

## **Jesus 101, #1**

Hi all,

More than any other time since I've been a disciple of the Lord I'm seeing believers who think they are mature because of the wealth of teachings available and what they think they know, yet they don't do the most basic teachings of Jesus - what I would call 'Jesus 101'. Entry level class to being a Christian. They are hypocrites of the highest order, yet as with most hypocrites, they don't see their own hypocrisy.

Many of us have experienced being 'unfriended' on Facebook for example. And if you're a church-goer you've no doubt also experienced being 'unfriended' long before Facebook ever came around with that term, lol. The 'unfriending' of a fellow church friend or social media friend is a prime example of those who think they are mature but are in fact babes in Christ.

What do you do when someone at church ends the friendship, or on social media you are unfriended and blocked?

### **Jesus' commands: Reconciliation is nearly always the goal**

Jesus said in Matthew 5: 23-24 if you're at the altar to bring a gift to the Lord, but remember your brother has something against you, leave your gift and go be reconciled to your brother.

In Matthew 18: 15 He said if your brother has trespassed against you, go to him privately and be reconciled.

That's basic Jesus. Paul and James would emphasize the same thing in Galatians 6: 1-3 and James 5: 16 when they said to seek restoration with someone who has trespassed against us, and admit our mistakes to one another and pray for one another for healing of the relationship.

Woven throughout the New Testament letters are commands to make allowances for one another, to love and forgive one another, to be diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and so much more. The objective is always reconciliation.

The only reasons given for not reconciling is the other person insists they are right and won't compromise, or they cause division and strife and hurt, or they refuse to reconcile, are going further into sin, or they teach error. (Matthew 18: 15-20, Galatians 6: 1-6, Romans 16: 17-18, II Timothy 2: 25-26)

### **Who obeys basic Jesus these days?**

A typical Facebook unfriending goes something like this: A person gets a message from someone whose post they had responded to and they say something like: 'It seems you are always trying to correct me or point out what I did wrong or take offense, so I think it best we part friends'. And that is that. When the person responds they get a 'this person is not receiving messages right now' or other notice that they have cut off all possibility of contacting them.

The person doing the unfriending does not follow Jesus' instructions about seeking reconciliation and trying to make peace, for they don't give the other person an opportunity to discover the issue and apologize.

I get many emails from people on the receiving end of such treatment; hurt, rejected, wondering what they did that was horrible enough to be 'unfriended and blocked'. The same unfriending happens in church. In fact unfriending on social media is just an extension of what existed in churches long before the computer age existed.

### **Their issue is with Jesus**

But if a person refuses to obey Jesus in a matter, there isn't much you can do about it. That is their wood, hay, and stubble they will carry into heaven to give account before the Lord. He will ask them why they didn't do what they knew was right. Their issue is truly with Him, not with you.

And that is the take away today - when a person refuses to do something basic that is woven throughout scripture - their issue is with the Lord and their own heart. Somewhere deep inside they

want to put themselves forth without any challenges or accountability to what they say. They want authority without responsibility.

With the exceptions mentioned above, we should as much as is within our ability, seek to live peaceably as scripture says. But some find it easier to cut you out of their lives than to do the hard work of making peace.

Jesus is always moving us towards being diligent to add to our faith moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, consistency, godliness, brotherly love, and unconditional love. He is always moving us into love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, meekness, kindness, faithfulness.

If we move away from these qualities of character and soul, we move away from Him. Next week, a visitation where the Lord taught me how He deals with people who refuse to learn their lesson. Until then, blessings,

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### **John Fenn, Jesus 101 #2, the teaching visitation.**

Hi all,

Late one night I was up praying, and suddenly I was in the Spirit, with the Lord standing before me in my living room. I could see Him and the natural things of my living room at the same time. He said, "I want to teach you how I teach people".

#### **I knew some of the basics**

Mark 4: 33 says He taught them 'as they were able to receive it' - revealing He didn't then nor does He now, overwhelm us with things we are not able to understand nor walk in. And if we aren't ready for a truth, He withholds until we seek Him about it.

A good example of this is the baptism with the Holy Spirit. I was born again at age 16, but within weeks became frustrated over my lack of understanding of the Word and lack of power, but I didn't know anything else. I remember telling the Father one day: "I don't want to seem ungrateful Father, and I don't want to offend you, but is this all there is? I thought there'd be more."

The next day my friend who led me to the Lord started talking to me about the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Up to the day before I hadn't even heard about it, but when she told me I'd be able to be taught by the Lord via the Holy Spirit and enter into a deeper realm, I was ready! He had caused her to wait until I was ready and able to receive information about it. He waited until I asked for more knowledge from Him - He didn't force a new teaching on me.

This night the Lord taught me what sometimes happens when a person doesn't first repent before believing in Him.

#### **John 3: 22-26 tells us John the Baptist is baptizing people in one place...**

...and Jesus and His disciples are baptizing people in another place. We are told some of John's disciples were concerned because Jesus was drawing more people than John was, which is where John responded in part: "He must increase; I must decrease."

Chapter 4 starts this way: "So when the Lord learned that the Pharisees had been told that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), He left Judea and returned again to Galilee. Now He had to go through Samaria."

The Lord said He knew the Pharisees would not follow Him through Samaria, so He used it as a sort of filter so they would be forced to go back to John. It meant they had to return to John and his baptism of repentance. If He had let them, the Pharisees would have followed Jesus without first receiving the baptism of repentance from John.

#### **Every head bowed and every eye closed...**

He then started talking about the modern western practice of raising the hand to 'accept Jesus', and how many never repent but go directly to being born again - never truly dealing with their heart about

their past sinful life. That is what the Pharisees would have done - followed Jesus without ever having first repented of their sins. They would have held onto their sinful Pharisee way while 'accepting' Jesus - and that isn't right.

The Lord's comment about how people today believe in Him without dealing with their previous life - repentance - means a person comes to the Lord with these past sin issues still present and occupying a place in their heart and lives.

They aren't giving their lives to Jesus, rather they are inviting Jesus into their sinful life. That's backwards.

It means very often because they've not first repented but have gone right to Jesus, they will struggle with sin rather than being able to say 'No sin, I repented of you and have turned another way.' Many have not brought closure to their past life of sin when they come to Jesus, so they are constantly struggling between their former life and their new life in Christ.

### **Consider the foundational teachings of the faith**

As listed in Hebrews 6: 1-2: Repentance from dead works, faith toward God, teaching on baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement.

Notice the progression from repentance from dead works to the end teaching on judgement. How many of us started with 'faith towards God', then to the baptisms of water and Holy Spirit, then to laying hands on people for healing or prayer, then to looking for heaven - without ever first having repented?

Is it any wonder many struggle with sin? They know deeper things in the Lord, yet still struggle with old sins because they never repented before coming to Jesus.

### **It's not too late...**

It is possible for a person who went right to Jesus without first repenting and coming to terms with their sinful past, to stop where they are right now, and repent of those things - even if that was 10 or 30 years ago. If you never stopped to really look at your sinful past, and repent of it to God the Father, to let that godly sorrow wash over them, then it might be a good thing to do so. And once done, move on.

It can be a simple act over and done with in seconds - that moment you bring to remembrance your sinful past, and out loud tell the Father you repent of those sins - you turn from them in godly sorrow. He leaves the memory of our past with us that we not return to them, as a sort of warning. If not repented of they become temptations. That's how you'll know your heart on the matter. If you repented, the sins of the past are no longer temptations. If you still hold some lust for them in your heart, they will tempt you. Repent, then press toward the mark of the high call in Christ.

In Acts 2: 38 when the people heard Peter's explanation of the day of Pentecost and asked what they needed to do to be saved, Peter said, 'Repent'. He didn't say 'believe', but 'repent' - repentance is the first word of salvation. Without it, a person may struggle with old sins throughout their new walk in Christ. Until next week, blessings,

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### **Jesus 101 #3, If you don't feel as close to God.**

Hi all,

The term 'backsliding' has been used for years to describe a Christian who is no longer going to church or isn't also currently 'walking with the Lord'.

### **Where does the term come from?**

We see the term in Hosea 4: 16: "Israel slides back as a backsliding heifer."

But the term 'backsliding' doesn't mean what you think. When we say 'backsliding' we picture an animal sliding backwards away from its master down a slippery, muddy slope. So the image of a backsliding Christian is that of a person on a slippery slope, sliding down towards eternal separation from God, not knowing their end.

The truth of the Hebrew word 'sasar' translated here as 'backsliding', is that it means 'stubborn, rebellious'. The word picture of Hosea 4:16 is not of an animal sliding backwards, but rather one digging in its heels while the master pulls the rope; a heifer or donkey sitting down refusing to move at all. One who backslides is one who has dug in their heels and refuses to move on even though the master is tugging at the rope to go with him.

### **Have you ever been a backslider?**

I think by that definition we've all been backsliders at one time or another. As they say, "If you don't feel as close to God as you used to, guess who moved?"

### **When you have a spot on clothing, all you see is the spot**

The New Testament says our righteousness is spiritually speaking, white linen robes. This is seen in Revelation 19: 8: "The fine linen clean and white, is the righteousness of the saints."

These robes of white linen are seen also in Revelation 3: 4, 5 and 3: 18, 6: 11 and 7: 9-14. And these are the robes it says we have in Ephesians 5: 26-28 where it talks of a husband loving his wife as the Lord does the church, "that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it might be without spot or blemish..."

But consider the word picture of a robe of fine linen, without even a wrinkle or spot on it - that means it is possible to have such a robe with a wrinkle or spot on it.

A spot doesn't ruin the garment, but when you get a spot on a clean outfit all you see is that spot.

So it is the Lord on this side of heaven can deal with us on an issue we don't want to deal with, and we are like that stubborn mule sitting down, digging in its heels, refusing to move on the subject. The rest of the robe is fine - we love the Lord, we are all smiles, we see Him blessing us in this area and that.

If only He would leave us alone with that one spot on our garment. We don't want to do what is right in that one area. Now if we were to die in such a condition that one spot of stubbornness would be burned away like wood, hay, and stubble that Paul talks about in I Corinthians 3: 1-15 - we will be saved, but as one having come through a fire, for that dirt will be burned away that the garment may be clean and fresh.

### **Have you noticed what He deals with us about is very simple?**

I remember one time Barb asking me to do something around the house that I didn't want to do. I don't recall what it was now, but I remember the rebuke from the Lord I received about it. I think it was something I didn't feel was needed, or that she could do herself but didn't want to, and I sat refusing to move, complaining to the Lord about her. I was backsliding, digging in my heels.

Suddenly the Lord said to me: "If I asked you to do it, would you do it?" I admitted hesitantly, 'Yes' because I knew I could never win an argument with the Lord. He then responded: "Very well then. I am asking you to do it, for I am in her. Now go do what she asks, for I am asking as well." (I obeyed)

It seems whatever the little spot on the linen is, it is always something simple, basic, just Jesus 101 so to speak. And it is so easy to 'backslide' about it - dig in our heels, sitting on our rump, refusing to move.

Little things like making our relationship right with someone, things like give a friend a call to check up on them, things like forgive that person that hurt you. Simple, basic Christianity.

Is it any wonder people run after the fun things instead? Doing the basic things is not something that is fun. It always involves crucifying the flesh. The temptation is to backslide, dig in our heels.

Yet I've found if I concentrate on doing the simple basics of the faith, the rest falls into place. I find no desire to get into the peripheral things that mean nothing to my faith but serve only to kill time and stir me mentally. Godliness with contentment as Paul said, is great gain. There is such peace just doing the little things, the simple things, and walking with Him. New subject next week, until then, blessings,  
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