

Christian Book Reports

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What do you know about Jesus?

- **What have you learned new about Jesus in the last 5 years?**
- **What has surprised you the most about Jesus in the last 5 years?**






The Jesus I Never Knew – Philip Yancey

- **What if you were led to believe in a Jesus that wasn't really accurate at all?**
- **What if the preaching you heard was so convincing that you just never questioned it?**
- **What if you found out there is a Jesus you never really knew – would you be disappointed or glad?**





Jesus Impressions

- **The Lakota Indian tribe calls him God's buffalo calf.**
 - **The Cuban government has distributed pictures of Jesus with a gun slung over his shoulder.**
 - **During the religious wars with France, the British shouted "The Pope is French, but Jesus Christ is English".**
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Jesus Impressions

- **Norm Evans, former pro football player said, “I guarantee you if Jesus came today he would play football and be the toughest guy to ever play the game”.**
- **Fritz Peterson, former New York Yankee said, “I firmly believe if Jesus were sliding into second base he would knock the shortstop into left field”.**





Jesus Impressions

- From those quotes I think we see that we are prone to make Jesus in our own image.
 - Have you ever thought of him as English speaking and Americanized?
 - Is your Jesus tall, dark, and handsome, or is he short and pudgy with curly hair? – would it matter?
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Jesus Impressions

- **Our best chance to form an accurate impression of Jesus is by reading the gospels.**
- **A good exercise for us is look for him in fresh ways as we read the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.**
- **Look for his emotions, his actions, his questions, his instructions, and his prayers.**





The Mystery of Jesus

- He urged obedience to the Mosaic law while gaining a reputation as a lawbreaker.
- He could have sympathy for a complete stranger and then turn and tell one of his friends to “get behind me, Satan”.
- He had uncompromising views on rich men and loose women, but both enjoyed his company.






The Mystery of Jesus

- One day miracles flowed from him and the next day his power seemed blocked by the lack of faith in the people he was near.
- His extravagant claims about himself kept him in the center of controversy, and then when he performs a miracle he tells those he healed to keep it quiet.
- Walter Wink said. “if Jesus had never lived we would not have been able to invent him”.





The Mystery of Jesus

- “This one who was never boring, or predictable has somehow been tamed to be this benign figure who is relegated to a statue on the coffee table or a shelf.”
Philip Yancy
 - “The church has managed to tame the Lion of Judah to be a household pet for children and old women.”
Dorothy Sayers
 - All of these quips beg for an answer to the question of “just who is this Jesus?”.
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The Mystery of Jesus

- He seems to prefer the ordinary pleas of the common person over the polished supplications of the religious professional.
- When he could have said “you made your bed, now lay in it” he instead puts the 99 obedient sheep at risk to go look for the stray – who would do that?
- And then in the next breath he tells of a father who left a son go and didn’t go after him. What is the difference?





The Mystery of Jesus

- He performed miracles, but understood they did not always lead the witnesses to faith – the more likely responses were suspicion, contempt, and jealousy.
 - When asked plain questions he often answered with questions of his own, or complex stories filled with riddles.
 - Though a rabbi himself, he had little time for all others who wore the same title.
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The Jesus We Never Knew

- **When Philip Yancey speaks of the Jesus he never knew he was referring to all of the truths about Jesus that are either intentionally left out, or otherwise passed over.**
- **It may be because he was the most complex person in all of history, or is it because we just don't listen when he speaks?**
- **Maybe what we need to do is forget all we think we know about him and read the gospels again intent on re-discovering the Jesus of the New Testament.**






The Jesus We Never Knew

- I have a friend whose been speaking of “re-Jesusing” a lot in the past few months.
- What he means is that he has seen a need to revisit the Jesus of the gospels again searching for the simple and profound truths he said about himself.
- My friend would also tell you that while he is more amazed than ever with Jesus, that Jesus wants his obedience even more than his amazement.






Strange Teachings

- If we were to read the Beatitudes for the first time having never been ‘schooled’ on them we would surely conclude they are strange at best.
 - From Freudian thought we learn the teachings of the Beatitudes are at best “masochism moderately indulged”.
 - I think we do not wince and recoil at them due to familiarity, and we need to be careful lest our familiarity lead us to contempt.
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Strange Teachings

- In the Beatitudes we see things prized that are not often thought of a prize worthy – being poor, being hungry, mourning, and persecuted.
 - “In the Beatitudes, Jesus honored people who may not enjoy many privileges in this life”. Philip Yancy
 - It was Jesus alone who was qualified to testify to the tremendous counter-balance Heaven is to those who do not enjoy the spoils of this life.
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People Who Impressed Jesus

- When we read of the people that caught his attention we see characters like the “two mite widow”, “Zacheus”, “the 5 times divorced woman at the well”, “men with leprosy” and the “woman caught in adultery”.
- The people who caught his attention were often the dependent, the sorrowful, and the broken-hearted.
- Was it because he thought these were the people who would be the most receptive to the kingdom he offered?






People Who Impressed Jesus

- **Matthew 16:25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. NIV**
- **No less than five times in the gospels we read these words of Jesus and I think the message is rather straightforward – Jesus is looking for the desperate.**
- **One of the best kept secrets of the gospel is that until we are desperate for change, we won't.**





Outrageous Commands

- **“Be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect” Jesus**
 - **Other religions of Jesus’ day taught “do not do to others what you would not want done to you”, but Jesus made it a positive command – “do unto others the things you want done to you”.**
 - **The law said, “do not commit adultery” Jesus said do not even look. The law said “Do not kill”, Jesus said “don’t even use harsh language”.**
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Outrageous Commands

- He said things like cut off your hand if you steal, and pluck out your eye if you lust, and we read these words like they are standard fare and rather normal.
- He said love your enemies, give your money away, and if someone hits you invite him to do it again.
- Were we not so Christianized we would think more deeply about these and wonder if it he really meant what is written in the bible – instead, we tend to yawn.





Outrageous Commands

- **“Jesus made the law impossible to keep and then demanded that we keep it.” Philip Yancey**
- **“The sermon on the mount did not help me improve, it simply revealed all the ways I had not.” Philip Yancey**
- **Leo Tolstoy said, “do not judge God’s holy ideals by my inability to keep them”. “If I know the way home and am walking drunkenly there, is it any less the way home?”**






Outrageous Commands

- While the sermon on the mount may be filled with impossible and outrageous commands, it is nonetheless God's standard for holiness.
- In many ways the sermon on the mount serves the same function as the Ten Commandments – they serve to show how short we fall and to make us into people desperate for grace.
- “Grace is for the desperate, the broken, the needy, and those who cannot make it on their own.” Philip Yancey





A Compelling Figure

- **Jesus is the most compelling figure in all of history if for no other reason than his fearless approach to confrontation.**
 - **He would confront the outcast with mercy and challenge them to believe they can be forgiven and start fresh.**
 - **He confronted the comfortable with his contempt for their credentials.**
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A Compelling Figure

- He seemed to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.
- Just when I think I have settled into a comfortable relationship with him I soon find that he is not much interested in my comfort.
- He wants me change even when I don't think I need to – maybe that's the way he wants it.





Questions / Comments

