

Life Group Lesson #35

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS: A GUMBY-LIKE JESUS?

John 17:6-12; 09/10/17-18

WELCOME: (15 minutes)

Whether you were a kid or now you are an adult, share an example when your father or mother was glowing with joy because of you. Your mom or dad had let you know-- it may have been through words or some other ways.

(If an example from your parents don't come to mind, chose another adult you looked up to.)

WORSHIP: (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to **the great love of God the Father that has been lavished on us**, (I John 23:1, 2)

You could use music prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

Some Psalms might be helpful – Ps. 108:1-5; Ps. 36:5-9; Ps. 116:1-9

WORD: (45 minutes)

Jesus' question to his disciples in Matthew 16 is incredibly important to us... "**Who do you say that I am?**" The question is doubly crucial in our day, because not **every Jesus is the real Jesus...**

Do our categories for Jesus sometimes fit our own Gumby thinking? Explain.

(If you want some explanation on Gumby, check out Youtube "Gumby Intro".)

There's Therapist Jesus—who helps us cope with life's problems, heals our past, tells us how valuable we are and not to be so hard on ourselves.

There's Starbucks Jesus—who drinks fair trade coffee, loves spiritual conversations, drives a hybrid, and goes to film festivals.

There's Touchdown Jesus—who helps athletes run faster and jump higher than non-Christians and determines the outcomes of Super Bowls.

There's Gentle Jesus—who was meek and mild, with high cheek bones, flowing hair, and walks around barefoot, wearing a sash, while looking very German.

There's Yuppie Jesus—who encourages us to reach our full potential, reach for the stars, and buy a boat.

There's Spirituality Jesus—who hates religion, churches, pastors, priests, and doctrine, and would rather have people out in nature, finding "the god within" while listening to ambiguously spiritual music.

There's Boyfriend Jesus—who wraps his arms around us as we sing about his intoxicating love in our secret place.

There's Good Example Jesus—who shows you how to help people, change the planet, and become a better you.

And then there's Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

Kevin DeYoung, "Who Do You Say That I Am?"

We do not serve a Gumby Jesus, a Person that is merely molded to our wants and desires...

Jesus' prayer in John 17:

- Is a revelation of Himself
- Reveals to us the things most important about Himself
- Explains to us how we can respond to the relationship of the Father to the Son Jesus.

The Sermon applied in Real Life: Revealing the Real Jesus

Test this thought: When we increasingly know how intimate, how loving, how responsive, how deep the Father and the Son were with each other, then we can:

- **Get to know Jesus more intimately ourselves**
- **Get to know each other more deeply, more intimately with each other; caring for each other – in a word-- unified.**

Passage: John 17:6-12

(The following paraphrase from the Message from John 17:6-12 could be helpful after checking out your usual translation)

Let's walk through the passage for clarity so we know how the characters fit together: the Father, the Son Jesus, and the followers of Jesus. (Brackets added by me)

**⁽⁶⁾I (Jesus) spelled out your (Father's) character in detail
To the men and women (followers) you (Father) gave me (Jesus).**

They (followers) were yours (Father's) in the first place;

Then you (Father) gave them (followers) to me (Jesus),

And they (followers) have now done what you (Father) said.

⁽⁷⁾ They (followers) know now, beyond the shadow of a doubt,

That everything you (Father) gave me (Jesus) is firsthand from you (Father),

For the message you (Father) gave me (Jesus), I (Jesus) gave them;

⁽⁸⁾ And they (followers) took it, and were convinced

That I (Jesus) came from you (Father).

They believed that you (Father) sent me (Jesus).

I (Jesus) pray for them (followers).

(9) I'm (Jesus) not praying for the God-rejecting world

But for those (followers) you (Father) gave me (Jesus),

For they (followers) are yours (Father's) by right.

(10) Everything mine (Jesus) is yours (Father's), and yours (Father's) mine (Jesus),

And my (Jesus) life is on display in them (followers).

(11) For I'm (Jesus) no longer going to be visible in the world;

They'll (followers) continue in the world

While I (Jesus) return to you (Father).

Holy Father, guard them as they (followers) pursue this life

That you (Father) conferred as a gift through me (Jesus),

So they (followers) can be one heart and mind

As we (Father and Son Jesus) are one heart and mind.

(12) As long as I (Jesus) was with them (followers), I (Jesus) guarded them (followers)

In the pursuit of the life you (Father) gave through me (Jesus);

Three Things to Apply:

- **We long to experience the depth of what “Abba Father” was intended to mean: (John 17:6,7)**
 - If we want to know God the Father, we need to know the Father through the real Jesus.
 - What do we know about the relationship between Jesus and his Father? John 10:14-18; John 17:10
 - Apostle Paul fleshes out for us *our value to God:*
 - Gal. 4:6,7
 - I John 3:1,2
 - Romans 8:15
 - **When we talk about application**, what's at the crux of the matter for us? John 17:6 *What do you believe are the obedience issues for us in our culture?*
- **We long to have the “rhema”, the sayings of God, so close and clear that we use them for your glory** (when we bring honor to Jesus in the real world, he can work salvation for others). **(John 17:8)**

- What happens to us as we hear the “rhema” -- when God speaks to us in His word? **What are the possible applications?**
 - Eph. 6:17,18,19
 - Heb. 4:11,12
 - II Tim. 3:15,16 (Don’t miss the last phrase)

- **We long for your unity among us: (John 17:11,12)**

“So that they (that’s us) may be one as we (The Father and the Son) are one”
(v.11)

- What’s the nature of the relationship of God’s people to each other? Check out John 17:11.
- What do we know about Jesus and his Father? Check out John 8:26 -29. How can this impact our unity?

A.W. Tozer wrote in THE PURSUIT OF GOD...*Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, **not to each other, but to another standard** to which each one must individually bow. So one hundred worshipers meeting together, each one looking... to Christ, are **in heart nearer to each other** than they could possibly be were they to become “unity” conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship.*

- Does this statement change our approach to achieving greater unity in your Life Group? Our Church?

WITNESS: (15 minutes)

“Finding Nemo”

Nemo is first introduced into the aquarium. Life in the tank is secure. On the whole life goes on, even though it is a bit sterile and boring. But some fish dream of escape and long to face the risky freedom of the ocean. “Finding Nemo” contains some lessons for us: without real engagement with the “outside world”, churches quickly become sheltered artificial environments, ecclesial fish tanks that are safeguarded from the danger and disturbances in the surrounding environment.”

- We want unity, but how do we get out of the “aquarium” in Life Groups and swim in the big world?

