

# Jesus *the* Forgiving Victim

LISTENING *for the* UNHEARD VOICE



PARTICIPANT GUIDE

# *How to Use the Participant Guide*

The Participant Guide is designed as an aid for you to use during the discussion time with your group and for private reflection. After watching the video with your group, it's easy to lose track of all of things that are covered. During your discussion, you can jog your memory by referring to the content summaries provided here. Or you can refer to the summaries afterwards as you continue to reflect on the video between the times your group meets. The questions for each session likewise can be used during the discussion or for private reflection. Please make use of the material provided here as you see fit to enhance your experience with the course.

Here is some more detailed information about what you will find in this guide.

## **PART OVERVIEW**

The guide for each Part begins with an overview that gives a sense of the ground covered in that Part of the course. You will also find here a listing of all the video sessions as well as the sections of the four book set of *Jesus the Forgiving Victim* essays that the video corresponds to. If you would like to purchase a copy of the four book set, it is available in both paperback and electronic format. Go to [www.jesustheforgivingvictim.com](http://www.jesustheforgivingvictim.com) for more information on how to purchase a copy of the books.

## **SESSION SUMMARY**

The session summary gives you a quick look at the content focus for the session. The focus is good to keep in mind during your discussion or personal reflection time. Keep track of any questions that arise that do not relate to the content focus as many of them will be addressed in future sessions.

## **MAIN IDEAS**

The main ideas for the individual sessions are quick bullet points of the session content. You can think of them as an outline of the session. They are an excellent way to keep track of all the content in the video for your discussions. Also, you can look back at previous sessions to recall when an idea or concept was first presented if you'd like to refresh your memory or take a second look.

## **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

The questions you'll find here are similar to the ones that the Facilitator of your small group will be using to guide the discussion. They are provided here so that you can refer to them during the discussion, but more importantly so that you can use them for personal reflection. If you have a journaling practice, they are a good guide to use for journaling between your group meetings.

## **CLOSING THOUGHT**

This final question often connects back to the Session Summary or the overall themes of the course, providing a way to end the session with a “big picture” thought.

## **SCRIPTURE HANDOUTS**

When James covers a text in depth, the text is provided as a printable handout. You can use it to follow along during the video and to refer to during the discussion.

## **SCRIPTURE REFERENCES**

All Scriptures that are referred to during the video session are listed here. You can use the list as a guide for your personal reflection or journaling between sessions.

## **GLOSSARY**

The Glossary for each Part of the course provides definitions of the terms and ideas that James introduces there.

## **ESSAYS WITH CORRESPONDING VIDEOS**

The next page provides a list of the essays and corresponding videos for all of the sessions in the course.

PART ONE		ESSAYS	VIDEOS
1	<i>Starting human, staying human</i>	1 "Don't speak until you're spoken to"	1 An odd beginning 31:22 minutes
			2 The social other 22:15
			3 Memory and revelation 26:19
	2 Emmaus and Eucharist	4 The road to Emmaus 30:47	
		5 Dead man talking 37:58	

PART TWO		ESSAYS	VIDEOS
2	<i>God, not one of the gods</i>	3 Who's afraid of the big bad book? PART ONE	1 The stoning of Achan 31:01 minutes
			2 Prophecy and interpretation 19:28
			3 Interpretation in the Scriptures 22:28
	4 Who's afraid of the big bad book? PART TWO	4 The final edition 32:23	
		5 Priests and prophets 22:39	
		6 God's utter aliveness 32:28	

PART THREE		ESSAYS	VIDEOS	
3	<i>The difference Jesus makes</i>	5 Stand up and be godless! On receiving the gift of faith	1 Emergence of the Other other 34:03 minutes	
			2 The gift of faith 31:45	
		6 Undergoing atonement: the reverse-flow of sacrifice	3 Undergoing Atonement: Ancient Hebrews 44:59	
			4 Undergoing Atonement: Gibeonites 27:46	
	5 Undergoing Atonement: Venezuelans 41:03			
	7 Induction into a people	6 Induction into a people 40:31		
		7 What might a new unity look like? 35:32		
		8 Some results of the anthropological earthquake 27:10		
	8 Inhabiting texts and being discovered	9 Inhabiting texts and being discovered 37:55		
		10 Reading for mercy 35:22		

PART FOUR		ESSAYS	VIDEOS	
4	<i>Unexpected insiders</i>	9 Prayer: Getting inside desire's shift in us	1 The working of desire 49:55 minutes	
			2 The Our Father 46:02	
		10 The portal and the half-way house: Spacious imagination and aristocratic belonging	3 The restaurant and the half-way house 25:56	
			4 The portal and the Embassy 25:47	
			5 The Banquet 31:09	
	11 A little family upheaval	6 A little family upheaval 31:09		
		7 The beginning in the middle 23:23		
		8 The grandeur in the everyday 24:19		
	12 Neighbors and insiders: What's it like to dwell in a non-moralistic commandment?	9 Neighbors and insiders: The Good Samaritan 39:37		
		10 Neighbors and insiders: From sacrifice to mercy 42:25		

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**PARTICIPANT GUIDE**

**PART ONE: STARTING HUMAN, STAYING HUMAN**

## PART ONE *Content Summary*

One of the really interesting things about theology, and the thing that makes it relevant to our lives, is that it contains within it an anthropology. This means that while theology is the academic discipline of making sense of who God is and what God is about, we can't talk about God without remembering that it is human beings who are doing the talking. So while many theology courses jump right to the God talk, leaving considerations about who we are as human beings implied or unspoken, *Jesus the Forgiving Victim* begins by bringing the anthropology out into the open from the start. The questions guiding the first Part are these: What is the shape of God's communication with us? And what is the effect on us of being on the receiving end of an act of communication from God? To answer those questions we begin with an understanding of communication on a human level. We will explore how human beings receive and are shaped by acts of communication from each other. For if God is communicating with us, it will not be in some form unsuited for us. God will not reinvent the communication wheel, so to speak, but will communicate with us at a very human level – hence the title of Part One: *Starting human, staying human*. To understand how God is communicating with us through Jesus and through the Bible, we need at the same time to understand ourselves.

## PART ONE *Videos and Corresponding Essays*

Part One consists of five sessions. Here are the titles and the length of the video clip that accompanies each session as well as the corresponding parts of *Jesus the Forgiving Victim* essays:

SESSION	VIDEO	ESSAY
1	<b>Video Introduction</b> 4:09 minutes <b>An odd beginning</b> 31:22	Essay 1: <i>Don't speak until you're spoken to</i> <b>Introduction, parts 1 &amp; 2</b>
2	<b>The social other</b> 22:15	Essay 1: <i>Don't speak until you're spoken to</i> <b>parts 3 &amp; 4</b>
3	<b>Memory and revelation</b> 26:19	Essay 1: <i>Don't speak until you're spoken to</i> <b>parts 5, 6, 7 &amp; 8</b>
4	<b>The road to Emmaus</b> 30:47	Essay 2: <i>Emmaus and Eucharist</i> <b>Introduction, part 1 &amp; part 2</b> through paragraph ending “... as we share it with others in the Church and ecclesiastical authority will confirm it later.”
5	<b>Dead man talking</b> 37:58	Essay 2: <i>Emmaus and Eucharist</i> <b>rest of part 2 to end of essay</b>

## SESSION SUMMARY

The course begins by examining the usual way in which human beings learn and become proficient at something. We'll receive a working definition of Christianity as the process of finding ourselves on the receiving end of an act of communication.

## MAIN IDEAS

- 1 Hebrews 1: 1-2 describes an odd form of communication from God. In talking to us through Jesus, God is communicating as someone who appeared in the middle of history, but who is also somehow involved in the creation of the world.
- 2 This course is about beginning to become habituated to being the sort of people who might be able to hear God speaking through the Son whom he appointed over all things.
- 3 Putting theology aside for a moment, the course begins with a basic anthropology.
- 4 Rather than grasping onto a theory, human beings learn by being inducted into a set of practices over time such that we find ourselves knowing from within how they work.
- 5 Christianity is the process of finding ourselves on the inside of an act of communication that is developing in us a new set of practices. This means that we discover from within what the ideas really mean as we discover ourselves becoming something, or someone, we scarcely knew before.
- 6 Habits are stable dispositions which you have acquired over time to be able to behave in certain ways. Habits are what make excellence possible.
- 7 There is no such thing as a human who is not shot-through with time. Therefore, time is a condition of our being able to tell the truth about ourselves.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

James talks about Christianity having been thought of as grasping onto a theory about what God has done for us and then acting according to a moral code. Is that what Christianity has been like for you? How or how not?

James says that habits are what make excellence possible.

What beneficial practices have you been inducted into?

Who inducted you or how did you acquire your “stable dispositions”?

What is your relationship to the Bible? Do you think of it as an act of communication from God? If so, what do you think God is communicating to us in our particular time and place?

What impact might an act of communication from God have on your life?

### **CLOSING THOUGHT**

Now that you’ve completed the first session, why do you think this course is subtitled, “Listening for the Unheard Voice”? You may find this quote from the first essay helpful as a prompt for reflection:

*“What I hope we are going to be doing together is to begin to become habituated to being the sort of people who might be able to hear God speaking through the Son whom he appointed heir to all things.”*