

# ED YOUNG

SNAPSHOTS



SNAPSHOTS  
OF THE SAVIOR

**JESUS UP CLOSE  
AND PERSONAL**

SMALL GROUP STUDIES

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# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Small Groups are a vital part of how we do ministry at Fellowship Church, just as they are in many churches around the world. There are a number of different theories on how small groups should work and they are all great in different ways. The book you are holding is written with our model in mind. So take a minute to read the following explanation, then feel free to adapt as necessary.

Each of our small groups practices a three part agenda in every meeting. That agenda includes a social time, a discussion time, and a prayer time. Each of these elements share equal importance, but not necessarily equal time. To help you get the most out of this book we have included an explanation of each of the parts.

The first element of every small group meeting should be a time of socializing. This phase of the meeting should about 30% of your time together. Welcome everyone as they arrive at the host home, and make visitors feel welcome by introducing yourself and showing genuine interest in them. Enjoy some snacks, or if your group prefers, a meal together.

Then move on with second part of the meeting, the lesson. The lesson itself may take as much as 50% of your group's meeting time, but remember, it is not the most important element. You may want to start this phase of your meeting with a short "icebreaker" to get everyone talking. The questions in the "Start it Up" section of each chapter are what we refer to as "level the playing field" questions that everyone should be able to participate in, regardless of their level of spiritual maturity or Bible knowledge. As your group moves through the "Talk it Up" section in each chapter, remember that it is more important to finish on time than to finish each and every question. It is okay to skip some questions to be sure you allow enough time to take care of the third phase of the small group time: "Lift it Up."

The "Lift it Up" section is a vital part of every small group meeting and should be about 20% of the meeting. During this time you will be able to share with the group what God is doing in your life as well as asking the group to support you in specific prayers. To help focus this time, there are one or two questions at the end of each study that will prompt prayers based on the material you have just talked about. There is also a space for you to write down your prayer request(s) so you don't forget them and so you can communicate them clearly when it is your turn. Below that is a place to write down the prayer requests of the people in your group so you can remember and pray for each request throughout the week.

As an additional tool to assist you in your journey of spiritual development there is a "Step it Up" section at the end of each session. This section consists of five devotional thoughts that reinforce the lesson you've just completed and are designed to help you develop a regular quiet time with God. To get the absolute most from this study I challenge you to take five or ten minutes a day to read and apply these devotionals to your life. If your group meets twice a month or bi-weekly, choose five of the intervening days to incorporate these thoughts into your devotional life.

In select studies, we have incorporated special notes for youth groups using this material. You will notice a special icon (Y) used several times in each session. This indicates that there is a comment or question especially for youth included in the leader's guide for that part of the study. When you see that icon, simply turn to the leader's guide for that session in the back of the book and find the corresponding (Y) and letter (for instance, (Y)-a). These notes are designed to help each discussion time speak to the unique needs and issues of youth.

# SNAPSHOTS

One weekend I brought my digital camera with me to Fellowship Church. I had it on stage during the service and thought it would be fun to take a few snapshots of the audience. I was hoping that the snapshots would capture the essence of what's going on at the church.



The pictures I took captured some of the people, but they didn't really capture everything that's going on at the church. To capture the essence of Fellowship Church on a weekend I'd have to take hundreds or even thousands of pictures. There would be enough pictures to fill up several photo albums. To have an accurate representation of the church, I'd need pictures of the parkers, the greeters, the ushers, and the people backstage tweaking dials. Then, I'd need pictures of those people working in the children's ministry, the nursery, the preschool, and the student ministry. There's no way I could capture the nature and essence of Fellowship with just one or two photos.

A lot of us carry a photo album of Jesus in our hearts and in our minds. However, most of the photo albums we have are incomplete. Some of us only have two or three snapshots of Jesus, thinking that these few snapshots complete the photo album. We might have a picture of Jesus in the manger, or of him walking on water. Maybe we have a snapshot of his death on the cross, and one of him rising from the grave. Those are great snapshots, but they are not enough. We should never stop adding pictures to our photo album when it comes to learning more about the most important person to ever walk on planet Earth.

As you go through this study, prepare to add more snapshots to your photo album—snapshots that will give you a greater appreciation and deeper relationship with the Savior.





# WEEK ONE

## LIKE JESUS

# SNAPSHOTS

### START IT UP

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Photographs are incredible. Photographs have the potential to capture a moment in time and store it in our memory. We keep photographs from important events and stages in our life. We hold on to snapshots of people from our most important relationships. We appreciate moments of natural beauty through photographs. Most of us have our favorite photographs decorating our homes, offices and even wallets. **Y-a**

**1. Do you have a favorite photograph? Describe some of your favorite snapshots and what you like about them.**

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As incredible as photographs are, they are incomplete. One snapshot might communicate a thousand words, but it cannot tell the entire story. For example, have you ever seen a photograph of a person before you met them? Chances are you began to form opinions about this person as you studied the photo. You might develop an idea of that person's character. You might form opinions on the person's occupation, interests or more. Yet, a photograph cannot completely capture a person's character, interests or background. Even a photo album full of pictures cannot completely capture the true essence of a person. But with enough of the right snapshots, we can begin to know that person.

A lot of us carry around a photo album of Jesus in our hearts and in our minds. But some of us have only two or three snapshots of Jesus, and we think that's all we need. The goal of this series called *Snapshots of the Savior* is simply this: to give each of us a more complete photo album when it comes to Jesus, the most important person to ever walk on planet Earth.

**2. What is in your photo album of Christ? Describe two or three of the prominent snapshots of Christ in your photo album. (Y)-b**

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## TALK IT UP

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Our photo albums are probably full of pictures about Christ's divinity, but so often we miss picturing his humanity. You may have pictures of Jesus' miraculous birth and of his death and resurrection, but what pictures do you have of everything in between?

Can you picture Christ as a human? Here is an exercise to help. Close your eyes and get a mental image of Jesus. Picture his face, his hair and his clothing. Picture him walking down an ancient street with his friends. Now this part might be difficult. Imagine the Savior of all humanity, God in human flesh, catching his foot on an uneven stone in the road. Can you see him trip and stumble like you do so often? Now visualize him trying to regain his balance. Can you picture your Savior tripping like a common person? If you cannot, you might be missing a key snapshot of your Savior: his humanity.

**3. How difficult was it for you to picture Christ in a human situation like tripping?**

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**4. If you have a hard time visualizing Christ's humanity, why do you think that is? (Y) - c**

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Jesus did not just pretend to be human. He became fully human. Christ's humanity allowed him to identify with us. There was no illusion in Jesus' humanity. When God sent his Son to be born, he sent him as a baby. And Jesus grew up in a family, went to school, and had to study like every student. He was tempted like us. He hungered like us. He got cuts and scrapes like us. Jesus lived a real human life that allows us to identify with the Savior of mankind. Without understanding the humanity of Jesus, we are missing a major component of his true essence.

**THE LIMIT**

*Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Philippians 2:5-7 (NASB)*

This doesn't mean Jesus emptied himself of his divinity. Once again, he was fully God and fully man – divinity and humanity. It does mean he voluntarily limited himself.

Years ago, I was chaplain of the Houston Astros® baseball team. One day, a major league all-star asked me to come on the field and he invited me to play catch with him.

I said, "No thank you."

He said, "Come on. I won't throw hard." (This guy threw over 90 miles per hour.)

I said, "I really don't want to do it."

He assured me, “Ed, I’ll throw 20-25 miles per hour. That’s it.” Here’s the key phrase. He said, “I will limit my ability.”

Jesus limited himself in the same way. He could have thrown 90, 95, 100, 200, or 500 miles per hour, but he didn’t. He threw 20-25 just so he could connect with us. In order to live a life like us, he limited his divinity to experience temptation, hunger, loneliness and sadness. Obviously Jesus thought that identifying with our human existence was essential. And if it was important enough for Jesus, it should tell us that his humanity is an important snapshot for our photo album.

## LIKE JESUS

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Do you ever have moments of whining and complaining? Of course you do. “No one understands what I’m going through. No one understands this relationship. No one understands my struggles. No one understands my pain. No one understands. No one understands.” Let me make a suggestion: add two words to those statements. Those two words are *like Jesus*. No one understands what you are going through *like Jesus*. Jesus experienced what you are going through. Jesus understands what you are going through. Jesus has a unique perspective on what you are going through. He can relate to you in every area of your life.

### **5. Why do you think it is more common to think about Jesus’ ability to fix us than his ability to relate to us?**

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Think about some of the following areas where Jesus can truly relate to us.

## OCCUPATION -d

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Think about your job just for a second. Think about what you do professionally. Have you ever thought about the fact that Jesus identifies with our marketplace endeavors? Jesus spent more time in the marketplace than he did as a minister.

The Bible says that he didn't begin his public ministry until age 30. And he died three-and-a-half years later. He spent more time working with his hands than he did as the Savior of the world.

What does the Bible say about Jesus? In Mark 6:3 he is called "*the* Carpenter." Not a carpenter, not the son of a carpenter, but "*the* Carpenter." What does that mean? It means that Jesus took up the trade. Back in biblical times it meant that he was responsible for the excavation work, the foundation work, and the finish out of a project. We have this whacked view of Jesus as some pail, frail, blonde hair, blue-eyed dude. In reality, he probably had a dark skin tone and long hair. The guy had to be pretty buff. He had to be in awesome shape just to do what he did professionally. We're talking about a man's man.

Because he worked like most of us do, Jesus knows all about pay disputes. He knows all about boredom. He knows all about the monotony of work. He knows all about stress and pressures. He's been there. Do you see the genius of God? He knew that most of us would spend a lot of our time in the marketplace—even more time than with our families. **Y-e**

We have to fight the urge to compartmentalize our lives. Resign the personal presidency of your life and give it to Jesus. It's about time that you allow Christ to sit in the corner office and call the shots. There is no way we can ever discover our identity in the marketplace until we sync our lives with Christ. Apart from Christ, I will never know who I am, and you will never know who you are. Talk to Jesus about the stresses, the pressures and the junk that you deal with in the marketplace, because no one understands *like Jesus*.

**6. Why do you think the temptation is so strong to separate our faith from what happens in the workplace? **Y-f****

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## RELATIONSHIPS

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How about relationships? That's another way Jesus identifies with us. Jesus was brought up in a family. The Bible says he had brothers and sisters. He had best friends. And he knows about betrayal, too. His best friends turned on him during his greatest point of need. Have you ever felt misunderstood in relationships? Jesus understands what you're going through. (Y)-g

**7. Who is the person in your life that understands you the best, and how did you come to realize that they really understood you?**

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**8. How does that intimate level of understanding with the person from the previous question make that relationship different from your other relationships? (Y)-h**

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The connection you have with your deepest human relationships may be strong, but it will never be as strong as your connection with Jesus. He understands you like no one else is able. He desires an intimate relationship with you more than anyone else. Jesus was willing to leave his place in heaven and give his life on earth to connect specifically with you. No one understands relationships *like Jesus*.

## TEMPTATIONS

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Jesus also relates to us in the area of temptation. The Bible says when you're tempted (James 1:13), not if. We're going to be tempted. I'm going to be

tempted and so are you. It's a part of life. The Bible says Jesus was tempted in every way we are.

Think just for a second ... where are you tempted right now? Are you tempted to lie or to exaggerate something at work? Are you tempted to be unfaithful to your spouse? What area in life do you feel temptation? What area do you feel that cross pull? You might be saying to yourself, "Well, no one knows the force of my temptation. No one knows what I'm dealing with. No one gets it. I'm here by myself and there's no one in this predicament." You're wrong. If you think no one understands, you need to add two words: *like Jesus*. 🙋-i

*Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:18*

Remember that word "help." He is able to come to the help of those in need. Do you know what the word help means in the original language? It's the picture of a mother running to the cry of her infant. Mothers have sensitive ears that will lead them to respond to the cry of their infant. When I'm tempted or when you're tempted in any realm, all we've got to do is cry out and Jesus will come to our help. He will strengthen us.

### 9. How has Jesus showed you he can relate to you by helping you in a temptation? 🙋-j

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*For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15 (NASB)*

Jesus is sympathetic to our struggles. He is our High Priest. You don't have to go through an earthly priest to get to God. Jesus is our High Priest who intercedes on our behalf to God directly. If you're a child of God right now, the Bible says Christ, your High Priest is in heaven articulating words and prayers that you can't even say to the Father himself. If that's not good news I don't know what is! How many times

have you wanted to pray, but just couldn't find the words? Jesus promises that he'll take our mumbling and stammering, our lack of words and articulate them to the Father. His work on our behalf helps us, encourages us, and empowers us. We can go into the throne room of God through Jesus, our High Priest.

## SUFFERING

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Think about the sufferings Jesus went through. Think about the pain he experienced. That's something that we can identify with. Are you going through pain right now? Are you suffering? The Bible says Jesus was hungry. It says Jesus was tired. It says Jesus was angry. How about physical pain? Do you have the pain of arthritis or another form of physical pain that no one really knows about? Are you dealing with cancer right now? Jesus identifies. He's experienced pain like we will never experience.

Isaiah 53:3 was penned hundreds of years before Christ came. It says, "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering." Christ was rejected by men. His best friends turned their backs on him during his greatest time of need. You want to talk about rejection? Jesus understands when you are suffering. He can relate to our suffering and comfort us in the midst of our suffering. (Y)-k

## WRAP IT UP

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**10. Of the major areas in which Jesus relates to our experience: occupation, relationships, temptation and suffering, which area is the most encouraging to you?**

Go back to Isaiah 53:5, "...He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."

Jesus identified with us to such a degree that he became sin. He took our junk, our rebellion, our guilt, our pain, and our moral foul ups. Everything we've ever done wrong and thought wrong. Everything we will do wrong and everything that is bad in our lives; Jesus took all of that upon himself. We don't deserve it. But he did it. That's how much he has identified with us. So now when God sees



## STEP IT UP

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Take a step further over the next few days and spend some time reflecting on the following devotional thoughts that reinforce the previous session. Use these as reminders to take what you've learned and apply it to your everyday life.

### DAY 1

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*Philippians 2:5-7*

Shaquille O'Neal is one of the most dominating players in professional basketball. His 7-foot, 325 pound body overpowers the biggest and strongest professional athletes in his sport. In a land of giant men, there are few, if any, who can match up with "Shaq." As dominating as he is playing professional basketball, imagine how dominating Shaq would be in a pee-wee basketball game. Most of the pee-wee players would be lucky to be half as tall as him, or weigh a fourth of what he does. And even if they were the size of Shaq, they wouldn't have his talent or training. It is safe to say that a pee-wee basketball game with Shaquille on the floor would be an embarrassing contest.

That is the way a lot of people think about Jesus on Earth. They see Jesus as this towering figure with power and perspective unmatched by those around him. They see Jesus as a professional playing on a pee-wee level. They might think, "Sure Jesus was sinless; he was God. If I was as powerful as God, I'd be able to resist sin too!" A lot of people have that image of Jesus on Earth...do you?

If you view Jesus as a Shaquille O'Neal presence in a pee-wee world, you have the wrong image. Jesus did not face the challenges of this world like God. Jesus faced the challenges of this world like you. Jesus limited his divinity, so he could take on life at our level. That is what makes Jesus' perfection so impressive. Jesus entered the battle just like us and still remained sinless.

Because Jesus was willing to limit his divine abilities, he lived a life like you. Jesus was not above the everyday struggles. There were days Jesus woke up tired and probably wanted to sleep more. There were days Jesus got frustrated with circumstances that were out of his control. There were days Jesus celebrated accomplishments that seemed unlikely when they began. Because of all this,

Jesus can relate to us. When we feel like no one understands, we need to remember no one understands “like Jesus.”

***What is an area of your life you feel like no one understands?***

Spend time talking with Jesus about that area and ask for his perspective since no one understands what you are going through like Jesus.

**Notes:**

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**Prayer Requests:**

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## DAY 2

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*Mark 6:3*

“Compartmentalization – to separate into distinct parts, categories or compartments” ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)).

It is amazing how we can be a character-compromising CEO one minute, and an angelic church attendee the next. How is that possible? The answer is compartmentalization. It is a big word with big effects. Compartmentalization is the idea that you can divide your life into pieces, then make choices in one piece that do not affect your other pieces. The hope is to keep one piece separated from the other pieces. Compartmentalization carries its own analysis in its spelling. In the middle of compartmentalization is the word “mental,” and that is exactly what you are if you think you can divide your life into independent pieces without any cumulative effect.

Compartmentalization is especially common in the workplace. It seems like biblical principles get parked in the lot with all the cars when it comes to the workplace. You pull into the parking lot leaving your car and biblical principles to be picked up at the end of the work day. Meanwhile, an abundance of unethical decisions and compromising choices happen in the name of market share and profit. God never intended your life to be compartmentalized.

Jesus spent more time in the marketplace than as a minister. Jesus was a carpenter, working in the rough and tough world of construction. Jesus competed in the marketplace without compartmentalizing his calling. Jesus lived a sinless life in the marketplace, and during his ministry. Jesus handled the pressures and problems of the workplace without compromising.

***Are you leaving Jesus behind as you walk into the workplace or any other area of your life? Ask God to show you if you are compartmentalizing any area of your life.***

If God helps you identify an area, ask for guidance to help you understand how to unite your faith with every area of your life.



## DAY 3

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*Matthew 12:46, Mark 14:10, John 11:3*

Jesus did not live in isolation. He was not insulated from the storms of life, especially in the form of relationships. Jesus had a wide variety of relationships—both positive and negative. He was close to a few, connected with many, and cursed by others. Jesus navigated the rugged plains of relationships just as we do.

Jesus grew up in a family with parents and siblings. He had friends who loved him and friends he loved. He had groups he battled. He mended relationships between confused and hurt parties. He sparked relationships with outcasts and spoke to prominent leaders. In all of this, he experienced the dynamics that make relationships challenging, rewarding, confusing, overwhelming, encouraging and more. Jesus experienced relational realities, just like we do.

What are the relationships that confuse you the most? Who is that person or group of people who perplexes and frustrates you with consuming thoughts that should be directed to more pressing issues? Jesus can relate. Whether it is a hard relationship or a fruitful friendship, Jesus can relate. Do you see Jesus as someone who can relate to you in your relationships? It is easy to leave the relational snapshot out of the photo album. It goes back to the image discussed in day one. Sometimes it is hard to see Jesus as anything but a professional playing in a pee-wee world. That is not the case. Jesus experienced perfection in his relational decisions while navigating the same distractions and interference we do.

No one understands the relationships you are in... like Jesus. It could be the bliss of a healthy relationship. It might be the tears from a contentious relationship. Whatever it is, no one will understand that relationship like Jesus. In the moments to follow, ask God to help you discover if you have isolated Jesus from any of your relationships. Invite Jesus into every one of your relationships. After all, no one understands them like Jesus.



## DAY 4

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*Hebrews 4:14-16*

“Do you feel me? Do you know where I’m coming from? Can you relate?” We have a desire for someone to share our feelings as we go through the experiences of life. We want someone who understands the significance of our success so they can celebrate with us. We want someone who connects with the depths of our pain so they can grieve like we do. We value the ability of others to understand what we are going through.

Think about an embarrassing moment in your life. Envision that moment as you were revealed as the object separate from the rest. Maybe you separated yourself with a fashion “faux pas.” Perhaps that moment of isolation came when you dropped your lunch tray in the middle of the cafeteria. It can happen when an unpopular decision is made. That moment of separation from the accepted standards can be so embarrassing.

In those moments of separation and embarrassment, we desperately want someone to share our feelings. It is the hope that if someone can relate to what we are going through, it will somehow ease our pain. The friend who comes to begin a conversation with you as others awkwardly gawk at your outfit...the kindhearted person who helps you collect the mess that has been spilled from your lunch tray...the moment someone embraces you despite your decision. These responses communicate acceptance and go a long way to restoring our frazzled emotions.

Jesus can relate to us and heal us from our most embarrassing moments. Jesus can relate to those feelings of temptation that cause us to feel so isolated from others. He experienced those feelings so he knows what it is like. He knows about them and accepts us fully. He relates to us and connects us to him through this experience. And in that connection, we do not have to live in timidity, afraid of being found out for what temptations we encounter. We can live in the confidence that comes from knowing that Jesus knows everything about us. We can live in the confidence of having someone who has shared in our temptations and relates to every area with which we struggle.

***What are the most prominent temptations in your life?***

Your temptations do not separate you from Jesus. Those temptations actually connect you to him, if you will confess them to him. Tell Jesus the temptations you are facing, and ask for his strength to overcome them.

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**Prayer Requests:**

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## DAY 5

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*Isaiah 53:3-5*

No area in life causes people to consider God like suffering. Even the atheist reaches out for something greater in those dark moments of life. We all suffer in life, and it's so good to know that God is not separate from our suffering. He is there in the midst of the pain and difficulty. God does not leave you alone in those terrible times of suffering. It may not seem like God cares about your suffering, but he does. God cared enough about your suffering that he allowed his Son to identify with you in suffering.

Jesus experienced pain like few of us can imagine. Are you in pain right now? Maybe you have the crippling effect of a chronic pain. Jesus understands your agony. Maybe you are suffering emotionally from the loss of a loved one. Jesus has experienced the pain you are experiencing. Have you been rejected? Jesus was rejected to the point of his murder. He understands your suffering.

The interesting thing about pain is that while it commonly causes us to look for someone greater, it also commonly causes us to retreat. Misery does love company, but at the same time those suffering often withdraw from others and try to fight their suffering in isolation. God never intended for his creation to fight suffering in isolation. Jesus does not want you to experience suffering alone. No one can understand what you are going through like Jesus. As in the past few days, let me challenge you to allow Jesus to help you with any struggles you might have with pain.

***What is the source of pain in your life?***

Begin the healing by talking with Jesus about your pain. Speak honestly with him, and allow him to give you his perspective.





# LEADER'S GUIDE SESSION ONE

## LIKE JESUS

# SNAPSHOTS

### LEADER'S NOTES

**1. Do you have a favorite photograph? Describe some of your favorite snapshots and what you like about them.**

*Tip: You might bring some of your favorite photos to show as you tell why you like those photographs. Also, think about why you like those photos. Sometimes a photo does not capture the best likeness of a person, but it reminds us of something we like.*

**Y-a**

*Have you noticed that girls seem to be more drawn to photographs than guys? The evidence is all around. Look at the decorations in a girl's room, her folders, wallet, cell phone, keychain and throughout her automobile and you will find evidence for this female picture phenomenon. Why do you think photographs are collected more by girls than guys?*

*While girls generally have more photographs, everyone has photographs. Who are the people that are the most common in your photographs and why are they so common?*

**2. What is in your photo album of Christ? Describe two or three of the prominent snapshots of Christ in your photo album.**

*Tip: Write down the snapshots described by each person and how many people have the same snapshots in their mental photo album. Then, if there are several snapshots that were mentioned frequently, discuss why you think those snapshots were so common.*

**Y-b**

*As an alternative to describing the two or three most common snapshots of Christ, draw those snapshots that come to mind when you think about Jesus' life.*

### 3. How difficult was it for you to picture Christ in a human situation like tripping?

*Tip: Be prepared for diverse answers to this question. For some, it will be no big deal to picture Christ tripping. For others, the thought of Christ tripping might be a very troubling, almost sacrilegious thought. For those who found it difficult to picture Christ tripping, follow up with the next question.*

### 4. If you have a hard time visualizing Christ's humanity, why do you think that is?

*Picturing Christ tripping could be difficult if you do not have an appropriate amount of snapshots of his humanity in your album. It is easy to see Christ as mostly God, and just a little bit human. That is not accurate. Jesus was human and experienced many of the little nuisances we experience on a daily basis. If you cannot picture him in a human situation like tripping, it might be even more difficult for you to picture an important human situation like Jesus being tempted.*

#### Y-c

*It might be hard for you to picture Jesus in human situations like tripping. Jesus faced everyday experiences like we do. Jesus was a teenager and dealt with issues you deal with. Try to think about Jesus when he was your age. What if Jesus lived as a teenager today? Answer the following questions about Jesus at your age:*

- *Do you think Jesus would be a straight "A" student?*
- *Would Jesus have to study for school?*
- *What extra-curricular activities do you think Jesus would be a part of?*
- *Would Jesus be popular?*
- *Do you think Jesus would come across as a know-it-all?*
- *Would girls have a crush on Jesus?*
- *Is it possible that Jesus would have a crush on a girl?*

### 5. Why do you think it is more common to think about Jesus' ability to fix us than his ability to relate to us?

*The most common image of Jesus is associated with the cross. This association is important because we know if it had not been for Jesus dying on the cross we would not have forgiveness. But, we would not have forgiveness if Jesus had not also been tempted and lived a perfect life. That part is often overlooked because what Jesus did on the cross is so prominent in teaching, paintings and even reminders like jewelry. So, that main image of Jesus on the cross becomes our focus in our relationship with him.*

#### Y-d

*As a student, your occupation and marketplace are the places you spend the most time. For most students, that is school and extracurricular activities. As you read through this section, substitute your situations with school and extracurricular activities for marketplace and occupation.*

**Y-e**

*One of the most common complaints about school is, "It's boring." That is why students try to sneak cell phones into class to text message. That is why students sneak in ear buds from their iPods while the teacher is lecturing. Instead of buying into how boring school is, realize the purpose of your placement.*

*God is not waiting for you to graduate to start using you. God wants to use you in the midst of your "boring" classes. Maybe the source of your school boredom is that you are not doing all God wants you to do. God wants you to be his representative in your school. Are you on purpose as a representative for God or are you sleeping through the opportunities you have? When you get bored, start praying for God to show you what you could do for him in your school.*

**6. Why do you think the temptation is so strong to separate our faith from what happens in the workplace?**

*It is easy to see biblical principles as valuable only in spiritual matters. After all, there are thousands of professionals that ignore biblical principles and do very well in the workplace. There are even some organizations that encourage a set of ethics that are anything but biblical. In order to fit into the way many successful professionals live, biblical principles have to be checked at the door.*

*Also, add to this that we focus on the last three years of Jesus' life more than any other part. Those were the years Jesus did all sorts of miracles, gave incredible sermons and collected a gathering of followers. The problem is Jesus spent far more time in the workplace than as an itinerant preacher. Add to this that the workplace in which Jesus worked does not resemble today's economy and all of this leads to the temptation to separate our faith from the workplace.*

**Y-f**

*If you think about it, it is ridiculous to focus on our faith for the hour or two we are in church then ignore our faith for the majority of our week. What we believe should be a part of every area of our lives. That means applying biblical principles to your efforts in the classroom, your work in athletics, your decisions with friends and every other area of your life.*

**Y-g**

*No one understands your relationships like Jesus. Jesus had intimate relationships. Throughout the New Testament you can read about Jesus and his closest friends Peter, James and John. Jesus shared experiences with them that he did not share with others. Jesus also knew the other side of relationships. Think about Judas. For years Jesus let Judas hang around him, all the time knowing it would not end well. Even after all Jesus showed Judas and taught him, the betrayal still happened. Jesus knows what it is like to be stabbed in the back by someone from his inner circle.*

*As you face relationship obstacles or celebrations, remember that Jesus understands them. He has been there so do not be afraid to let him be a part of your relationships.*

**7. Who is the person in your life that understands you the best, and how did you come to realize that they really understood you?**

*Tip: Every person has someone who understands them better than others. Encourage everyone to identify that person so they can participate in the next question.*

**8. How does that intimate level of understanding with the person from the previous question make that relationship different from your other relationships?**

*Tip: Encourage your group to share specific examples of when that intimate level of understanding proved valuable. It could be a trying time when that close friend was able to help even though it seemed like no one else could help. It could be a moment of celebration that was only understood by the close friend who truly understood. Whatever the circumstance, bring out how the understanding friend was able to help more than others.*

**Y-h**

*How is your closest friend's understanding of you different from most of the people you are around on a regular basis?*

**Y-i**

*Temptation is not the same as sin. That is important to remember. We can be tempted without giving in. Avoiding temptation does not mean being immune from the appeal of the temptation. For example, if someone lies about you to a friend and you feel the desire to get even, you have not sinned... you have been tempted. The decision you make when you feel tempted will determine if you sin.*

*The distinction between temptation and sin is important. Jesus felt the desire for things that were not right. In other words, he felt temptation. The key is Jesus did not give in. One of Jesus' most famous temptations came in his wilderness wrestling match with Satan. Satan came to tempt Jesus and offered him alternatives to what God had for him. The key was Jesus did not give in. If you want to read about it, check it out in Matthew 4:1-11.*

**9. How has Jesus showed you he can relate to you by helping you in a temptation?**

*One way that most people can relate to is using a biblical principle or promise during a time of temptation. Jesus embraced God's truth as he fought temptation so he can relate to our need for it as well.*

**Y-j**

*Do you want Jesus' help in a temptation? There are times it does not matter that Jesus could help because we do not want help. We want to make the decision based on our wants*

*instead of what God wants. If you have those moments of not wanting Jesus to help, ask why. What about Jesus' character would make you not trust that he wants the best for you?*

### Y-k

*Most people realize Jesus knew what it was like to suffer physically. The movie "The Passion of the Christ" graphically depicts the physical suffering. But have you ever thought about the emotional suffering of Jesus? John 11:35 says that Jesus wept when he got to the funeral of his friend Lazarus. Luke 22:44 says that Jesus had so much anguish over his decision to go to the cross that his sweat fell to the ground like he was bleeding. That is some serious mental suffering! Jesus knows what it is like to suffer, so he can help us through our suffering.*

### 10. Of the major areas in which Jesus relates to our experience: occupation, relationships, temptation and suffering, which area is the most encouraging to you?

*Tip: Ask for specific examples of how Jesus has encouraged each person in the area they answered.*

## CREATIVE NOTES

### ICEBREAKERS

#### *Worth a Thousand Words*

Have a member of the group bring a picture of someone they know well (who is not known by most of the group) and ask members to describe what they think the person might be like based only on the photograph. How accurate was the group in describing the individual?

**BRIDGE** – A photograph may give us a glimpse of someone, but it falls short in portraying a person's true character. As much as we can determine from a photograph, it is never a complete picture of the person represented. The same is true with Jesus. One image is not enough. We need an album full of snapshots if we want to truly grasp the character Christ.

#### *History Speaks*

Show an old black and white photograph of your parents or grandparents. Have everyone try to describe the character of your relative by the expression, environment, etc., in the picture. Are they correct?

**BRIDGE** – There are some aspects of a person that we can determine by a photograph, but by itself, one picture can never give us the full story of someone's life. When we

spend time with Jesus and gather more and more snapshots of who he is, we expand our photo album and our understanding of his true essence.

### *One Chance*

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Hold up an image of Christ's likeness and have everyone say what comes to mind or give one word descriptions based on the photograph alone. Then, discuss other aspects of Christ that are not shown in the picture.

**BRIDGE** – This exercise will show how limiting one photograph can be in capturing the essence of Jesus. Discuss how much we would miss if we only knew him from one snapshot.

## **HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES**

### *Daily Work*

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Have team members draw a picture of themselves doing something they normally do. After everyone has finished drawing and has shared their picture with the group, have them discuss if they ever think about Jesus doing something similar to what they drew.

**BRIDGE** – Identifying with Christ's humanity is commonly avoided. We try to compartmentalize our lives and limit Christ's influence to specific areas. By recognizing him in all our day-to-day activities we are able to connect more deeply with him and expand the snapshots in our photo album.

### *Drowning our Sorrows*

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Have team members write down a challenge or temptation they face. Wrap the paper around a pebble with a rubber band and drop it in a bowl of water.

**BRIDGE** – Through Christ's humanity, he understands the temptations and challenges of daily lives. During his time on earth, he limited himself so he could personally connect with us. Jesus gets it. He understands the trials we face every day and, as represented by the water, he surrounds our problems and bears the weight of our sin.

### *On the Job*

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Ask two members to play out common scenes in the workplace such as: the boss giving bad news, being asked to work on the weekend, dealing with a difficult coworker. Once they are finished, discuss how their actions might have been different if they believed Jesus was really with them throughout the experience.

**BRIDGE** – It is easy to separate our faith from our jobs. It is important to remember Jesus' influence should not be limited to certain areas of our lives. His influence is for every area.

## **VISUAL REINFORCEMENTS**

### *Divinity*

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Serve Divinity© as a snack for this week's small group meeting.

**BRIDGE** – Serving Divinity as a snack will remind us of the divine nature of Christ.

### *Humanity*

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Search the internet or magazines to display images with examples of various emotions. Add Bible verses to the images that portray Jesus' experience of these emotions.

- Overwhelmed – Matthew 26:38
- Sorrowful or Troubled – Matthew 26:37
- Compassion – Mark 6:34
- Anger – John 2:14-16
- Sadness – John 11:35
- Love – John 11:36

**BRIDGE** – Remind everyone that Jesus felt the same emotions as we do – he is our sympathetic Savior.

### *Worth 1,000 Words*

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Display photographs of strong, moral people and evil, destructive people. From the photographs alone, can you tell the kind of people they are?

**BRIDGE** – Use the photographs to emphasize that one snapshot is only a small representation of any person. In order to know someone's true identity, we must spend time with them and gather many images.

## **MEDIA REINFORCEMENTS**

### *“Cry Out to Jesus” by Third Day*

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**BRIDGE** – This song shows us how Jesus has the capacity, ability, and desire to help us when we are facing life's struggles and challenges. He understands our humanity and carries our burdens.

**TAKE HOME OBJECT** (Reminders of the lesson)*Photo Album*

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Go to a dollar store and get little photo albums for members to take home reminding them to gather many pictures of Jesus life.

*Picture of our Savior*

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Give everyone a picture of the likeness of Jesus to keep in their wallets or on the refrigerator to remind them that every day we experience things just like Jesus did.