

STUDY GUIDE

FIVE SESSIONS

BESTSELLING AUTHOR

JOHN ORTBERG

# WHO IS THIS MAN?



The Unpredictable Impact  
of the Inescapable JESUS

## SESSION 1

# THE MAN WHO WON'T GO AWAY

*I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I  
must confess as an historian that this penniless  
preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very  
center of history.*

H. G. WELLS

## Welcome!

Welcome to Session 1 of *Who Is This Man?* If this is your first time together as a group, take a moment to introduce yourselves to each other before watching the video.

## Video: The Man Who Won't Go Away (17 minutes)

Play the video segment for Session 1. As you watch, use the outline (pages 12 – 13) to follow along or to take notes on anything that stands out to you.

### Notes

Jesus' impact on human history has been without parallel.

His presence is unavoidable.

His influence is inescapable.

His appeal is inexhaustible.

His endurance is inextinguishable.

The personal question: *How would you like Jesus to impact your life?*

This week:

- Take one of the things Jesus taught and allow it to shape your life: love your enemies; turn the other cheek; pursue reconciliation.
- Live in a spirit of humility: serve in a way you normally wouldn't serve, or remember someone who is poor and be generous with your money.

### Group Discussion (41 minutes)

Take a few minutes to talk about what you just watched.

1. What part of the teaching had the most impact on you?

### *Inescapable Influence*

2. On the video, John described the pervasive influence Jesus has had across history and on every sphere of life — art, science, government, medicine, education, social welfare, culture, philosophy, human rights (treatment of women, children, the poor and suffering), and more.
  - Of all the progress and revolutionary changes John talked about that can be traced back to Jesus, which do you think

have become so woven into the fabric of contemporary life and culture that they are now perhaps taken for granted?

- When you consider the ways Jesus has changed the world over time, which sphere of life stands out as one that has especially benefitted you? Share the reasons for your choice. For example, if you or someone in your family were born sick or with an obvious physical impairment, in ancient times you might have been killed or left to die of exposure. Knowing this, you might identify Jesus' influence on medicine or the treatment of children as especially beneficial to you.

### *Revolutionary Teaching*

3. People who listened to Jesus were amazed and surprised by what he taught (Matthew 7:28 – 29). They said things like, “How did this man get such learning?” and, “No one ever spoke the way this man does” (John 7:15, 46).

## Review on Your Own

Briefly review the ten revolutionary teachings of Jesus listed in the left column of the chart on pages 16–17.

- Place a ✓ next to one or two teachings you have recently witnessed being lived out among others in your own Christian community.
- Place a ✕ next to one or two teachings you have recently lived out in your own life.

## Discuss Together

- What was it like to use Jesus' teachings to assess your Christian community and yourself? For example, did it make you uncomfortable, help you to recognize goodness you had overlooked, or shift your perspective in some way?
- Describe how you have recently witnessed Jesus' teachings being lived out among others in your own Christian community. What stood out most about it? How did it impact the people involved?
- Share an example of how you have recently lived out Jesus' teachings in your own life. What made this easy or difficult for you to do?
- If you could choose just one teaching and know that everyone in your Christian community would live it out fully and radically, which teaching would you choose? What do you imagine might happen — within and beyond your community — as a result?

✓ x	TEN REVOLUTIONARY TEACHINGS OF JESUS	
	<b>Embrace a surrendered and sacrificial life.</b>	If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it (Luke 9:23–24 NLT).
	<b>Love your enemies.</b>	You have heard people say, “Love your neighbors and hate your enemies.” But I tell you to love your enemies and pray for anyone who mistreats you (Matthew 5:43–44 CEV).
	<b>Do not take revenge; turn the other cheek.</b>	<p>You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also (Matthew 5:38–39 NLT).</p> <p>If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat stuff. Live generously (Matthew 5:42 MSG).</p>
	<b>Forgive—without ceasing.</b>	<p>Forgive, and you will be forgiven (Luke 6:37).</p> <p>Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying “I repent,” you must forgive them (Luke 17:4).</p>
	<b>Share the best of who you are and what you have with those who can’t reciprocate.</b>	When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous (Luke 14:13–14).

	<b>Do not worry.</b>	<p>I tell you not to worry about your life.... Can worry make you live longer? (Matthew 6:25, 27 CEV).</p> <p>Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow (Matthew 6:34 MSG).</p>
	<b>Practice servanthood — it is the path to greatness.</b>	<p>Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet (John 13:14).</p> <p>Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:26–28).</p>
	<b>Protect yourself from greed.</b>	<p>Take care! Protect yourself against the least bit of greed. Life is not defined by what you have, even when you have a lot (Luke 12:15 MSG).</p> <p>Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal.... You cannot serve both God and money (Matthew 6:19, 24 NLT).</p>
	<b>Do not judge or condemn.</b>	<p>Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned (Luke 6:37).</p>
	<b>Humble yourself.</b>	<p>God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth (Matthew 5:5 NLT).</p> <p>If you put yourself above others, you will be put down. But if you humble yourself, you will be honored (Luke 14:11 CEV).</p>



### *The Personal Question*

4. At the end of the video, John posed this question: *How would you like Jesus to impact your life?* Focusing on your desires and hopes, how would you answer John's question? How would you most like Jesus to shape the person you are becoming?
  
5. The four remaining sessions in *Who Is This Man?* explore Jesus' inescapable influence on the world, and how we can advance — or impede — that influence through our own lives. In addition to learning together as a group, it's important to be aware of how God is at work among you — especially in how you relate to each other and share your lives throughout the study. As you discuss the teaching in each session, there will be many opportunities to speak life-giving — and life-challenging — words, and to listen to one another deeply.

Take a few moments to consider the kinds of things that are important to you in this setting. What do you need or want from the other members of the group? Use one or more of the sentence starters on page 19, or your own statement, to help the group understand the best way to be a good companion to you throughout this study. As each person responds, use the chart on pages 20 – 21 to briefly note what is important to that person and how you can be a good companion to them.

*It really helps me when ...*

*I tend to withdraw or feel anxious when ...*

*I'd like you to challenge me about ...*

*I'll know this group is a safe place if you ...*

*In our discussions, the best thing you could do for me is ...*

NAME	THE BEST WAY I CAN BE A GOOD COMPANION TO THIS PERSON ...

NAME	THE BEST WAY I CAN BE A GOOD COMPANION TO THIS PERSON ...

**Individual Activity: What I Want to Remember** (2 Minutes)

Complete this activity on your own.

1. Briefly review the outline and any notes you took.
2. In the space below, write down the most significant thing you gained in this session — from the teaching, activities, or discussions.

*What I want to remember from this session . . .*

**Closing Prayer**

Close your time together with prayer.

## Personal Study

### ● Read and Learn

Read chapters 1 – 3 of the book *Who Is This Man?* Use the space below to note any insights or questions you want to bring to the next group session.

### ● Study and Reflect

---

**Humility, which was scorned in the ancient world, became enshrined in a cross and was eventually championed as a virtue.**

**Enemies, who were thought to be worthy of vengeance (“help your friends and punish your enemies”), came to be seen as worthy of love.**

**Forgiveness moved from weakness to an act of moral beauty.**

*Who Is This Man?*, page 16

---

1. Jesus’ teachings constantly challenged the prevailing values in ancient culture — in society at large and also within his own faith community (Matthew 7:28 – 29; John 7:15, 46). More than two thousand years after his death, Jesus’ teachings are still revolutionary, challenging the prevailing values of both secular and religious cultures.

- Turn to the Ten Revolutionary Teachings of Jesus chart from the group discussion (pages 16 – 17).
- Review the teachings listed in the left column of the chart and circle the teaching that stands out most to you for any reason. Write it on the first row of the chart on page 25.

- Read the corresponding Scripture for the teaching you circled. Read it slowly, perhaps two or three times, and underline any words or phrases that resonate with you. Write your underlined words and phrases on the second line of the chart (page 25).
- Use the remaining questions on the chart to reflect on how this teaching connects with your life right now.

REFLECTING ON JESUS' TEACHING	
Which of Jesus' teachings stands out most to you?	
What words and phrases from Scripture resonate with you?	
What personal circumstances or problems come to mind in connection with this teaching?	
What relationships come to mind in connection with this teaching?	



---

Something about Jesus keeps prodding people to do what they would rather not: Francis of Assisi gives up his possessions, Augustine gives up his mistress, John Newton gives up his slave trade, and Father Damien gives up his health.

*Who Is This Man?, page 18*

---

2. As you reflect on your chart, what “prodding” are you aware of?

What reluctance, if any, do you feel about following through on this prodding?

If you were able to follow through, what good and redemptive thing do you hope might result — in your life and in the relationships you identified?

---

[Jesus] made history by starting in a humble place, in a spirit of love and acceptance, and allowing each person space to respond.

*Who Is This Man?, page 12*

---

3. There is nothing meek and mild about what Jesus taught. The writer of Hebrews leaves no room for doubt about this:

God means what he says. What he says goes. His powerful Word is sharp as a surgeon's scalpel, cutting through everything, whether doubt or defense, laying us open to listen and obey. Nothing and no one is impervious to God's Word. We can't get away from it — no matter what. (Hebrews 4:12 – 13 MSG)

This passage states a vivid and sometimes painful truth, but it's rooted in the teachings of a Savior who always approaches us in a spirit of love and acceptance, inviting us to respond right where we are.

Where are you most aware of your need for love and acceptance from Jesus in connection with the teaching you've reflected on?

What do you sense Jesus' loving invitation to you might be?

● Guided Prayer

*Lord, I am so grateful that love is the foundation for everything you want to teach me — even the hard lessons.*

*Today, I feel challenged by your teaching on ... This one is hard for me because ...*

*I believe you may be prompting me to ... What I need most from you now is ...*

*I want my life to be a reflection of your revolutionary love for me — this day and every day. Change me, Lord, and give me courage to live a radically different life because of love. Amen.*