

# Introduction

## OBJECTIVES OF THIS BIBLE STUDY

To address misconceptions college students have about following Christ  
To provide a way to spend time with God consistently  
To provide thought provoking interaction with others around the Bible

## MISCONCEPTIONS

We all have them. A misconception is defined as “a view or opinion that is incorrect because it is based on faulty thinking or understanding.” When we were growing up, we had countless misconceptions. For example, you’ve probably heard that a Twinkie can stay edible for up to a decade. In reality, a Twinkie’s shelf life is only forty-five days. Over time, many of our misconceptions have been corrected as we have been exposed to right thinking. Most of our misconceptions do not greatly impact our daily living.

When it comes to faith, however, our misconceptions have much greater consequences. Having incorrect views about God, His character, His purpose for your life, and His desires for you can undermine the joy, contentment, satisfaction, and fulfillment that God wants to provide. This study aims to address and challenge the many held misconceptions of faith that college students have.

## SCHEDULE

**WEEK 1** Misconception #1: *Following Jesus won't be fun.*

**WEEK 2** Misconception #2: *Other things will satisfy more than following Jesus.*

**WEEK 3** Misconception #3: *If I do my part, God will accept me.*

**WEEK 4** Misconception #4: *Obeying Jesus is optional.*

## Misconception #1: *Following Jesus won't be fun*

Read **John 10:1-13** and answering the following questions.

<sup>1</sup>“Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” <sup>6</sup>Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

<sup>7</sup>Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

<sup>11</sup>“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. <sup>13</sup>The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

**John 10:1-13**

You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

**Psalms 16:11**

Who is the gatekeeper in verse 3? How well does the gatekeeper know you?

What types of people does Jesus contrast with himself? (v. 8)

What warning does Jesus give in the first part of verse 10?

Who or what act as thieves in your life (people or things that steal, kill, or destroy your ability to enjoy life)?

Why did Jesus say he came in the last part of v. 10?

The word “full” here literally means, “that which is not ordinarily encountered.”

What would a “full” life look like for you?

**THOUGHT TO CONSIDER:** The Bible says that God created you, the world, and everything in it. God created you with the capacity to enjoy life. The reason we can even experience joy and fun is because God created us to experience it. Who do you think would know how to experience pleasure best, you or God?

How far was Jesus willing to go to make an extraordinary life possible for us (v. 11)?

Because Jesus was already willing to lay down His life for you, why do we think He is going to hold out on providing a satisfying and enjoyable life of following Him?

## **Misconception #1: *Following Jesus won't be fun***

### **EVALUATING THE SOURCE OF YOUR JOY**

We all turn to things outside of God for fun, comfort, and satisfaction. These things can be fun in the moment, but after the temporary fun fades, they leave us empty.

**1. What are the things you turn to experience fun in college?**

**2. What are some ways these things have left you feeling empty?**

**3. Imagine living your life completely committed to following Jesus. What benefits (fun, satisfaction, contentment, etc.) do you think it could bring?**

**4. What is preventing you from allowing Jesus to be the source of your fun and joy?**

### **APPLICATION**

How can you take a step this week to allow Jesus to be the source of your fun?

## Misconception #2: *Other things will satisfy more than following Jesus*

Read **John 6:32-42** and answer the following questions.

In v. 34, what kind of bread do you think the people were looking for?

Seven times in the book of John, Jesus makes an “I am” statement in order to clarify that He is God. We see one of these “I am” statements in verse 35. What does Jesus say? What promise does Jesus give?

What achievements or experiences do you tend to think will satisfy you more than following Jesus?

What is one achievement or experience that you are pursuing most right now?

How do you think it will satisfy you?

**THOUGHT TO CONSIDER:** Although God uses things outside Himself to bring enjoyment, these things were never meant to be the source of our satisfaction. We are designed for God to be the only person or thing that can satisfy.

The skeptics of Jesus’ day, the Jews, did not believe that Jesus could satisfy like He claimed He could. How are you skeptical that Jesus is able to satisfy you more than other things?

**32**Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. **33**For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

**34**“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

**35**Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. **36**But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. **37**All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. **38**For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. **39**And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. **40**For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

**41**At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.”

**42**They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

**John 6:32-42**

For He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

**Psalms 107:9**

## Misconception #2: *Other things will satisfy more than following Jesus*

### THE PURSUIT OF SATISFACTION

**Brad Pitt:** “Man, I know all these things are supposed to seem important to us - the car, the condo, our version of success - but if that’s the case, why is the general feeling out there reflecting more impotence and isolation and desperation and loneliness? If you ask me, I say toss all this - we gotta find something else. Because all I know is that at this point in time, we are heading for a dead end, a numbing of the soul, a complete atrophy of the spiritual being. And I don’t want that.”

**Tom Brady:** Why do I have five Super Bowl rings, and still think there’s something greater out there for me? I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, “Hey man, this is what is.” I reached my goal, my dream, my life. Me, I think: God, it’s gotta be more than this. I mean this can’t be what it’s all cracked up to be. I mean I’ve done it. And what else is there for me?

**King Solomon,** the wisest and wealthiest man in history: I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11)

What can we learn from these men about seeking satisfaction apart from Christ?

Read **Psalm 145:15-19.**

What do these verses say about God’s ability to satisfy you?

**15**The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. **16**You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. **17**The Lord is righteous in all His ways and loving toward all He has made. **18**The Lord is near to all who call on him in truth. **19**He fulfills the desires of those who fear Him; He hears their cry and saves them.

**Psalm 145:15-19**

The word “satisfy” in verse 16 meant to fill or satiate (be satisfied to the full)

How do these verses describe God differently than you may have previously thought of Him?

### APPLICATION

How can you begin to turn to Jesus as your source of satisfaction over other things?

## Misconception #3: *If I do my part, God will accept me*

Read **Luke 18:9-14** and answer the following questions.

<sup>9</sup>To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: <sup>10</sup>“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup>The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup>I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

<sup>13</sup>“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

<sup>14</sup>“I tell you that this tax collector, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

**Luke 18:9-14**

How did the Pharisee pray to God? What does it reveal about him?

The Pharisees were a group of people who lived during the time of Christ. They thought of themselves as religiously superior to others because of their strict adherence to rules and traditions.

What are some ways you tend to validate yourself to God based on your performance or accomplishments?

How did the tax collector pray to God? What does it reveal about him?

Tax collectors were arguably the most hated people of Jesus’ day. They were corrupt and typically overcharged people on their taxes and kept the difference. It is no coincidence that Jesus chose to use a tax collector in this parable.

Why was the tax collector justified and not the Pharisee? (v. 14)

**Justified** - to declare or pronounce one to be righteous

**Exalted** - to elevate to dignity, honor, and happiness

**Humbled** - to be reduced or brought low

What was the Pharisee trusting in? What was the tax collector relying on?

Read **Isaiah 64:6**. How does the Bible describe even our righteous acts?

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags

**Isaiah 64:6**

## Misconception #3: *If I do my part, God will accept me*

Read **Ephesians 2:8-9** and fill in the following chart:

<sup>8</sup>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast.

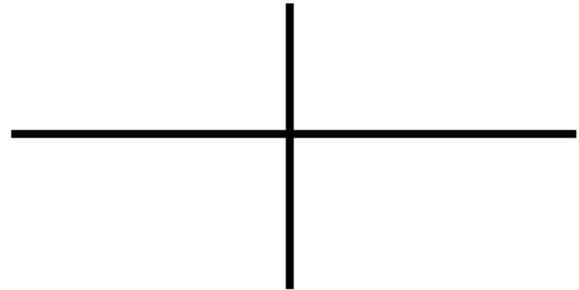
**Ephesians 2:8-9**

Ephesians 2:8

Ephesians 2:9

What we're  
saved by

What we're  
not saved by



**THOUGHT TO CONSIDER:** We often think that we have to be “good enough” to gain God’s approval and forgiveness. For some of us, we have worked for years perfecting our resume so that God will have no other choice than to accept us. We play the comparison game: “at least I’m not as bad as \_\_\_\_\_!” Yet we are no better off than the name we put in the blank. We reduce our equation for God’s acceptance to:

**Trying my best + avoiding the *really* bad sins = God’s acceptance**

How have you tried to “do your part” and earn God’s approval through your works or actions?

Despite your spiritual resume, how does **Romans 3:23** reveal that our actions are not enough to earn God’s forgiveness?

For all have sinned and fall short of glory of God.

**Romans 3:23**

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**Romans 5:8**

Read **Romans 5:8**. How does Jesus offer forgiveness despite our “good” actions falling short?

### APPLICATION

How can you turn from thinking that God’s approval depends on you?

## Misconception #4: *Obeying Jesus is optional*

Read **Luke 14:25-35** and answer the following questions.

What do you think it would look like for you to “hate” your family and even your own life? (v. 26)

The “hate” Jesus refers to in verse 26 means that someone’s should love and be devoted to Christ so much that it makes it look like they “hate” their family in comparison.

What do you think it means to carry your cross and follow Jesus? (v. 27)

What point is Jesus making in verses 28-30 and 31-32?

What do you think Jesus means in v. 33?

Why do you think Jesus wants us to give up everything to follow Him? How does this compare to other Christians you know?

What are some things you may still be holding on to that you know you need to give up?

What fears do you have about giving these up? How can v. 33 motivate you to overcome your fear?

**25**Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: **26**“If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. **27**And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

**28**“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? **29**For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, **30**saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’

**31**“Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? **32**If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. **33**In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

**34**“Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? **35**It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.

**Luke 14:25-35**

## Misconception #4: *Obeying Jesus is optional*

Read **John 14:21-24** and answer the following questions.

**21**Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

**22**Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

**23**Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. **24**Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

**John 14:21-24**

In verse 21, what does Jesus equate with obedience?

How does he reiterate this idea in verse 23?

How do you typically view obedience to God?

**THOUGHT TO CONSIDER:** Our love for God hinges on our willingness to obey God. God Himself did not separate love from obedience. If we claim to love God, we must obey Him.

How would you explain the necessity of obedience to someone who is considering following Christ?

Why do you think God would require a willingness to obey from those who are following Him?

Obedience to God and the Bible is how God protects us, guides us, and shows us the best way to live.

What do you think it would look like for you to walk in light and not in darkness?

If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.  
**1 John 1:6**

### APPLICATION

How can you begin obeying Jesus in an area of your life you may have been hesitant to?

# Bible Reading Plan

## 1. What did you learn?

Read the verse(s) for the day a couple of times. In one or two sentences, write out what you learned. Some helpful questions:

- What did you learn about mankind?
- What did you learn about God or God's character?
- What wrong beliefs did you have about God or yourself?

## 2. Key Verse

Write out word for word the most impactful verse to you.

## 3. What does this mean for me? (Action Step)

Write one or two sentences about how you will apply this passage.

- What will you do in your life because of what you read?
- What truths do you need to believe?

|              | <b>Week 1</b>    | <b>Week 2</b>    | <b>Week 3</b>    | <b>Week 4</b>    |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Day 1</b> | John 2:1-12      | John 4:1-42      | Luke 8:22-25     | Matthew 13:44-46 |
| <b>Day 2</b> | John 1:35-51     | Luke 5:1-11      | Luke 15:11-23    | Mark 14:3-9      |
| <b>Day 3</b> | Mark 9:14-29     | Mark 6:30-44     | Matthew 18:12-14 | Luke 8:1-15      |
| <b>Day 4</b> | Matthew 14:22-33 | Mark 5:24-34     | John 3:1-21      | John 9:1-41      |
| <b>Day 5</b> | John 20:19-29    | Matthew 20:29-34 | Mark 2:13-17     | John 13:1-17     |
| <b>Day 6</b> | John 11:17-44    | Mark 1:40-45     | Luke 19:1-9      | John 15:1-17     |
| <b>Day 7</b> | Luke 5:17-26     | Luke 14:12-24    | Luke 23:32-43    | Mark 1:16-20     |