

## A message to you, from God.

You may wonder how this newsletter comes about twice a month and how I choose what to study and write about each time.

My background in PR taught me that effective communication comes from a strong communications plan with concise message points directed to a target audience.

And...I use none of that.

Right now I have no more of an idea what the next newsletter will be than you do. The messages come during my time alone with God when He puts something right in front of me where I can't help but see it. Often, as today, it comes from Him showing me things I do wrong; embarrassing things that come from the ugly spots of my heart that I would rather not reveal.

I reveal them because I know God has a message for you too. It would be nice to encourage you by sharing the Godly things I do, but that's just not God's plan to use me right now.

If this is in front of you, it's not by accident. If we really want to be new, we have to look our ugly right in the eye and let Jesus' light banish it.

Yearning for a pure heart,  
Jennifer

## Which Woman Would You Choose?

Today I was reeling from a snub and turned to the Lord in my prayer time yearning for comfort from the One, the only one, who truly knows me. He knows my heart, my thoughts, my dreams, my sins, my weaknesses, my fears and my pains. And He loves me.

When I was in college I was struck by a quote that said we're always alone in this life because no one can ever truly know who we are inside. At the time I still had a God-sized hole in me and the quote deeply saddened me because I realized it's absolutely true; no one would ever really know me.

How thankful I am to know now that while no human, including my beloved Jim, will ever really know the insides of me – Jesus does.

Anyway, Jesus, as He often does, brought my prayers around from looking for comfort from a snub to wondering where I have wounded others with my own snubs. It led me to thoughts of what I studied last week in Matthew 25:31-46 where Jesus tells a parable (an earthly story with a heavenly meaning) about the future final judgment.

He explains to those who are saved that they are blessed by the Father and can take their inheritance because they fed Him when He was hungry, gave Him something to drink when He was thirsty, invited Him in when He was a stranger, clothed Him when He needed clothing, looked after Him when He was sick, and visited Him when He was in prison.

Their reply was, "Lord, when did we do this?"

He explains that "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

Jesus goes on to explain to those who will be cursed and sent into the eternal fire that whatever they did *not* do for the least of these they did *not* do for Him.

I wondered about the times I've wanted to fit in and be popular or cool. How often have I walked by Jesus because His appearance or demeanor was nothing to notice and chose instead to seek out a conversation with someone who looked hip, chic, popular and cool?

OK – Know I am not saying there is anything wrong with looking great. I try my best too and if I had any sense of style, I'd be using it.

What I am saying is that if there were three women in a room, which would you approach?

- (1) The woman who is sitting alone with nothing to attract you to her.
- (2) The woman who looks like most everyone else.
- (3) The woman who stands out as stylish and beautiful.

I would love to say I would approach any of them without giving a thought to their looks, but I'm so ashamed to say it's not true. I would give a warm smile and say hi to #1 and then approach #2, assuming I have the most in common with her. While talking to #2, I would glance often at #3, wishing I was put together like her.

Yes, I am a Christian who studies the Bible and prays daily. Yes, part of me is pathetically stuck in Middle School at times. But, beyond pathetic, it's a sin. It's the sin of those who are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.

The Lord Jesus is my savior. Because I am His, His blood covers even this sin in me. Oh, but how I dread the day I stand before His throne and am shown all the times I walked by Him without a second glance because of His outward appearance. (Do you remember our last lesson, #7?)

If we choose instead to go to the person who looks the worst in the room every time we aren't any better.

What we should see when we walk in the room is:

- (1) The woman who was created by God in His image; a woman with struggles and triumphs, stories of joy and pain, a woman who needs Jesus.
- (2) The woman who was created by God in His image; a woman with struggles and triumphs, stories of joy and pain, a woman who needs Jesus.
- (3) The woman who was created by God in His image; a woman with struggles and triumphs, stories of joy and pain, a woman who needs Jesus.

And when we see anyone in any need, we should go to them and offer all we can because Jesus loves us and asks us to love others. What we do for the least of those in need, we do for Him.

Pray with me.

*Oh, Lord, create in me a pure heart. Lord, only You know me and even though You know all of me, You still love me. You see my ugly sin but You don't walk by me. You see me as You created me, in Your image, and You come to me in love.*

*Jesus, let me take Your love and pour it out on others in Your name. Use me to be a balm to their soul. Lord, please heal the many hurts I have caused others. I ask that You minister to them in the pain I have caused and that they might be comforted by You and find their salvation in You.*

*Lord, forgive me these sins. Give me Your strength to be new and live with a changed heart. Let me not repeat this ugly behavior, but instead see with Your eyes. In Your name I ask this, Jesus, Amen.*

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## Meditate and Study

Grab your notebook and Bible and get ready to explore!

### Lesson 8-1

1. Pray, asking God to open your eyes and heart to His truth.
2. What did you learn or apply from the last lesson?  
If you didn't do the lesson, you can print it at  
<http://www.hopeinthelord.org/DownloadBibleStudy.html>
3. Read Mark 6:1-6.
  - a. Where did Jesus go?
  - b. How are important people greeted when they go back to their home town?
  - c. How are you greeted when you go "home"?
- 4a. What was their first response when Jesus started teaching (6:2)?
- b. What was their next response (6:3)?
- c. Why do you think this happened?
5. What was the result (6:4-5)?
6. How have you been rejected? Include details.
7. The phrase "they took offense" in the original Greek is "to be caused to stumble; to be repelled." Jesus was rejected. How does it help you to know that Jesus was rejected by those who knew Him?
- 8a. How have you rejected others? Ask the Lord to open your eyes and reveal unknown hurts to you.
- b. Confess those sins, in detail where possible, to the Lord.
9. Ask the Lord to heal your heart of the offenses and rejections you listed above (Q. 6). Then go down and specifically forgive each person who rejected you, thanking the Lord for the forgiveness He has given you.
10. What will you change as a result of this study?
11. End in prayer.

### Lesson 7-2

1. Pray for the Lord to reveal His truth to you and open your heart.
2. Describe how the changes you're making as a result of last week's lesson are affecting you and others.
3. Read Matthew 25:31-46.
  - a. When is the time described (25:31)?
  - b. Has this time happened yet?
  - c. What is Jesus doing in this future event (25:32-33)?
- 4a. Who are the two groups?
- b. Describe the difference in the actions of the two groups.

- 5a. What is the first group (sheep) headed to (25:34, 46)?
- b. Who was it prepared for (25:34)?
- c. When was it prepared (25:34)?
- d. How long will they be there (25:46)?
- e. What is the second group (goats) headed to (25:41, 46)?
- f. Who was it prepared for (25:41)?
- g. How long will they be there (25:46)?
6. In your life, who are “the least of these”?
7. How does my story of the three women apply to you?
8. Read Matthew 18:10.
  - a. How does this verse affect your thinking?
- 9a. Did the first group (sheep) know what they did?
- b. Did the second group (goats) know what they did?
- c. Because you have the opportunity to read this truth in the Bible, how are you different from both groups?
- d. How does this truth change your way of thinking?
- e. What actions will you take as a result of this?
10. Close in prayer.

When we are made new in Christ, we desire to please Him and live as He lived. We'll never get it perfect – sometimes we're not even close - but our hearts will listen to His commands and desire to love others, particularly the least of these, because He loves us.

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I pray Jesus is making you new through these studies; that your heart is different today than when you started. God is good. . . all the time. He is good when He corrects and rebukes us just as He is good when He loves and does not reject us.

I'm looking forward to next time, even if God chooses to show you my ugly again. Because if my ugly can somehow be used to glorify Him, it is all worth it.

A sinner in daily need of a Savior,  
Jennifer