



Swamp Camp Services, Inc.

1380 Maxeys Road, Union Point, Georgia 30669

2018 Summer Camp Bible Classes & Devotionals

A word to teachers about Bible classes...

This year's theme, *Image*, has its genesis from a conversation revolving around being a Sin Manager rather than an Image Seeker and how easy it is for us to focus on dos and don'ts more than on imitating Jesus. Which do you think campers more readily identify with? Which are you more tempted to pursue? Which is easier? How can the "gospel of sin management" consign Jesus to be a taboo topic? Can Jesus really be an ever-day influence in our life? How inspiring is a life molded by the Word Who Became Flesh compared to a life pushed by a catalog of rights and wrongs? Is this what James refers to about looking into a mirror and forgetting what you look like? The answers to these questions are the focus of our summer and its Bible classes. My prayer is that we will all grow in greater amazement of Jesus, the real person Jesus, and that we will strive to walk as he did (1 John 2:6) in order to somehow attain his full image during our time on this earth and, in some manner, get back to the real gospel: that God loves us immensely and he desires us to be with him forever...in his image.

When you prepare to teach, keep the following two questions in mind:

- Does the content of my lesson and the passion infused in my teaching have a natural tendency to cause the listeners (campers) to become a full-time student of Jesus?
- Would the campers who believe my message be interested in following him as a natural "next step"?

Have a great time preparing and giving the lessons you choose to teach...thanks for your willingness to do so.
Much love, Jeff

Some Helpful Hints:

- Scriptures in **blue** are to be read out loud to campers.
- Scriptures in black are for reference.
- Questions in **red** are to be asked out loud to campers.
- Questions in black are rhetorical and/or for your consideration.
- Text in {brackets} are for your reference.
- Be prepared to have the end in mind when teaching: What is the overall message this lesson is trying to get across to the campers? What can I put in their pocket that they can pull out when they get home?
- Questions are meant to keep things moving and get the campers engaged.
- Don't be afraid to use the "pregnant pause" or a few moments of silence to generate engagement as well.
- **HAVE FUN!**

Monday – Self-Image or God-Image – Younger (9-11), Middle (12-13) & Older (14+)

Give each person a paper plate and can of play dough. {instruct campers to keep playdough on the plate in order to care for playdough as it will be used all summer.}

[Isaiah 64:8]

God molds us into what we are; today *you* are going to play the part of the potter and mold some answers to two questions. Using their play dough, have each person answer the following question, one at a time:

1. **What is your image (picture) of God?** Ask some to share and explain their creation.
2. **What is God's image of you?** Ask some to share and explain their creation.

What is self-image?

How do we create a 'self' image?

How does our self-image get corrupted?

In whose image are you created? [Genesis 1:26-27]

Why is that significant?

How often do you think of this?

What keeps us from thinking this way every day?

What would someone observe about your daily life, if you did think this every day *and* believed it was significant?

What would be the impact on your inner-image, the part others can't observe about you?

Once walking through the streets of Hong Kong, a man came upon a tattoo studio, which had samples of the available tattoos displayed in the window such as an anchor, flag, or mermaid. The one that struck the man with force were three words: "Born to Lose." The man entered the shop in astonishment and pointing to those words, asked the tattoo artist, "Does anyone really have that terrible phrase, 'Born to Lose', tattooed on their body." He replied, "Yes, sometimes." "But," the man said, "I just can't believe that anyone in his right mind would do that." The tattoo artist simply tapped his forehead and said in broken English, "Before tattoo on body, tattoo on mind."

Perhaps, if we believe that our inner-image comes from God, we would be less inclined to allow our self-image to be formed by the judgments of others or our western pop culture (TV, movies, songs, Social Media posts, etc.) or own thoughts and desires. Let's be mindful of this daily and believe in the inner-image God has in mind for each of you. Armed with this belief, allow Him to mold and shape you into who and what He sees. He already made you wonderfully in your mother's womb; will He not do well with the time outside the womb? Be moldable! And watch what you will become as God, the Master Potter, shapes you into His image. Be amazed at who you are and will become!

Tuesday – Is Jesus Cool? – Younger

What does it mean to be "cool?" Someone everyone wants to be around.

Is Jesus considered "cool?"

What are common things said about Jesus and who he is/was?

What are some misconceptions about Jesus?

- Pale, weak, thin, soft, boring, quiet, "doormat"
- "Love the children and animals", "lamb in arms" tone
- Spacey, dreamy look on face & eyes, haloed

Why do people have so many misconceptions?

- Listen to what others say
- Watch poor media coverage
- Don't read about Jesus for themselves

{GOAL: to inspire the campers to want to examine the gospels to find the *real* Jesus: His heart, attitudes, priorities, relationship with God, how he spent his time and how reacted/treated people. Behold the man!}

[Hebrews 1:1-3a]

Yesterday, talked about being made in God's image. **Who else was made in God's image?** Yes. Jesus.

Why is that important for you and me to know? God is invisible. If you want to know God better, you can do so through Jesus as he is the *exact* representation of God.

Let's spend a couple of days {that's a long Bible class, ha ha} with Jesus so we can really get to know him. {Lots of questions: only allow one or two answer per question and keep it moving, choose different campers to answer.}

[Mark 1:16-20]

They left their nets. **What does that mean?** left their livelihood, job.

What would cause someone to leave their job to follow a person? Charisma? Confidence?

[Mark 1:21-28]

Why were they amazed at his teaching? Taught with authority

What does it mean to teach with authority?

- Not afraid of what others think, confident, knows the topic. They came back to hear his teaching! More than just charisma. Look at how he treats this man possessed by an evil spirit.

How would most people react to a person "possessed by an evil spirit"?

- Afraid, cross the street, back-off, put distance

How did Jesus treat him?

- Sternly! Boldly! Not how we picture Jesus. What a beast Jesus is! These people remembered this event.

[Mark 1:29-34]

What did Jesus do in these passages? Healed.

What does that tell you about Jesus? Compassionate, loving, wants people to be better.

[Mark 1:35-37]

What was his priority?

How many of you talk to God on a regular basis?

What does this show about Jesus?

- Especially after yesterday or previous days (look back through the chapter).
- Shows his relationship with God.

[Mark 1:40-42]

What is leprosy?

- Grotesque bacterial disease which affects the skin; social stigma.

How would most people treat this man?

- Afraid, put distance, ignore

How does Jesus treat him? Gets close to him. {We should never be afraid of getting to know people's story.}

Why do you think he touched him?

- When words aren't enough, maybe no one had touched him in years, could have healed him from afar ("*Ok, you stand over there, keep your distance, ok, you're healed, now.*")

What does this say about Jesus?

So, after spending a couple of days with Jesus, what do you think of him?

Is Jesus cool? Is he someone with whom you would like to have in your cabin or spend more time? How would you like to have him as a big brother? If so, then start reading the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John); invite him into our life and family. Ask questions. Befriend Jesus. Get to know who he is...who he *really* is.

Tuesday – Who is Jesus...Really? – Middle/Older

What do you think I mean by the title of this lesson? Why would I emphasize “*really*”?

Would you say that Jesus is an “everyday” figure in people’s lives? {Might have to discuss what is meant by an “everyday figure.” Reference or be aware of 2 Timothy 3:15-16.}

What are common misconceptions of Jesus?

How does these effect his “everdayness” in our lives? Puts distance, makes him not relative, minimizes him.

On a scale of 1-10, 1 being none, 10 being most, how would you rate Jesus as the smartest person you know? Give me an example of why you rated an 8 or above.

[Hebrews 1:1-3]

Who does this scripture say Jesus is? God. Creator of Universe. Powerful. Sustainer.

What would have to be invented before the universe could be created? Physics, astrophysics, calculus, geometry, gravity, nuclear forces, chemistry...What else? Jesus had to invent each one of these disciplines in order to create the universe. Sound smart? Yeah! To be a sustainer you have to know what is constantly going on in an ever-moving, fluid universe. Would you say he is involved? Yeah!

[Luke 22:49-51]

Explain setting. Grasp what Jesus just did right there: put his ear back on!! Guess we better include biology, hematology, neurology, angiology, biochemistry, and audiology to the list.

[Mark 11: 12-14, 19-21]

Killed a tree. Let’s include: dendrology, xylology, organic chemistry, cytology, cellular biology to this list.

[John 2:1-9]

Turns water into wine. What “ology” does this cover? Do you get the point?!

Jesus is the Master of Molecules!

Read the following excerpt from [The Divine Conspiracy](#) written by Dallas Willard:

At the literally mundane level, Jesus knew how to transform the molecular structure of water to make it wine. That knowledge also allowed him to take a few pieces of bread and some little fish and feed thousands of people. He could create matter from the energy he knew how to access from “the heavens,” right where he was.

It cannot be surprising that the feeding of the thousands led the crowds to try to force him to be their king. Surely one who could play on the energy/matter equation like that

could do anything. Turn gravel into gold and pay off the nation debt! Do you think he could get elected president or prime minister today?

He knew how to transform the tissues of the human body from sickness to health and from death to life. He knew how to suspend gravity, interrupt weather patterns, and eliminate unfruitful trees without saw or ax. He only needed a word. Surely, he must be amused at what Nobel prizes are awarded for today.

In the ethical domain, he brought an understanding of life that has influenced world thought more than any other. And one of the greatest testimonies to his intelligence is surely that he knew how to enter physical death, actually to die, and then live on beyond death. He seized death by the throat and defeated it. Forget cryonics!

Death was not something others imposed on him. He explained to his followers in the moment of crisis that he could at any time call for 72,000 angels to do whatever he wanted. A mid-sized angel or two would surely have been enough to take care of those who thought they were capturing and killing him. He plainly said, "Nobody takes my life! I give it up by choice. I am in position to lay it down, and I am in position to resume it. My father and I have worked all this out." (John 10:18).

All these things show Jesus' cognitive and practical mastery of every phase of reality: physical, moral, and spiritual. He is Master only because he is Maestro. "Jesus is Lord" can mean little in practice for anyone who has to hesitate before saying, "Jesus is smart."

He is not just nice, he is brilliant. He is the smartest man who ever lived. His now supervising the entire course of world history (Rev. 1:5) while simultaneously preparing the rest of the universe for our future role in it (John 14:2). He always has the best information on everything and certainly also on the things that matter most in human life.

Jesus **REALLY** is the Master of Molecules. If you want to know God, you must know Jesus. Isn't it time that he became an "everyday" figure in your life so you can know who he is...*really*. Start reading the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John); invite him into your daily life, get to know him better and think of him from this day forward as the guy who can answer every one of your questions; and then see if he isn't worth imitating.

Wednesday –An Everyday Jesus – Younger

How many of would say Jesus is smart?

How do you know? Can you give me some examples?

[Hebrews 1:1-3] {Read this yesterday, let's look at it again.}

Who does this scripture say Jesus is? God. Creator of Universe. Powerful. Sustainer.

What would have to be invented before the universe could be created? Physics, astrophysics, calculus, geometry, gravity, nuclear forces, chemistry...**What else?** Jesus invented each one of these disciplines in order to create the universe. Sound smart? Yeah! To be a sustainer you have to know what is constantly going on in an ever-moving, fluid universe. Is he involved? Yeah!

[Luke 22:49-51]

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[John 2:1-9]

Turns water into wine. **What would Jesus have to know to do this?**

Is Jesus smart? If he is that smart, do you think he can help you every day?

How can you be so sure?

Jesus died a long time ago. **How can he be with you every day?**

[John 1:1-3, 14]

What is the Word? Who is the Word? Is the Bible Jesus and Jesus the Bible?

If this is true, then the Bible is the most amazing group of words ever and will help you. Right?

Can the Bible be with you every day? That's how Jesus, the smartest person ever, can be with you every day.

Wednesday – The “Everyday” Jesus – Middle / Older

After yesterday's lesson, what does the title *Master of Molecules* mean to you now?

So, if the Master of Molecules was going to make an opening statement to be recorded for all time about how to live a spiritual, happy life, what do you think would he say?

Would the things he says be relevant, pertinent, and “every-day”? Why do you think so?

Today's lesson is about answering these questions. I hope after our time together you will see that Jesus is not some lofty, other-world Bible figure that throws out a bunch of dos and don'ts like he was the Head Gamemaker preparing a Quarter Quell for our own personal Hunger Games, but instead that you see him as the concerned, practical, everyday Lord and author of life who wants you to succeed in life and have something you were created for: a vibrant and ongoing relationship with God, now and for eternity.

Jesus, in fact, made an opening statement and it is famously called The Sermon on the Mount. It is Jesus' inaugural thesis on a proper and expected spiritual life. It is his way of jump-starting the process of turning religion back into a relationship; taking a right and wrong list and turning it into a daily picture of spiritual living.

The story is once told of a pilot doing maneuvers in a fighter jet one night. In order to ascend to the heights, she pulled back on the joystick...and crashed. Unbeknownst to her, she was flying upside down. Much of our view of church, Jesus, the Bible, God, and spirituality as it relates to everyday life is upside down. Jesus in his “sermon” helps to right our plane and fly as we were meant. Let's see what he has to say.

We won't have time today, but I encourage you to read the entire sermon; it spans chapters 5, 6 & 7 in Matthew and is meant to be taken as a whole, not in pieces, as sometimes happens. You see, the opening statement builds upon itself as Jesus lays it out. Today, we are only going to summarize part of it; it is the foundational concepts to his entire ministry and life and purpose while on earth; once you read it in its entirety, you decide for yourself how practical and “everyday” it is.

How many of you enjoy a close tight sporting event, where the lead goes back and forth and your team is the winner in the last seconds? How would you feel during the game? How would you feel during the game if you knew the final score?

With that in mind, let's look at how Jesus ends his first sermon and see the final score, the final point of his famous opening statement. [\[Matthew 7:24-27\]](#)

What does this mean? You "win" if you put Jesus' words in to practice.

Why does Jesus say "therefore"? Go to go and read everything before this to see what it is "there for," so let's go.

Here is a chapter 5 & 6 summary:

- The Kingdom of Heaven is for everyone, this includes you, no matter what you or others think about you.
- Turn private things public and make public things private so your house will be solidly built.

We will discuss first part of Chapter 5 and then do a group activity for remainder of Chapter 5 and all of Chapter 6.

[\[Matthew 5:1-16\]](#)

Blessed: def. Comes from Old English word *bledsian*, which meant mark or consecrate with blood {hmmm...} and now means endowed with divine favor and protection; happiness; pleasure or relief. Jesus means for all men to be protected and happy to be the salt and light of the world, if you follow him.

[\[Matthew 5: 17-20\]](#)

What does it mean to surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees and teacher of the law? How do you do that? Does this mean you become more legalistic—really crank that dos and don'ts list?!

No. ***It is the inner life of the soul we must aim to transform, then behavior will follow. That is why seeking the image of Jesus must be the focus over and above managing a list of sins or laws, which is what the Pharisees and the teachers of the law did and taught. Being a Christian is not a system but a relationship.***

The rest of Chapter 5 Jesus takes us through six heart, or inner, situations, in which his way goes beyond doing and exploits being. They can be summed up in the following table taken from Chapter 5:

Inner Situations - Groups	Sin Manager	Image Seeker
1. Anger/annoyance with others (vv. 21-26)	Just don't kill em.	Intense desire to help. No anger or contempt.
2. Sexual attraction (vv. 27-30)	No sex.	No cultivation of lust.
3. Unhappiness with spouse. (vv. 31-32)	Distance and divorce.	Consider the other person.
4. Convincing someone to believe something by swearing. (vv. 33-37)	Manipulate by a swearing or requiring oath. "You promise?!"	Simply state yes or no and hold true to it; no verbal manipulation.
5. Getting hurt. (vv. 38-42)	Get them back.	Help and give to those who harm you.
6. Handling an enemy. (vv. 43-48)	Hate them.	Love them and hope blessedness for them.

Do the following:

- Break up into six (6) groups.
- Give each group one of the passages from the table above, i.e. Group 1 verses Matthew 5:21-26, Group 2 verses Matthew 5:27-30, and so on.
- Ask them to answer *using short phrases* the following three questions. This should take about 10 min.
 - What is the situation?
 - How does a Sin Manager deal with this situation?
 - How does an Image Seeker deal with it?
- Have each group report back.

The Image Seeker turns the private world (heart) upside down and inside out. The Sin Manager just battles with outward behavior. The Image Seeker changes her heart, which in turn guides her behavior.

With the same groups, repeat the same steps above with this chart that focuses on outward situations from Matthew 6:

Outward Situations - Groups	Sin Manager	Image Seeker
1. Giving to needy (vv. 1-4)	Do it to be seen.	Do it secretly. Show God.
2. Praying (vv. 5-13)	Do it with many words that will be heard by all.	Do it secretly with few but meaningful words that will be heard by God.
3. Forgiveness (vv. 14-15)	Not necessary. Only if they forgive me.	Forgive consistently like God.
4. Fasting (vv. 16-18)	If you do it, do it so all will know and can tell you are such a "spiritual" person.	Cover it up so only God sees the importance of it.
5. Valuing earthly things (vv. 19-24)	Value things AND be spiritual.	Don't live for (treasure) anything that death can take away.
6. Worrying about life (vv. 25-34)	Stressfully run after the American dream.	Seek Jesus and his priorities and know you will be taken care of.

The Image Seeker takes all the public things and turns them private. The Sin Manager is all about establishing his public image. The Image Seeker concerns himself with his God-Image not his self-image.

Are these situations everyday occurrences?

Are they worthy of daily focus?

Does Jesus' way of dealing with them make sense and seem rewarding?

Who will survive the storms of life, the Sin Manager or Image Seeker?

Are there examples in current events that show this to be true? {Mention one and let them think of outcome if

that person would have been an Image Seeker. i.e. sex scandal with public figure.}

Be an Image Seeker and watch what happens to the foundations of your life. If you the storms of life are tossing you back and forth and beating the snot out of you, ask yourself the hard question: Am I putting Jesus words into practice every day?

Friday – Remember What You Look Like – Younger

Imagine you had a best friend who was born blind and he/she asked you to describe what you look like. Ask for volunteers who will stand up and describe what they look like as if speaking to that friend.

[James 1:22-25]

Why is reading the Bible and not obeying it like looking into a mirror and forgetting what you look like?

How can you be tricked or deceived just by only listening to the Word?

What does it mean to look intently at something?

What is the perfect law? Could that be Jesus' way of doing things?

How can you keep from forgetting what you look like?

How can you keep from forgetting Jesus?

A story is told about Fiorello LaGuardia, who, when he was mayor of New York City during the worst days of the Great Depression and all of WWII, was called by adoring New Yorkers 'the Little Flower' because he was only five foot four and always wore a carnation in his lapel. He was a colorful character who used to ride the New York City fire trucks, raid nightclubs with the police department, take entire orphanages to baseball games, and whenever the New York newspapers were on strike, he would go on the radio and read the Sunday funnies to the kids.

One bitterly cold night in January of 1935, the mayor turned up at a night court that served the poorest ward of the city. LaGuardia dismissed the judge for the evening and took over the bench himself. Within a few minutes, a tattered old woman was brought before him, charged with stealing a loaf of bread. She told LaGuardia that her daughter's husband had deserted her, her daughter was sick, and her two grandchildren were starving. But the shopkeeper, from whom the bread was stolen, refused to drop the charges. "It's a real bad neighborhood, your Honor." the man told the mayor. "She's got to be punished to teach other people around here a lesson." LaGuardia sighed. He turned to the woman and said "I've got to punish you. The law makes no exceptions--ten dollars or ten days in jail."

But even as he pronounced sentence, the mayor was already reaching into his pocket. He extracted a bill and tossed it into his famous sombrero saying: "Here is the ten-dollar fine which I now remit; and furthermore, I am going to fine everyone in this courtroom fifty cents for living in a town where a person has to steal bread so that her grandchildren can eat. Mr. Bailiff, collect the fines and give them to the defendant." So, the following day the New York City newspapers reported that \$47.50 was turned over to a bewildered old lady who had stolen a loaf of bread to feed her starving grandchildren, fifty cents of that amount being contributed by the red-faced grocery store owner, while some seventy petty criminals, people with traffic violations, and New York City policemen, each of whom had just paid fifty cents for the privilege of doing so, gave the mayor a standing ovation.

Jesus paid our fine. He also gave us something else: he collected the words of the prophets and people over a long time and put them together in the Bible, so we can have them to know God better. Wouldn't it be weird if we forget what we looked like? Let's not forget Jesus or the Bible, that would be weird too.

Friday – Mirror, Mirror on the Wall – Middle/Older

“Mirror, Mirror on the wall; shall I stand or shall I fall?”

Imagine you had a best friend who was born blind and he/she asked you to describe what you look like. Ask for volunteers who will stand up and describe what they look like as if speaking to that friend.

[James 1:19-25] {Say: “As I read this, pick out as many topics as you can, that we have discussed this week.”}

What topics in the verse have we discussed this week? Everyone (Matt. 5:1-16), anger (Matt. 5:21-26), righteousness (Matt. 5:17-20), get rid of (change the inside), planted IN you, merely listen (he who hears my words and puts them into practice), forgets (storms rise, foundation crumbles), blessed in what he does. {Miss any?}

So, it is safe to say that Jesus' teachings are consistent throughout the Bible. {Actually, read the whole New Testament and test that out yourself.}

Why is reading the Bible and not obeying it like looking into a mirror and forgetting what you look like?

How can you be deceived just by only listening to the Word?

What does it mean to look intently at something?

What is the perfect law? Could that be Jesus' way of doing things?

How do we act when we forget what we look like or don't put Jesus' words into practice?

[Matthew 7:1-5]

We judge: and become self-righteous.

[Matthew 7:7-12]

We self-focus: become the center of our world and are not others focused; forget the golden rule.

[Matthew 7:13-14]

We stray: lose our convictions and say everything goes; no worries God will forgive; everything is okay.

[Matthew 7:15-20]

We choose unhealthy relationships: can't tell godly character from evil character and so we don't choose friends or leaders well.

[Matthew 7:21-23]

We become religious and do things without knowing Jesus...we keep him taboo and distant, while trying to keep up appearances before others.

[Matthew 7:24-29]

We fool ourselves and build unwisely, and so, our house falls when troubles or suffering comes...and, during it all, think everything is just fine.

In Matthew 5 & 6, Jesus tells us to the difference of being a Sin Manager versus an Image Seeker. In Matthew 7, he shows us the impact it will have our relationships and our life.

After this weeks' Bible classes and Devotionals, how would you summarize Jesus?

What will you do with him know?

I hope you will seek him and his image and in turn become what God destined for you to be.