not nailed.
    - He suffered longer, lasting two days.
    - He encouraged passersby to confess faith in Christ.
- Biblical connections:
  - In John 1:40-42, Andrew traveled far to hear John the Baptist. Andrew also sought his brother before anything else.
  - What does this say about Andrew's relationship with Simon? What does this teach us today about reaching family members?
    - He and his brother were close.
    - After coming to Christ it is natural to tell those closest to us.
  - In John 1:19-37, what prevents someone from reaching the conclusion that Andrew and John were fickle and lacked commitment by the way they left John for Jesus?



- John already said he was not the goal in their search.
- He pointed them to the One who was.
- John in essence released them to follow Jesus.
- In John 1:35-37 and Matthew 4:18-22, what about these passages indicates that following Jesus had been a process that involved the passage of time?
  - The two sets of brothers had returned to their fishing businesses after the first encounter with Jesus.
  - It is conceivable that several months had passed.
- In Matthew 4:18-22 and Luke 5:1-11, what obvious omission do you notice?
  - Andrews' name is missing from the Luke account.
  - This is an indicator that Andrew was in the background much of the time.
  - Perhaps he accepted his behind-the-scenes role.
- Highlighting the lesson:
  - What four indicators can you trace in Scripture that imply that Andrew had the right heart in order to be used effectively in the background? (p. 63)
    - He did not seek the center of attention.
    - Of the inner circle, Andrew is the most thoughtful.
    - Whenever he acted by himself, he did what was right.
    - Whenever he is expressly mentioned, Scripture commends him.
  - Andrew was the disciple who saw value in individuals. What evidence is there that Andrew brought people to Christ? (p. 67-68)
    - At the feeding of the 5000, Andrew brought the boy with the lunch to Jesus (Jn 6:7-9).
    - When a small group of Greek seekers wanted to see Jesus, Andrew made it happen (Jn 12:20-22).
  - Jesus taught about the significance of the “insignificant gift” (Lk 21:1-4). Andrew had likely already learned that lesson in a previous instance. What was that incident and how did it reveal one of Jesus' core values? (p. 72)
    - In John 6, Andrew spotted the boy with the bread and fish.
    - Even though he knew it would not feed the crowd, he knew it was something the Master could use.
  - Billy Graham for years had a program called “Operation Andrew” that was a people-to-people approach of bringing neighbors and friend and family to Jesus.
    - Why do you think it was called this?
    - Describe a person in our church that appears to be like Andrew.
- Lasting implications:
  - How is Andrew a better model for church most leaders than Peter?
  - Do our leaders at KG more resemble Andrew or Peter?
  - What person do you credit for inviting you to church or sharing the gospel with you?
  - Quote from p. 70 – who in our church fits this description?

•John 1:35-42

- What did Jesus say to Andrew and the others?
- What did they say to him?
- What is implied by the reference to the time of day John includes in this description?
- How much time do you think they spent in conversation with Jesus, where he lodged?
- How does Jesus still invite to “come and see?”
- What actions can you take to spend more time with Jesus?

•Matthew 3:1-6

- How does Matthew describe John the Baptist?
- Why was John such a phenomenon?
- If Andrew was a follower of John, was he willing to embrace the lifestyle of John? Why?
- Andrew’s name means *manly*. How does his temperament live up to that name?
- Peter was driven; Andrew was laid-back. Which do you more resemble?
- Andrew left the business for a cause. What cause would people say has captivated you?

•Matthew 4:18-22

- Why were Peter and Andrew fishing?
- What appears to be difference from John 1?
- How significant is the word “immediately?”
- Describe two decisions or actions based on God’s word that you did “immediately.”
- When have you sensed God calling you to lay down your work and spend time with him?
- What does “following Jesus” mean today?
- What is your following Jesus status?

•John 6:8-13

- What fact did Andrew bring to Jesus’ attention?
- Why was Andrew interested in the boy with his lunch?
- How much food was left over?
- What intrigues you the most in this miracle?
- Describe a time in our church when a seemingly insignificant action paved the way for a major accomplishment or blessing to many.
- When did God last use a little to bring about a huge result?

•Mark 9:33-37

- Why did the disciples hesitate to tell Jesus what they had been discussing on the road?
- How did Jesus’ definition of greatness differ from the disciples?
- What were the two unexpected illustrations of greatness Jesus used?
- Jesus followed this standard (Mark 10:43-45). How is “follow me” more than just walking behind him
- What is it about servanthood that is hard to swallow for most people?

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**Scott Chafee**  
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One Son of Thunder

•Another look:

—What are the reasons that Zebedee may have been a man of some importance? (pp. 77-78)

- Reference of “sons of Zebedee”
- Financial success in the fishing business
- “Known to the High Priest” (Jn 18:15-16) evidence of being a Levite

—What are five evidences that James was a strong leader (in the inner circle)? (p. 78)

- Only he, John and Peter were permitted to go with Jesus when He raised Jairus' daughter (Mk 5:37)
- The same group of three witnessed the transfiguration (Mt 17:1)
- He was among the four who questioned Jesus on the Mount of Olives (Mk 13:3)
- He was with Peter and John when Jesus asked them to pray with Him privately in the Garden (Mk 14:33)
- In two lists, he is listed just below Peter (Mk 3:16-19, Acts 1:13)

—Describe the mixed-race group called the Samaritans (p. 81)?

- Conquered by Assyrians, 722 BC
- Ten “lost tribes” of Israel?
- Captivity and resettlement
- Intermarriage, mixed blood
- Claimed to worship YHWH, founded their own priesthood, built their own temple, making a new religion based on human tradition

—What were the reasons that Jesus and the Twelve were turned away as they were passing through Samaria?

- They were on their way to Jerusalem to worship
- Samaritans believed the only place for true worship was Mt. Gerizim
- They knew Jesus' intention so they denied His request

•Biblical connections:

—Look at 2 Kings 9:20-10:31. Based on what we know about James, compare the similarities and differences of Jehu and James (p. 79)

- Similar personality and zeal
- Similar ambition and bloodthirsty tendencies
- Both were men of intense passion
- James however had a heart to please God
- Jehu's zeal was tainted with selfish ambition
- James may have been on the same road had Jesus not met him

- Zealots were often the terrorists of the day. But what differences do you see in the zealotness for God as seen in Jn 2:17 and Rom 2:17? What determines godly zeal?
  - Zeal based on personal ambition is misguided passion
  - That which is grounded in the knowledge of God’s will and Word is legitimate
- Calling fire from heaven. Why was it appropriate for Elijah (2 Kings 1:3-17) but inappropriate for James and John to do so? (pp. 84-87)
  - Elijah’s mission was different from Jesus’ mission.
  - Elijah was to warn and bring on judgment against extreme wickedness to maintain God’s glory.
  - At Jesus’ first coming, He was revealing a different perspective of God’s agenda: He did not come to destroy.
  - Humanly speaking: their motives were wrong, a tone of arrogance.
- James and John had no clue why they could not bring down judgment, but it can be clearer once they understood the rest of the story (Acts 8:5-8). Which is the best headline:
  - Forecasted firestorm fails to develop
  - Samaritans change their minds about Messiah
  - Unexpected investment in peace pays dividends
  - Flames of judgment give way to revival fire
  - Scolded disciples denounce Philip the evangelist
- What was the agenda of Jesus that prevented James and John from calling down fire?
  - Luke 19:10, Matt 20:28, John 3:16-17, Luke 9:55-56, John 12:46-47
- Thunderous personalities. Positive or negative traits (p. 80)?
  - Elijah, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, Jesus
  - All four are positive, zealous for the right reason
- Lesson highlights:
  - Knowing what we do about James, does it surprise you that he encouraged his mother to approach Jesus about who would be the greatest? (pp. 89-91)
- Lasting implications:
  - James may have come from a well-to-do family. How does someone’s family of origin influence the kind of things they expect from God?
  - What ways have we done as the Samaritans, developed a self-styled religious system?
    - Penitence exchanged for confessed sin forgiven
    - Worshipping God at our own convenient location
    - Accommodating sinful activity as acceptable in the church
    - Speaking in tongues as evidence of the Holy Spirit
  - Calling down fire was from a wrong motive. When do you think people are most tempted to cover their wrong motives by quoting a verse or example from the Bible?

- Can you name someone who has influenced your life that reminds you of James? How did that person shape your Christian devotion?
- Matt 17:1, Mk 5:37, 13:3, 14:33
  - List the people present in each scene and what is happening.
  - How would firsthand experience impact James’ faith?
  - How would it have affected your faith?
  - Which of these four experiences helped James to prepare for his martyrdom?
- Luke 9:51-56
  - What prompted James / John to call down fire?
  - What personal attitudes are revealed?
  - What strikes you as arrogant?
  - Name a time where you had seen Christians acting in a condescending manner to those who are obviously ungodly.
  - How would Jesus respond to such super-spirituality?
  - What have you learned about yourself in this passage?
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
  - What kind of life situations does this passage deal with?
  - What seems to be the bottom-line message in this poem?
  - For the Samaritans, it was not the time to kill, so what time was it for Jesus?
  - How do you determine how God wants you to act at any given time?
  - Think of a time when your first reaction was wrong but led to an important discovery.
- Matt 20:20-24
  - Identify the cast of characters in this one-act play.
  - How does Jesus respond to the mom’s request?
  - What did Jesus grant and what did He withhold in His response?
  - What about this scene is consistent with Zebedee being a man of influence and wealth?
  - What do you think about James and John so ready to drink the cup of sorrow?
  - What attitudes do you need to keep in check?
- Luke 22:24-34
  - What ungodly behavior is not attributed to individuals by name? Which one is tied to an individual?
  - How does Peter’s failure illustrate how easy it is to perceive greatness in oneself that is not merited?
  - Why did Jesus take the time to tell Peter the extent of his future failure?
  - Why do you think that people without material possessions are just as tempted as those who “have it all?”
  - The “who’s the best” debate came at the Last Supper. When was a time in your life when you were surrounded by believers, only to give in to ungodly thoughts or actions?

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A Study in Transformation

- Another look:
  - The son of thunder gets the nickname “the apostle of love.” What three areas of love does John write extensively about? (p. 96)
    - The Christian’s love for Christ
    - Christ’s love for His church
    - The Christian’s love for one another
  - What are examples of John’s black and white thinking? (p. 97)
    - Light and darkness / life against death
    - Kingdom of God vs. the kingdom of the devil
    - Children of God vs. children of the devil
    - Judgment of the righteous vs. the wicked
    - Resurrection to life vs. to damnation
    - Receiving Christ vs. rejecting Christ
    - Fruit vs. fruitlessness / obedience vs. disobedience
    - Love vs. hatred
    - 2 John 9
  - Quote from p. 96. What explains the change that took place in John? (p. 100)
    - Jesus has three years and transforms his character
    - A self-centered fanatic to a mature man of balance
    - A son of thunder into an apostle of love
  - When does the apostle learn the balance of truth and love? (p. 105)
    - Mark 9:38
    - Second John: First half is on love, second half on loyalty to God’s truth
  - To Peter Jesus said, “Feed My sheep.” What did the dying Savior say to John? Why did Jesus choose John for this task? (p. 115)
    - “Take care of My mother.”
    - As far as we know, John was the only one at the crucifixion
    - Jesus trusted John because he learned to be a humble and loving servant
- Biblical connections:
  - Does John tell us that Christians are incapable of sinning? (1 John 1:8-2:1; 3:5-6)
  - How does that compare to Paul? (Rom 7:14-24)

- John is concerned with the overall pattern of a person's life – righteousness is to mark the believer's life
- Paul is concerned with exceptions that occur in a person's life because we live in an imperfect world
- Mark 9:1-38 – The transfiguration story
- Why do the events on the mountain fulfill the prediction made in 9:1?
  - Appearance of Moses and Elijah with the glorified Jesus
  - The disciples witness the kingdom in a special way
  - Jesus was not speaking of an end-of-world experience
- Why would it be difficult for these ambitious men to not talk about this experience?
- Why would such an experience make it easy to start debating issues of status?
  - They would want to add this to their list of achievements
  - This meant prestige among their peers
  - That is why they talked about it with themselves
  - They milked this ego-boosting moment for all it's worth
- John celebrates the gift of forgiveness (1Jn 1:9) as we confess sin. Jesus helped John discover forgiveness earlier...
  - Mark 9:33 – Jesus does not ask what they were talking about because he did not know, he wanted to provide them an opportunity to confess their selfish actions
  - Mark 9:35-37 – John is convicted of his sectarianism when he hears Jesus extol the virtues of servanthood. John confesses his guilt.
- Paul paints a picture of spiritual maturity (Eph 4:13-15)
- What suggests this is a lifetime process?
- Was it a lifetime project for John?
- Lesson highlights:
  - John was a seeker of truth like Andrew, traveling far to see John the Baptist. In spite of John's disciplined search for truth, why was he a difficult person to be around?
    - He was lacking in love and compassion for people
    - He had to learn that knowing truth and living according to the truth were different things
  - John had a low aptitude for tolerance, and did not score too well in humility. What makes you think that Jesus had a remedial student on his hands (Mark chapters 9-10)?
  - In light of Mark 9:35-37, we understand why John's favorite term for his readers is "my little children."
  - Was this an indication that he finally caught on?

- They wanted to be important, Jesus said to become like children
- Now they fuss about seating arrangements, (just like children)?
- Which indicator strikes you as the evidence that he caught on to humility? (p. 110-111)
  - In his gospel he never mentions his name
  - He never paints himself in the foreground as a hero
  - Only John includes the servanthood of Jesus washing the disciples' feet
  - The letters mention "little children" and "beloved" and he calls himself a brother and fellow child of God
  - In the Revelation he writes he is a brother and companion even though he is the last surviving apostle
- Lasting implications:
  - John appeared to have grown up in spiritual maturity. What qualities do you normally associate with someone who is spiritually mature?
  - Our best characteristics can become an occasion for stumbling...ambition not balanced with humility can lead to pride. How might these qualities get corrupted by sin?
    - Dedication to job
    - Financial generosity at church
    - Sensitivity to the feelings of others
  - What is the risk of preaching about love and tolerance at the exclusion of issues the Bible clearly speaks against?
  - What qualities of children do you think Jesus had in mind when he called John to become more like them?
- Mark 9:38-41
  - What did John confess he had done?
  - How did Jesus respond?
  - If this was your first encounter with John, what kind of person do you think he is?
  - When are you most tempted to protect your group's way of doing things?
  - Which describes how our church welcomes new people?
  - Are you sure we're the church you're looking for?
  - What took you so long? We've been waiting for you.
  - Follow me. I'll show you around.
  - You're new? I didn't know.
  - We're excited about the new ideas you will bring to our church.
  - What does this say about our attitude toward guests?



- Romans 6:6-7
  - What is the Christian's relation to sin?
  - Read Rom 7:14-24, is this a description of a slave to sin?
  - Read Heb 12:1-2 and write out a description of an ensnaring sin.
  - What ensnaring sin can be a battle ground in our church?
  - What advice does John give? (1Jn 1:9)
  - What is God's response to our confession of sin?
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-5
  - Paraphrase Paul's words so you can understand.
  - Why would a person from an affluent background (like John) have difficulty digesting this definition of love?
  - Which characteristic do you still lack?
  - Which is he building in your life right now?
  - When are you most in need of being reminded that loving means giving up your rights?
  - Even with Paul's love chapter, John writes more about love. What verse stands out to you?
- Luke 14:7-11
  - What setting does Jesus picture here?
  - Where was he when he gave these instructions?
  - What elements of the instructions seem counter-cultural in our society?
  - What suggests that our humility may not go unnoticed?
  - What should be our response if we take the lowest seat and no one seems to notice?
- Revelation 1:9
  - What words does John use to describe himself?
  - How are these self-effacing terms?
  - Other than siblings, who else do you consider your brothers and sisters?
  - In what ways are those terms more than just a handy means of address?
  - Why is this kind of relationship necessary in order to balance a life of love and truth?

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The Dense Disciple

•Another look:

–What evidence is there that Philip, Nathanael and Thomas were all fisherman from Galilee? (p. 120)

•In John 21 – Gone fishing...Going with you...

•Thomas and Nathanael are included

•Based on implication, the other two unnamed disciples would be Philip and Andrew

–Peter, Andrew, James and John were directed to Jesus by John the Baptist. What made Philip's encounter with Jesus unique? (p. 122)

•He was the first person Jesus ever said, "Follow Me"

–What might explain why the Greeks sought out Philip when they wanted to see Jesus? (p. 128)

•Philip had a Greek name! (John 12:20-21)

–Philip saw the very face of God and it still was not clear to him. What may have caused his lack of insight? (p. 133)

•He was limited by earthbound thinking, his materialism, his skepticism, his obsession with mundane details, his preoccupation with business details, his small-mindedness

•Biblical connections:

–God takes initiative in seeking those with whom he desires a relationship. How is this illustrated:

•Jeremiah 1:4-5

•Psalm 139:1-16

•Ephesians 1:1-14

•Jeremiah celebrates God's foreknowledge and the other two we see a similar emphasis. God is the first mover.

–Philip is quick to tell Nathanael that "we have found him" (Jn 1:45). How do you make sense of this apparent contradiction?

•From a divine point of view God seeks us

•From a human point of view we interpret such encounters from our vantage point

–Jesus wants to test Philip's faith (Jn 6:1-7). What benefits are there to such testing?

•1 Peter 1:3-9 – genuineness of faith

•James 1:2-8 – development of perseverance

•Psalm 139:23 – anxiousness in our hearts

•1 Tim 3:10 – readiness for service

–Did Philip doubt that salvation was for the Gentiles (Matt 10:5-6, 15:24). In what way does Paul clarify this seeming exclusiveness?

- Jesus’ primary thrust was to reach the Jews
- This was a priority issue
- The Gentiles were always a part of God’s redemptive plan! What do these passages reveal?
  - Genesis 12:1-3
  - John 1:11-12
  - Phil 2:4-11
  - Rev 7:9-10

•Lesson highlights:

–Which of the following phrases best reflects why Jesus chose these men?

- Beggars can’t be choosers
- They were the best I could find
- At least they’re willing
- Availability is more valuable than ability

–Philip had a rough exterior but he had a soft spot for truth. In what ways does Jesus celebrate this softness?

- Philip was also following John the Baptist
- He was a student of the Scriptures, claiming he had found the promised Messiah
- He is invited to follow and was eventually chosen

–“Come and see” – In what way is “seeing is believing” really backwards?

–Read John 14:7-11. What about Jesus’ question to Philip suggests that faith is something a person must choose to act on?

–How would the fact that many of the Twelve already knew each other benefit Jesus as he began to train his men?

–Who was the first person Philip went to after Jesus tracked him down? Friendships are a great place to start in evangelism.

–Think of a time in our church where preoccupation with details prevented our people from seeing the big picture?

–Are you encouraged or appalled at Philip’s comment in the upper room the night before Jesus died?

–In what ways did Jesus challenge Philip’s comfort zone? From what comfort zone does the Lord want to remove you?

•John 21:2-14

–What does Peter feel like doing?

–Has Peter chosen an activity others are interested in pursuing?

–What activity would you have probably resorted to as a way of getting back to normal?

–What is very similar with these men to before their meeting Jesus?

–In what ways does your life continue to exhibit traces of habits and views from your time before Christ?

•John 1:43, 21:19-22

- How are these similar? How are they different?
- Who were the participants in each event?
- What did the phrase, “Follow Me” imply for Philip in John 1?
- What did the phrase imply for Peter in John 21?
- When was the last time you sensed Jesus speaking to you about a decision or choice in your life and saying, “Follow Me?”

•John 6:5-10

- Why did Jesus ask Philip where they could find food for the crowd?
- What did Philip reply?
- How would characterize his tone?
- Did Philip pass the faith test?
- What is an impossible situation you are currently facing that you are reluctant to trust the Lord for?
- What is the basis for your reluctance?
- What could Jesus be planning to allow this into your life?

•John 14:1-11

- What does Jesus reveal about himself?
- What does he reveal about his intentions?
- How confident is Jesus that they understand?
- Does Philip’s lack of understanding surprise you?
- What does “spending time with the Lord” mean to you right now?
- Just “spending time” with Jesus was not enough for Philip. How can you improve your understanding of spiritual matters?

•1 Corinthians 1:27-29

- How does God consider “weak” and “foolish” people?
- How is God’s choice of servants compare with your idea of the worthiness of people?
- When do you feel least qualified to be recognized as a follower of Jesus?
- When you feel most qualified, what is going on in your life to give such confidence?
- What is the difference between reasonable and humble confidence on one hand, and dangerous pride on the other?

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Purely Prejudice

•Another look:

- Other than the fact that their names are linked in each of the synoptic lists of the Twelve, why would we believe Nathanael and Philip to be good friends?
- According to John 1:45, after Jesus called Philip to follow Him, we are told that Philip immediately went to tell Nathanael. Why else would he do this unless they were close?
- According to MacArthur, it was prejudice that skewed the view of Jesus' contemporaries from being able to see Him as the Messiah. What were the three kinds of prejudice the author identifies?
- The religious establishment was dominated by hypocrisy and false piety while the disciples (with the exception of Judas) had hearts that were open to the truth and hungry to know it. According to the author, "They were sincere in their love for God and their desire to know the truth" (p. 137).
- Jesus is an Aramaic name. What is its equivalent in Hebrew? And what does that Hebrew name mean (p. 138)?
- In Hebrew, Jesus' name is Joshua, which means "Yahweh is salvation."
- "It is inconceivable to Nathanael that the Messiah would come out of a tacky place like Nazareth" (p. 140). On what does the author base this statement?
- The author states that Nazareth was an uncultured place, full of evil, corrupt, and populated with sinful people.
- According to MacArthur, it was prejudice that skewed the view of Jesus' contemporaries from being able to see Him as the Messiah. What were the three kinds of prejudice the author identifies?
- The prejudice was directed at Jesus because:
  - He was a Galilean and a Nazarene.
  - He was an uneducated person outside the religious establishment.
  - His message offended them.

•Biblical connections:

- When John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and declared Him to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, those who heard him understood what he was referring to. Based on the following passages in the Old Testament, what symbol does the "lamb" suggest?
  - Genesis 22:1–14
  - Exodus 12:21–23
  - Leviticus 4:32–35

- Leviticus 16:1

- In each case the lamb is the required sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin.

- In John 1:46, Nathanael's response betrays a bias against people from Nazareth. What "prejudicial" assumptions are made against Jesus in the following verses? In what way are they similar to the ways people are discriminated against today?

- John 7:52 - against people from Galilee (lower class).

- Luke 4:22 - against carpenters (commoners).

- Isaiah 53:1-3 - against the unpopular & unattractive.

- Read Matthew 23:13-33. In contrast to the sincerity of faith that is portrayed in Nathanael (p. 143), the religious leaders of Jesus' day were "*alethos* challenged." What of the following phrases captures the essence of their hypocrisy?

- "Do as I say, not as I do."

- "God looks on the outward appearance; man looks on the heart."

- "Nobody's perfect."

- "Gimme a break! I'm doing the best I can!"

- Read Luke 2:25-32. Although Simeon was much older than Nathanael, and although he met Jesus much earlier than Nathanael did, what was true of both of these men and their responses to Jesus?

- They both were students of the Scriptures and were looking for the Messiah. They both readily responded when they met Jesus for the first time.

- When Jesus encountered Nathanael, He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John 1:51). After reading Genesis 28:12, explain what Jesus is saying about Himself.

- Jesus is the "ladder." He alone is the means by which we reach the Father.

- Highlighting the lesson:

- Nathanael was interested in the fulfillment of prophecy. Based on how Philip referenced Jesus to him, it was obvious he had devoted time to study and reflection of Moses' writings and those of the prophets. Does this surprise you considering that Nathanael most likely was a fisherman? Why or why not?

- Jesus called attention to Nathanael's personal discipline of studying and reflecting on the Scripture. That's what Jesus was referring to when He said, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you" (John 1:48). Why did the author suggest that this figure of speech meant that Nathanael was given to personal prayer and reflection (p. 145)?

- Most of the cooking was done indoors so trees were planted outside to provide a cool shaded place to which to retreat. A fig tree grew to fifteen feet and was a wonderful location for reflection away from the heat and hurry of the activities in the home.

- In spite of Nathanael's devotion to Scripture, he was not devoid of personal imperfection. What was his signature sin? Why would the fact that Nathanael was raised in Cana contribute to the irrational nature of prejudice?
- His comment about Nazareth indicates he was down on "Nazarenes." Cana was just as much on the wrong side of the tracks as Nazareth. It doesn't make sense that Nathanael would put down a group of people who were no different from him.
- From the start, Nathanael confessed, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (John 1:49). What was it that led him to this conclusion from day one, when Philip still didn't recognize it after three years of walking with Jesus?
- He recognized the supernatural power of Jesus' omniscience.
- Lasting implications:
  - When Philip told Nathanael that he had found Jesus, he didn't say, "I've found a man who has a wonderful plan for your life" or "someone who can fix your marriage." How did he present Jesus as One for whom they'd been looking?
  - Why is it the norm today to offer Jesus as someone who can meet felt needs instead of someone who is the essence of the Truth?
  - What prejudices do the people in your sphere of influence tend to have? Are these as irrational as the one Nathanael struggled with? Why or why not?
  - What can Nathanael teach us about where the ideal place might be to spend time with the Lord?
- Read John 1:43–47
  - What in the passage suggests that Philip had a preexisting relationship with Nathanael?
  - In what ways do these verses suggest that Nathanael was ready to respond to Jesus?
  - For both Philip and Nathanael it took "personal study" and "being asked" to trigger their commitment. Based on your observations, are these two qualities always crucial in someone's surrendering to Christ? Why or why not?
  - What would you say were the two or three most significant hurdles God took you over on your way to commitment to Christ?
  - What individual has been like Philip for you? In other words, who came alongside you and suggested you check out Jesus for yourself?
  - What caused you to trust that invitation?
  - For whom have you been a Philip? In whose life might God use you in that role on their way to faith?
- Read John 1:43–47
  - What did Philip say to appease Nathanael's curiosity and doubt?
  - How did Nathanael respond to Philip's invitation?
  - Does his response surprise you? Why or why not?

- What principle can be extracted from this passage about dealing with people who know what you believe but aren't sure about it themselves?
  - Under what circumstances would it be appropriate to say to a neighbor or friend, "Come and see what you think about the place I go to church"?
  - What did Nathanael's readiness to take the next step reveal about his character?
  - In light of that, how could you advance a neighbor's readiness little by little?
- Read John 1:47–51
- What does verse 47 imply about Nathanael's ultimate response to Philip's invitation in verse 46?
  - What did Jesus observe before He actually spoke to Nathanael?
  - Does it seem that Nathanael was surprised by Jesus' affirming words to him? Why or why not?
  - How would you have reacted if Jesus had said those words to you?
  - Being known as a person who is "truly" God's own and in whose heart there is no deceit doesn't require you to be sinless. What does it require?
  - Would you say you are a person who is without deceit? What would people who know you say? Explain.
  - Are you more like Philip or Nathanael? Explain.
- Read 2 Corinthians 4:3–4
- How does Paul describe those who resist God's truth in this passage?
  - How does each comparison illustrate an aspect of resistance to God?
  - What does the "god of this age" do to blind us through issues of prejudice (as represented by his influence in our culture)?
  - How would you describe the remedy for this blindness?
  - What about Nathanael's experience indicates that it is very easy to be prejudiced toward others who are, in reality, not all that different from you?
- Read John 2:25
- What does this verse suggest Jesus can do?
  - How did He demonstrate His ability in His encounter with Nathanael?
  - What are the possible reactions a person might have to Jesus' complete knowledge of him or her (from a distance)?
  - If Jesus were to have said to you that He saw you under the fig tree reading, would you be pleased that He knew the kind of material you tend to read? Why or why not?
  - How does the fact that nothing in you is hidden from God's sight affect your sense of personal privacy?
  - How should Jesus' omniscience affect the way Christians pray?
  - Describe one quality of Nathanael you would like God to build into your life?



**Twelve Ordinary Men**  
**Scott Chafee**  
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Publican and the Pessimist

•Another look:

•According to MacArthur, “Most members of the Jewish establishment in Jesus’ day were so utterly blind that when the Messiah came and did miracles before their eyes, they still did not see Him as the Messiah” (p. 150). In fact, what does the author say happened to Jesus the first time He preached in public?

•Those in the synagogue looked for a way to have Jesus murdered.

•MacArthur writes, “Matthew was a tax collector—a publican—when Jesus called him. That is the *last* credential we might expect to see from a man who would become an apostle of Christ” (p. 151). What does he mean by this?

•Tax collectors were the most despised people in all Israel. They were more worthy of scorn than the Roman soldiers who occupied the Jews’ land. In the words of the author, “Most were despicable, vile, unprincipled scoundrels” (p. 152).

•The author alleges, “Matthew’s only friends were the riffraff of society—petty criminals, hoodlums, prostitutes, and their ilk” (p. 153). Why would this be the case?

•Since tax collectors were considered traitors to their nation, they would have been considered social and religious outcasts as were the criminals and prostitutes. Similar people (or at least similarly outcast people) hung together.

•MacArthur says this about Thomas: “He is usually nicknamed ‘Doubting Thomas,’ but that may not be the most fitting label for him. He was a better man than the popular lore would indicate” (p. 157). Still, Thomas did have a personality quirk that causes the author to liken him to what character in “Winnie the Pooh”?

•Eeyore, the pessimistic donkey.

•Following Thomas’s encounter with Jesus after the resurrection, MacArthur describes the scene (p. 164). What does the author contend was the cause of this dramatic personality change?

•The appearance of Jesus was beyond Thomas’s wildest expectations. The presence of the Savior transformed this previously pessimistic disciple into a great evangelist.

•Biblical connections:

•P. 150-151, the author links the verses of Isaiah that Jesus read in the synagogue with those who were in attendance. Ironically, this description of the Messiah’s mission was intended to be good news. Based on MacArthur’s interpretation, why was it received as bad news? Read Luke 4:18–19 as well as Isaiah 61:1–2.

- Those in attendance the day Jesus read this prophecy of Isaiah not only took exception that He was implying that He was the Messiah, they also felt He was implying that they were blind, oppressed, and imprisoned by their spiritual ignorance.
- Jesus deliberately passed over those who were aristocratic and influential and chose men mostly from the dregs of society. But according to the author, “That is how it has always been in God’s economy” (p. 149). What comes through loud and clear in the following passages of Scripture?
  - Psalm 8:2
  - Isaiah 26:5–6
  - Ezekiel 21:26
  - Zephaniah 3:12
  - Each of these passages calls attention to the fact that God exalts the humble and lays low those who are proud.
- Apparently Jesus had a special place in His heart for tax collectors. How do the following references confirm or contradict that impression?
  - Each one of the tax collectors specifically mentioned received forgiveness. They responded positively to the message Jesus declared.
- Read John 11:4–16. In verses 5 and 6, the author points out an interesting juxtaposition of thoughts. What is it? What principle about God’s way versus man’s way can you glean from the way the story actually concludes? State that principle in a headline for the *Jerusalem Post-Gazette*.
  - Jesus loved Lazarus and his family, but when He heard Lazarus was dying, He stayed put.
- Although Thomas is often called “the doubter” (based on his comments in John 20:25), what in the following verses suggests that others might be just as deserving of that label? What in the verses gives you reason to identify with these “ordinary men”?
  - Mark 16:10–11
  - Mark 16:13
  - John 20:20
  - In each verse the disciples were not prone to believe at first blush that Jesus was alive. This apprehension to accept the unthinkable is only natural and should serve to comfort us when we find faith a challenge.
- Highlighting the lesson:
  - What was Matthew’s first impulse after Jesus invited him to follow?
    - Matthew was so overwhelmed with joy when he was accepted (and forgiven) by Jesus that he looked for a tangible way to express his happiness. He threw a party at his home.
  - Whom did Matthew invite to be part of his celebration? What are you inclined to view as a transferable principle in this “paradigm of conversion”?

- He invited those who were part of his circle of friendship. It appears from this scenario that when Jesus enters a person's life, some kind of response is required. And what is more, that response would naturally include those with whom you share the most in common.
- The immediacy of Matthew's response is remarkable when you consider that he left his toll booth standing in the middle of the road. What can you assume about this notorious tax collector as you make sense of his irreversible decision?
  - Obviously knowledgeable of the Scriptures (self-taught no doubt), he was also obviously morally bankrupt and sick of the life he led. He was only too ready to have the opportunity to start over again.
- MacArthur describes Thomas as pessimistic. But he doesn't leave it at that. He suggests that our first peek into the personality of this man (John 11:16) should alert us to his pessimistic heroism. What does he mean by this? What does it suggest about Thomas?
  - Even though Thomas was convinced that the worst lay ahead, he was willing to lay down his life as a loyal follower of Jesus to embrace that dreadful future. As the author says, "It's not easy to be a pessimist" (p. 160). Still you have to admire Thomas for sensing what was around the corner but still choosing to stay with the plan. It was an indicator of raw courage, but also love for and belief in Jesus.
- Thomas was not present with the other disciples when Jesus first entered the Upper Room after the resurrection (pp. 162–163). What about his personality would explain his desire to be alone?
  - A melancholy personality would be deeply impacted by Jesus' death. His love of the Savior was unquestioned. He was hurting big time.
  - When Jesus invites Thomas to see and touch His wounds, we realize that Jesus wasn't physically present when the "doubting" disciple voiced his reservations. But, Jesus was aware of what was said. In addition to His omniscience, Jesus is the epitome of unconditional non-judgmental love. He doesn't put Thomas down for his questions. Instead, He holds out His scarred hands.
- Lasting implications:
  - Apparently what separated the men Jesus overlooked from the boys He called to be His followers was their willingness to admit to their own sinfulness. If forgiveness and unconditional love are the payout for such a confession, why did so many people try to cover up their need for Christ then? What about now?
  - Matthew threw a huge party for Jesus at his home. He invited his notorious friends in order to introduce them to his newest friend. In what ways might a home be a perfect place of hospitality and ministry?
  - For this tax collector, hosting a dinner party for Jesus was his way of acknowledging that a change had occurred in his heart. What other tangible ways can you think of that would signal "salvation has come to this house" (as recorded about Zacchaeus in Luke 19:9)?

- As cautious as this pessimist was, Thomas was the first one to suggest that all the disciples go with Jesus to Bethany, even though it meant walking into enemy territory. What did this seem to suggest about faith in Christ?
- There is no indication that the disciples in the Upper Room were bent out of shape over the fact that Thomas was not with them. How important is it to allow people space to deal with their feelings when they think that people (or God) have disappointed them? What tact would you take with someone like Thomas?
- Read Luke 5:29–32
  - Who were the invited and the party-crashers at the feast Matthew (Levi) hosted?
  - What was the complaint of the scribes and Pharisees?
  - How would you express a contemporary version of this same complaint?
  - How did Jesus defend His willingness to spend time in such a setting?
  - Based on the metaphor Jesus employed, can you draw the implication from this that every person is spiritually sick? Why or why not?
  - Complete this sentence: I am more likely to be like the Pharisee in this parable when I...
  - Complete this sentence: I am more likely to be like the tax collector in this parable when I...
- Read Matthew 22:21 and Romans 13:7
  - What is the purpose of taxation?
  - What is a Christian's responsibility to the government when it comes to paying taxes?
  - Why would a tax collector be held at arm's length by the Jews?
  - What do you think it would be like to have a job that exposes you to the instant suspicion and hatred of others?
  - How might a person's frustration with his or her job actually result in an openness to the gospel?
  - What about your work sets you up to be misjudged by peers? How does that tension affect your day-to-day experience of God's presence in your life?
- Read John 11:1–16
  - List the participants in these dramatic moments with a one-sentence description of each one's part in the events.
  - What surprises you about Jesus in this passage?
  - Based on what you thought you knew about Thomas, what surprises you about him in these verses?
  - What proof is there that Thomas was the obvious leader in this situation?
  - How would you describe someone you know who, if he or she suggested you join in doing something daring, you'd follow in a heartbeat?
  - What is it about some people that makes them "followable" in that way?
  - In what circumstances do you think you would be willing to die for your faith?

- Read John 20:19–29

- What did Jesus do that caused the disciples to recognize Him almost immediately?
- Exactly what conditions did Thomas require of Jesus before he could believe the Resurrection?
- How do you explain Jesus' gentleness with Thomas?
- What does Jesus say to Thomas that challenges him not to rely so much on physical proofs?
- Do you think Thomas was spooked or encouraged by the fact that Jesus knew about his secret doubts?
- How should the fact that the risen Christ is everywhere present even though we don't see Him elevate an ordinary disciple to an extraordinary one?

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The Not-So-Well-Known Trio

- Another look:
  - According to MacArthur, quote on p. 167. What explanation does he give for this?
    - The Gospel writers wanted the essence of their story to be about Jesus. The references to the apostles provided color and contrast, but the spotlight remained on Jesus. Scripture deliberately records more about Jesus and His teaching than it does about the lives of these men.
  - On page 168 the author writes... How does MacArthur describe their actions in the aftermath of Pentecost?
    - They are strong and courageous.
    - They perform great miracles.
    - They preach with newfound boldness.
  - Besides the two men named James who were part of the Twelve, MacArthur observes, “There are several men with the name *James* in the New Testament” (p. 171). One of the “others” MacArthur describes in some detail became the leader of the Jerusalem church and wrote the small epistle near the end of the New Testament. What is particularly interesting about this James?
    - This James was the half brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:19).
  - MacArthur lists four basic divisions of the Jews that existed in the first century (p. 175). Briefly describe each of them.
    - Pharisees—these religious fundamentalists were fastidious about the law.
    - Sadducees—these rich religious liberals denied the supernatural.
    - Essenes—these ascetic celibates lived in the desert studying the Law.
    - Zealots—these terrorists wanted to overthrow the Roman government.
  - The author points out that the traditional apostolic symbol of Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus is a club (p. 180). Explain why this symbol could be both appropriate and ironic.
    - Tradition says that Judas was clubbed to death for his faith. For a tenderhearted “mamma’s boy,” such an end was truly a testament to his devotion and courage.
- Biblical connections:
  - Read John 6:43–71. Based on what Jesus taught in this passage, many turned away from Him. What appears to have been the cause of this desertion? Why didn’t the Twelve abandon Him as well?

- Jesus taught what seemed to some to be cannibalism. To others it was clear that He was equating Himself with God (like “manna from heaven”). In either case, most were offended. But the disciples did not bail out because they understood enough of the veiled language to sense that Jesus was their only hope. They were courageous to be sure. But Jesus also makes reference in John 6:44 that the Father was involved in drawing to Him those who would remain.
- In Hebrews 11:32–38 we find references to anonymous heroes of the faith. The majority of the apostles would find company with these “no-names” because they are not described in the Gospels in detail. After reading over the passage in Hebrews, explain why James the Less, Simon the Zealot, and Judas (not Iscariot) were not given celebrity status in spite of their heroic faithfulness to Jesus.
  - They were not the only ones who suffered for their faith. In fact, “saints in the shadows” is the norm in the Scriptures.
- Read Acts 5:20–40. Gamaliel calls for caution in evaluating the apostles’ behavior. He makes reference to the founder of the Zealots. How is the reliability of Scripture underscored by reference to verifiable historical events? In what way does the plight of Judas the Galilean validate Jesus’ words in Matthew 26:52?
  - When events of secular history are mentioned in Scripture, the accuracy of the Bible in the minds of nonbelievers is elevated. Judas the Galilean was wiped out (along with the other Zealots) because violence ends in a violent way. No wonder Jesus taught the concept of forgiveness and turning the other cheek.
- The only words we hear from the lips of Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus are in a conversation he had with Jesus recorded in John 14:21–23. Explain the logic of his question as well as the logic of Jesus’ answer.
  - It would be only natural for Judas to wonder why he and his friends were being given the opportunity to encounter the Messiah. Who were they to deserve such an honor? Who indeed! Jesus explains that His approach with them (a nonmilitaristic kingdom) is accessible to all who open their hearts to Him.
- What about the question that Judas (not Iscariot) asked Jesus is consistent with Judas’s nicknames?
  - Unlike brash Peter who challenges Jesus, or James and John who boldly ask for favors, Judas the tenderhearted gentle man quietly asks a question that isn’t an affront to anybody. And Jesus graciously answered him in kind.
- Highlighting the lesson:
  - P. 170-171, MacArthur makes reference to the fact that we see the apostles’ shortcomings and weaknesses more than we do their strengths. Other than underscoring the reliability of the Scriptures, why would the Gospel writers opt for such raw honesty in the description of the Twelve?

- It is an intentional ploy on their part to remind us that Jesus is pleased to use imperfect people in His mission. Reading about these men allows us to identify with them more than we would with superheroes.
- The only thing we really know about James the Less is that he was the son of a man named Alphaeus; the only distinguishing mark of this man was his obscurity. In what way does obscurity promote the biblical virtue of humility? (See 1 Peter 5:6.)
  - From James’s point of view, if you aren’t in the spotlight, you don’t have to deal with ego as much.
  - From our point of view, the lack of description helps us see that God uses humble servants who aren’t “in it” for the glory. We can be assured that God has a place for the humble. On the other hand, if we struggle with issues of ego or pride, it is for God to humble us.
- In spite of the lack of recognition James the Less (and many others of the Twelve) received, Jesus was quite clear about the reward they would be due in eternity. Read Mark 10:29–31. How might James’s lack of celebrity illustrate “deferred gratification”—yet another biblical virtue?
  - James was not concerned about being remembered in a book Matthew or John would write. He was most concerned with what Jesus had promised. He understood that waiting for ultimate rewards and recognition was far more important than seeking short-lived pleasure or popularity in this life.
- God’s sense of humor is evidenced in the fact that Matthew (a tax collector who worked for the Romans) and Simon (a Zealot who hated the Romans) were both selected by Jesus to be disciples. How did this unlikely scenario promote the kind of tolerance and cooperation God desires among those in His church?
  - Jesus desires us to learn to get along with and appreciate those who come at life differently than we do. This is a wonderful example of “bearing with one another” (Colossians 3:13).
- P. 178 quote, we see how the names associated with Judas (not Iscariot) actually reveal to us who he was. Jesus chose a “tender” man to soften the rough edges of hardheaded individuals like Peter, James, and John. What would Judas have learned from those who were unlike him?
  - Judas was a gift to the group. They were a gift to him. His soft-spoken, gentle personality helped the group mellow out. The outspoken extroverts helped Judas know how to speak up and be assertive. As Paul suggests in 1 Corinthians 12, every part of the body is important and contributes to the whole.
- Lasting implications:
  - MacArthur says, “If the faults and character flaws of the apostles seem like a mirror of your own weaknesses, take heart. These are the kinds of people the Lord delights to use” (p. 169). In light of that, why shouldn’t Christians disqualify themselves from service opportunities for which they feel inadequate?



- Simon the Zealot was known by his nickname all his life; therefore, we can assume that he remained passionate and zealous. Whom do you know at church whose personality and experience the Lord utilized for the kingdom after that person became a Christian? How does that example prompt you to look at your unique skills?
- Amazingly, the Zealots' hatred and bloodshed was the indirect cause of Jerusalem being destroyed. Their unrestrained passion undermined the goal that motivated them. What lessons can be learned from this in terms of the passions that fill people's hearts today?
- Among the Twelve, MacArthur suggests, we see one of almost every imaginable personality type. Why did Jesus opt for that kind of diversity?
- In spite of the obscurity in the Gospels that characterizes James the Less, Simon the Zealot, and Judas (not Iscariot), Jesus affirmed and included them in His mission. How does God feel about the people in your congregation who work behind the scenes without much public recognition?
- Read Luke 18:28–30
  - How does Peter choose to call attention to the sacrifice he has made to follow Jesus?
  - In these verses, what indicates Peter's frustration?
  - How does Jesus respond to Peter's statement?
  - What did Jesus mean by His own declaration?
  - In what ways have you found Jesus' statement to be true since you have been following Him?
  - When are you most apt to be aware of the price tag associated with being a committed Christian?
  - In light of the sacrifices the apostles made, why do you think Christians are so quick to complain about inconvenience or sacrifice?
- Read John 6:53–71
  - What did Jesus say that many of the disciples found hard to accept or understand?
  - How was Jesus feeling as He looked over the dwindling crowd of people? Why?
  - What question did He ask the Twelve?
  - How would you have felt if you had witnessed this scene?
  - Why is Peter's answer so significant?
  - In spite of the mysterious words Peter hears but cannot fully understand, he detects that he is in the presence of God. Have you ever felt that way? When?
  - Why did John include Jesus' statement that even among the Twelve, one would turn out to be "a devil"?
- Read Hebrews 11:32–40
  - What evidences of God's power in human lives is illustrated in these verses?

- What specific tribulations did these faithful ones experience?
  - Explain the meaning of the phrase “of whom the world was not worthy.”
  - In what ways are individuals persecuted for their faith today?
  - How would the phrase “out of weakness were made strong” be appropriate for those who experience hardship as they live out their faith?
  - In what ways, according to the author of Hebrews, do we actually benefit from the suffering of those Old Testament saints?
- Read John 19:17–27
- Who was standing at the foot of the cross witnessing Jesus’ death?
  - Compare this reference to Mark 15:40. Why do some think that one of the Marys at the crucifixion was the mother of the disciple called James the Less?
  - What aspects of Jesus’ ministry did each of those women represent?
  - Apart from whether this is the mother of the disciple or if James the Less was Jesus’ first cousin, what do you find significant about the fact that Jesus’ mother was not alone in her grief?
  - Jesus obviously desired others to share in His ministry even as Mary needed someone to stand with her in His death. How is the principle of “power in community” still applicable today?
  - What can we learn from the fact that Jesus drew comfort and strength from people like James, Simon, and Judas whose background was left sketchy?
  - Who are the people in your life that you know you can count on through thick and thin? Express your thanksgiving to God for them as you jot down their names.
- Read John 14:21–24
- According to Jesus, how does a person validate his or her verbalized love for Him?
  - How does this insistence by Jesus go against the primary dogma of our culture that love is about feelings?
  - How does Jesus say He will reward the person who values God’s Word and seeks to live according to it?
  - The picture of Jesus making His home with the faithful follower is a vivid one. Compare it to what you find in Revelation 3:20.
  - What does Jesus’ “taking up residence in our lives” mean in a practical sense?
  - Judas is mind-boggled and humbled by the thought that Jesus would manifest His glory to him (and the other apostles). How does one go about maintaining a sense of “awe” when it comes to acknowledging God’s mercy in our lives?
  - When was the last time you experienced awe over all that God has done in your life?

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The Devil's Disciple

•Another look:

•According to the author, it was easy for Judas Iscariot to play the hypocrite. What contributed most to that?

•Judas was from a humble town south of Jerusalem. The others, who were from Galilee, knew nothing about his family or his background before Judas joined them. Thus, the betrayer was able to work his way into a place of trust without being suspected.

•MacArthur claims that Judas never was drawn to the Person of Christ. What does he suggest was Judas's goal in spending time with Jesus?

•Judas was only after personal prosperity.

•MacArthur quote, (p. 193). What does MacArthur offer as the most obvious proof that this was the case?

•He had already taken the money for it (Matthew 26:15).

•From the start, the Twelve believed that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. But their understanding of how that would play out was more political than spiritual. According to the author, (p. 187). But how did Judas deal with the redefined role of the Messiah that Jesus offered?

•He grew increasingly disillusioned but hid his jaded response from the others by hypocritically pretending to go along with the program.

•While some have struggled over an apparent contradiction in details about Judas and the Field of Blood (Matthew 27:6–8; Acts 1:18–19), the author thinks such a struggle unnecessary. He writes that, “all apparent discrepancies are easily reconciled” (p. 196). How so?

•While the Matthew account indicates that the chief priests bought the field and Acts implies that Judas bought it, both are right. It was Judas's money that the priests used after his suicide to buy the land.

•Biblical connections:

•Judas's dark deed was predicted centuries before. In John 13:18, Jesus calls attention to the fact that He is about to be betrayed and cites Psalm 41:9 as a reference point. Beginning with that passage, describe how each Old Testament Scripture relates to Jesus and Judas?

•Psalm 41:9 At the Last Supper, Judas broke bread with Jesus before lifting up “his heel” against Him.

•Psalm 55:12–14 Judas was one of Jesus' closest friends. For over three years they had traveled, worshiped, and ministered together.

- Zechariah 11:12–13 Judas agreed to sell Jesus to the religious leaders for thirty pieces of silver. He then threw the blood money into the temple, but it was eventually used to buy a plot of land.

- In Genesis 50:20 Joseph reflects on the injustices he has personally endured that were instigated by the sinful motives of his brothers. After looking up that verse, what correlation do you see between Joseph’s experience at the hands of his siblings and Jesus’ experience at the hands of Judas?

- In both cases God incorporated the evil schemes of sinful men into His perfect plan of redemption (in Joseph’s case the redemption of Israel).

- “Judas had every opportunity to turn from his sin,” the author asserts on page 186. What should he have gleaned from the following lessons he heard Jesus give? Judas should have identified himself:

- Matthew 16:19–34 As one who was laying up treasure on earth

- Matthew 22:11–14 As the man who did not have on a wedding garment

- Matthew 23:1–12 As one who was guilty of pride

- Luke 13:13–21 As one who had a faulty perception of Christ’s kingdom

- Luke 16:1–13 As the unjust servant

- Read the poignant story in John 12:1–11. Apparently the “wasted” ointment and Jesus’ response to Judas were the turning point in the traitor that began his process of betrayal. What contrast can you detect in the attitudes and actions between the woman who anoints Jesus and the man who betrays Him? Does anything in this scene surprise you?

- The woman is totally transparent. She holds nothing back in her expression of extravagant love. Judas is the picture of hypocrisy. He is anything but transparent. He pretends to have concern for the poor. He moves from this scene to set in motion a plot that is nothing less than extravagant hate.

- In Matthew 27:3–5, we peek into the turbulent heart of Judas after he sees that Jesus has been condemned to die. Would you describe Judas as repentant or remorseful? Why?

- Highlighting the lesson:

- Although Scripture had predicted that Judas would betray Jesus, he was in no way coerced into this act of ultimate shame. It is clear that Judas entertained greed, ambition, and wicked desires in his heart even though he was viewed as one of Jesus’ followers and had every advantage of the other eleven disciples. How do you explain this irony?

- P. 182, the author draws two conclusions from the tragic life of Judas. Which of these two lessons is illustrated in the following biblical personalities? What warnings or encouragement does each person’s story offer the Christian?

- Saul and Solomon both proved that exposure to the truth of God is not sufficient to persevere in a faithful life.

- Christians should be warned that simply being with other Christians does not guarantee growth.
  - Joseph and Stephen prove that when evil appears to triumph, God is nonetheless working His plan.
  - Their lives encourage Christians to trust God even when it appears as though He has abandoned them.
- Lasting implications:
- In spite of the rare opportunity Judas had to learn from or receive help from the Lord, Judas didn't take advantage of these one-on-one settings. What opportunities for personal growth are available to the people of God that we often ignore?
  - Judas had the enviable privilege of being one of the Twelve, yet he cashed in this priceless honor for thirty pieces of silver. What privileges does the Lord guarantee those who enter into a personal relationship with Him that are easily squandered without thought of their worth?
  - Judas went down in history as living (and dying) proof that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. From what you have observed, how does a preoccupation with material things suck the energy and blur the focus of Christians in today's culture?
  - Judas is proof of the patient, forbearing goodness of Jesus. The Lord's unconditional love never wavered toward the traitor. He called him a friend to the very end. If you truly believed that there is nothing you could ever do that would cause you to earn (or lose) God's favor, what impact would it have on the way you respond to what His Word requires?
  - Although Judas's life of deception and his ultimate act of betrayal played into Satan's plan to destroy him and humiliate Christ, God's sovereign plan for His creation was not undermined in the least. How does God's ultimate control in this scenario (in which Judas facilitated His Son's being mocked and killed) challenge the way you look at "bad news" in the world?
  - Judas is proof of the fact that hypocrisy is lethal. If not confessed and turned from, it separates a person increasingly from the truth. Although it is easy to cover up, it eventually comes to light. Since it has soul-damaging consequences, what steps should a person take to root out the initial growth of hypocrisy?
- Read Ephesians 1:1–11
- How do these verses support the view that God is never surprised by what happens in our lives?
  - What other highlights do you see in this section of Scripture?
  - What, according to this passage, does God's predestined plan include?
  - What in this passage suggests the kind of privileges Judas had as a member of the Twelve?
  - When you contemplate that you were chosen by God to be part of His forever family before the world was even created, what thoughts or feelings do you have?

- If God is committed to working everything out according to His purposes, does that free Christians to be careless in their lives? Why or why not?
- Describe your highest sense of responsibility within God's purposes for your life (review pages 185–186).
- Read Matthew 6:19–34
  - What risks are taken by those who store up treasures on earth?
  - What alternative to earthly riches does Jesus pose?
  - When Jesus spoke about the location of the heart being near the treasure, what was He indicating would happen to the person who chooses the wrong treasure?
  - How did Judas's love of money result in "destruction"?
  - What about our culture allows a person who is really serving Money to appear as though he is serving God?
  - What might Judas have been thinking when he heard the words recorded in this passage fall from Jesus' lips?
  - Describe your treasure.
- Read John 12:1–11
  - What appeared to trouble Judas about the way the fragrant oil was used?
  - Why didn't Jesus share Judas's indignation?
  - As best as you can tell, what motivated Mary's action?
  - What is the most extravagant gift (that you're aware of) that has been given to the Lord's work?
  - In what way have you chosen to express your deepest appreciation for all that Christ has done for you?
  - Why is it easy to cover up personal greed by diverting attention away from your own values, as Judas did on this occasion?
  - Based on His response to Mary's gift, how does Jesus recognize sacrificial gifts from those who love Him?
- Read John 13:21–30
  - What about this passage makes it clear that the disciples didn't know the identity of Jesus' betrayer?
  - What clue is contained in these verses that Judas had a fascination with money?
  - Describe the main differences between having money and money having you.
  - Why is John's use of the word "night" quite possibly more than an indication that it was after sundown?
  - Does your lack of insight into the true spiritual condition of the people with whom you worship prevent you from fully worshiping the Lord? Why or why not?
  - How often do you think a person should look into his or her heart for wrong motives? Explain.

•Read John 15:1–10

- To what does Jesus compare a person’s relationship with Him?
- According to Jesus’ figurative language, whose responsibility is it to produce fruit—the vine or the branch?
- What do you find helpful about this description of your relationship with Christ?
- Based on the context, what does Jesus mean by “abiding” in the vine?
- Why didn’t Judas bear fruit?
- From those whom you’ve observed who have borne much fruit, what choices and disciplines have they made to “abide in” the vine?
- What fosters the clearest sense in your life that you are “abiding” in Christ?