

# THE JESUS CREED

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.

*Love* the Lord your God with all your **heart**,

with all your **soul**, with all your **mind**, and with all your **strength**."

The second is this: "*Love* your **neighbor** as yourself."

There is no commandment greater

than these.

## Questions for Further Reflection

### Study Guide 2

**Opening Question:** Think of one or two stories from the scriptures that have impacted your view of God and what it means to live a life in response to what God has done. What is it about these stories that have been so powerful for you?

# Questions for Further Reflection

## Study Guide 2

**Compare and Contrast** the invitation John the Baptist gives tell the truth and turn around and go in a different direction (repentance) with the response of our first parents at another life changing moment in their lives.

**Genesis 3:1-13**

**Luke 3:1-16**

**Imagine:** As you think about the experience of Adam & Eve and their unwillingness to tell the truth, and the experience of those who were listening to John the Baptist and his call to be honest before God and tell the truth, what speaks to you the most powerfully? In what ways do you find yourself identifying with both stories?

### **What if these Passages shaped the way you prayed?**

Do you feel comfortable telling the truth to God when you pray, or are there places in your life that you prefer to leave buried and untouched—places that you are not sure you really want to go—even with God? If so, what is it that holds you back? What would you need to know, sense, or be reassured of in order to be able to allow God access to those places in your life?

For those places in your life that are difficult for you to touch on, do you have a sense of God's gracious understanding and warm embrace, or does it feel more like disappointment and judgment? What do you think God most wants you to feel?

# Questions for Further Reflection

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Ponder the stories of these people who learned what it was to be fully open and honest with God: (What do you notice in these stories?)

Peter in Luke 5:1-11      The Samaritan Woman in John 4      Thomas in John 20-24-31

What parts of their experiences do you find yourself drawn to or identifying with the most?

In Scott McKnight's book, The Jesus Creed, he quotes Joseph Epstein :

*We all exist on at least three levels: there is the person as he or she appears in public; the person as he or she is known to intimates, which include family and dear friends; and that person, deepest of all, who is only known to him- or herself, where all the aspirations, resentments, fantasies, desires, and much else that is not ready for public knowledge reside. (page 68).*

What others think matters to us. What God thinks matters to us. When who God sees us as is in tension with how others see us, or how we think others see us, we can find ourselves struggling. What are some of the ways this surfaces for you in our own experience?

As you consider this in the light of the experience of Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25), how do you deal with those moments (or perhaps seasons) when you sense a conflict between who it is that God invites you to realize that you are, and your reputation, which reflects how others see and evaluate you?

# Questions for Further Reflection

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Ponder how the reputation of these individuals were impacted as they made their decision to follow Jesus:

Disciple's arguing over greatness

Luke 9:46-50

The Pharisee & the Tax Collector

Luke 18:9-14

As you think about the Jesus Creed as it finds expression in Mary's story, particularly as God seems to be shaping her for a particular *vocation* or *calling* in life, what kinds of things impress you the most?

How is this sense of vocation richer than simply the concept of a "job"?

Other famous women in scripture also had a clear sense of vocation. How does this show up in the following examples:

Elizabeth

(Luke 1)

Ana

(Luke 2:36-38)

The women at the tomb

(Luke 24:1-12)

Earlier, we noticed Peter's response to Jesus inviting him to come and follow Him, and the impact that realization of his vocation had upon him. As powerful as that moment was, when you continue to reflect on Peter's life, you begin to see that this was one of many moments that revealed an on going process in his life. Think about some of the other moments in Peter's life that remind us that we too are a continual work in progress: (review pages 94-95)

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Some other stories that reflect pivotal moments in the lives of people as they respond to Jesus include: (notice both how they are similar and how they are different)

Mark 1:1-16

Luke 15:11-32

Mark 10:46-52

John 1:43-51

As you reflect on the story of the Apostle John as described in chapter 11, and the ways his journey toward love unfolds, where do you find parallels in your own story as you think about the various seasons in your own life?

Where do you think your own growing edges are right now?

Perhaps one of the most tangible ways that Love shows up in the lives of Jesus' followers is in the expression of compassion. How do you find this surfacing in these stories:

Mark 9:42; 10:13-16

Matthew 5:3-12

John 9

### Spiritual Exercise

Take a few moments to prayerfully think back over the course of today, or perhaps the last couple of days. Where are the places where you saw or experienced the compassion of the Jesus Creed being expressed? Then take a few moments to consider those moments in which you saw or experienced it being blocked. Talk with God about what surfaces for you as you reflect on those moments, and the moments that lie ahead for you.