



The
CHOSEN

An Interactive
Bible Study

Season 3

The Way of the **Chosen**

Amanda Jenkins, Dallas Jenkins, & Douglas S. Huffman

DAVID  COOK

transforming lives together

© 2023 The Chosen, LLC. Published by David C. Cook. All rights reserved.

CONTENTS

Introduction: The Way of the Chosen	7
Lesson 1: FORGIVE as Jesus forgives	19
Lesson 2: GO as Jesus sends you	33
Lesson 3: GRIEVE as Jesus grieves	45
Lesson 4: STAND where Jesus stands	59
Lesson 5: DELIGHT in what Jesus delights in	73
Lesson 6: ASK because Jesus tells you to	85
Lesson 7: WELCOME who Jesus welcomes	99
Lesson 8 TRUST JESUS all the time	113
Conclusion	129
About the Authors	141

Lesson 1

FORGIVE

as Jesus forgives

JOHN THE BAPTIST: What did you think of Him?

JOANNA: I don't know how to describe it.

JOHN THE BAPTIST: Like you were grateful for food but didn't realize you'd been starving.

JOANNA: That works.

JOHN THE BAPTIST (*smiling at Andrew*): Anything new?

ANDREW: So much.

JOHN THE BAPTIST: Tell me what He said.

JOANNA: Nothing that made sense. (*John likes where this is going.*)

JOANNA (CONT'D): Everything upside down—the poor, the grieving, the meek, all elevated.

JOHN THE BAPTIST: Blessed.

JOANNA: Yes. And other things reversed ... love your enemies. Who can LOVE their enemy?

JOHN THE BAPTIST: He can. What else?

JOANNA: Bizarre imagery. Something about pearls before pigs, logs in eyes ...

JOHN THE BAPTIST: Yes.

ANDREW: Salt, murder, rain, God feeding the birds, houses on sand.

JOANNA: He's almost as strange as you.

JOHN THE BAPTIST: I wish I were so strange. (*John paces now, excited.*) How many people were there?

JOANNA: Thousands.

JOHN THE BAPTIST: Wonderful. What else?

ANDREW: John ... what do we do about you? How can I help?

JOHN THE BAPTIST: You're helping me with what you're sharing.

ANDREW: You know what I mean.

JOHN THE BAPTIST: Come here. (*Andrew leans in.*)

JOHN THE BAPTIST (CONT'D): Don't be afraid. (*Andrew inhales. He is afraid.*)

JOHN THE BAPTIST (CONT'D): The prophecies of Isaiah ... He has been sent to proclaim liberty to the captives, and what?

ANDREW: The opening of the prison to those who are bound.

JOHN THE BAPTIST: This prison is nothing now that He's here. Do you believe that?

ANDREW: I'm trying.

JOHN THE BAPTIST: Andrew ... in all He said to those thousands of people, there was something just for you. For what you're going through. There always is. What was it? Something that stuck with you.

ANDREW (*pausing, emotional*): Don't be anxious. Can you add a single hour to your life by being anxious?

JOHN THE BAPTIST: That sounds like Him. What else?

ANDREW: But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

JOHN THE BAPTIST: Even more like Him. So if you want to help me ... Andrew? (*Andrew looks up.*) If you want to help me ... listen to Him. Go home and do what He says. That's what I want. Got it?

Upside Down

If you're all caught up on *The Chosen*, you know season 2 closed with Jesus beginning to preach His most famous sermon. That landmark message has come to be known as

FORGIVE

the “Sermon on the Mount” (or SOM, for short)—which is exactly where season 3 picks up. But the focus of episode 1 isn’t merely on Jesus’s teaching. It’s also on the way His followers understand His words and apply them to the complexities of their lives.

And that’s *always* the hard part, right? Jesus’s words sound great and inspiring and true until the rubber meets the road and we have to actually apply them, starting with one of the most impossible exhortations of all: forgive others their trespasses.

Truth is, following Jesus often entails seeing and doing things that are opposite our instincts. As Joanna put it, a lot of what Jesus said seems upside down to us; nothing makes sense. Things like the first will be last and the last will be first (Matt. 19:30), to lead we must serve (Matt. 23:11), to gain we must give (Luke 6:38), to live we must die (Mark 8:35), and to inherit the world we must first become poor, meek, and peace-seeking even in the face of persecution (Matt. 5:2–10).

Not exactly a wooing message in our “me first” world.

That is, unless every other road leads to destruction.

Your Turn

1. What does “the first will be last and the last will be first” mean in the context of Matthew 19:16–30? In what ways are you living that principle? In what ways are you not?

For Bible Nerds (like us) Who Want to Know

While the SOM is known the world over as one of the greatest messages of all time, there are some today who debate how it should be understood and applied.

Was it merely a transcript of a historical event? Was it a set of aspirational (albeit unrealistic) goals for a perfect world far off in the future? Or could it be convicting and applicable to everyone everywhere in every time and every place?

(Spoiler alert: it’s that last one.)

In Matthew’s summary, the SOM closes with a twice-repeated invitation for “every-one then who hears these words of mine” (Matt. 7:24, 26)—which strongly implies Jesus’s message was universal.

It’s difficult to argue that Matthew took time to record this repeated exhortation (along with the rest of the SOM, for that matter) believing it only applied to the people who were present that day.

And so, we believe the SOM is not only for historical curiosity and future anticipation; the SOM was, in fact, intended to make a difference in how all of Jesus’s followers—in all times and places—live their lives.

You've Heard It Said

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

Matthew 5:21–24

Whenever Jesus started a sentence with “you’ve heard it said,” His listeners were about to have their worlds rocked. Because it’s pretty easy to avoid being a murderer—most people read the sixth commandment and put a checkmark in the corresponding box.

Commandment VI:
You shall not murder.

Grudge:
a persistent feeling of ill will or resentment resulting from a past insult or injury.

But as it turns out, the absence of murder doesn’t mean our hearts are free from the darkness that births it. Which means Jesus’s take on the sixth commandment makes it much harder to keep since it’s nearly impossible to go through life without ever holding a grudge. Or having one held against you.

For Bible Nerds (like us) Who Want to Know

What scholars call the “antitheses” section of the SOM (Matt. 5:21–48) contains six repetitions of the theme “You have heard it said ..., but I say to you ...” (vv. 21–22, 27–28, 31–32, 33–34, 38–39, 43–44).

These are places where Jesus corrected misunderstandings about the Old Testament. Mind you, He was

not correcting the Old Testament, which He made clear by saying, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (v. 17).

Rather, Jesus was correcting the people’s interpretations of God’s Word and the way they put it into practice.

Perhaps that's why Jesus spoke of forgiveness so often. In the week before He was crucified, He said, "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25). And then He proceeded to forgive the very people who nailed Him to the cross. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

How is that possible?

Well, in our measly sinful strength, it's not. And yet the Bible tells us that in order to have fellowship with God, our accounts must be clear. In order to receive forgiveness from God, we must extend radical grace to others. In order to experience the peace of God, we must trust Him to avenge. And in order to interact with others the way God wants us to, we must wholly depend on the sinless, steadfast, and unconditional love of the One we follow.

Your Turn

2. Are you holding or have you ever held a grudge? Against who and why?

"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth ... [But] if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
1 John 1:5-6, 9

"Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven ... For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."
Luke 6:37-38

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' To the contrary, 'if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.'"
Romans 12:18-20

**Avenge:
to accomplish justice by
punishing wrongdoing.**

3. Read Matthew 18:21–35. While you can't earn God's forgiveness through good behavior, why does God's forgiveness depend on your willingness to forgive others?

4. Based on the parable Jesus told in Luke 7:41–50, explain the following statement:

Those who are forgiven much, love much. Those who are forgiven little, love little.

East and West

“He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.

For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.”

Psalm 103:10–14

Entitled:
believing oneself
to be inherently
deserving of privileges
or special treatment.

We tend to be an entitled people. Meaning, most of us think we deserve more respect and greater consideration than we sometimes get. At the same time, we minimize our flaws, believing them to be fewer and farther between *and more justifiable* than

the flaws of those around us. And under the right conditions, those thoughts can morph into the grudges we hold against people we believe have done us wrong.

Yet the Bible repeatedly tells us that God doesn't deal with us that way. Instead, He offers to forgive our trespasses and remove our sin from us, **as far as the east is from the west**. Comprehending the magnitude of such grace, such grandiose mercy and love, requires a greater understanding of (a) our own sin, (b) what we actually deserve, and (c) what God did for us instead.

Contrary to our sense of entitlement, we're very sinful people. Our hearts are prone to wander away from God—to choose the wide road. To be self-centered, self-promoting, and self-indulgent. To be lustful and greedy for gain. To be disrespectful, discontent, and disconnected from the truth. To be angry, judgmental, and yes, unforgiving.

And God sees it all but pursues us anyway. "For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust." In spite of our sin and the righteous judgment it deserves, God withholds that judgment from those who follow Jesus because Jesus took it instead! Thus, God is both righteous and compassionate. He knows we're weak and frail. He knows our lives on earth are fleeting.

Like dust.

Indeed, during the course of our lives, each one of us will experience struggle and sickness, heartbreak, pain, and ultimately death—along with our ongoing inability to NOT sin. But none of these calamities go unseen by the One who loved us enough to take the consequence of our sin upon Himself. The Bible says:

The Romans Road
(not an actual road; rather, it's a series of verses from the New Testament book of Romans that lays out God's plan of salvation):

**"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
Romans 3:23**

**"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
Romans 5:8**

**"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
Romans 6:23**

**"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."
Romans 10:9–10**

For Bible Nerds (like us) Who Want to Know

As followers of Jesus, we're instructed to be forgiving. "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive" (Col. 3:12–13).

Of course, God doesn't force His forgiveness upon us: that is, a person can choose to *not* believe in Jesus and to not receive God's forgiveness in Christ. In which case, God doesn't hold a grudge. Rather, He allows people to continue down the path of destruction. And so, even as God—with great sorrow—lets unrepentant unbelievers go their own way, sometimes we too will have to let people go.

On that note, while it's true we're called to be like Jesus and to offer forgiveness to others, that doesn't mean we have to live under continued abuse by those who are unrepentant.

If you find yourself in a troublesome or dangerous situation where you can't discern what offering forgiveness looks like, by all means, seek the wisdom of a trusted pastor or other Christian leader.

He made you (Ps. 139:13).

He knows the number of hairs on your head (Matt. 10:30).

He knows when you sit and when you rise, and discerns your thoughts (Ps. 139:2).

He counts your tears and keeps track of your sorrows (Ps. 56:8).

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up wounds (Ps. 147:3).

Such knowledge should melt our self-focused, self-protective, hard hearts. Our sin offends the Lord, but He forgives and heals and draws near to those who draw near to Him (James 4:8). So, what right do we have to hold others to a standard we're not being held to? On the contrary, when we truly grasp the height and width and length and breadth of God's goodness toward us, we can't help but forgive those who've trespassed against us.

At least, in theory.

Your Turn

5. Some have defined compassion as sympathetic pity or sadness for the suffering of others, accompanied by a desire to relieve it. How does the Romans Road (see page 23) outline God's compassion?

6. God knows your comings and goings, intimately understands your sorrow, and forgives you every time you ask. How does that make you feel?

7. Psalm 139 closes with these words: “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” (vv. 23–24). Pray those words and confess anything God brings to mind.

Shalom

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”

Matthew 5:38–42

Some things are harder to forgive than others. Obviously. That said, nothing is more difficult to forgive than murder. And Jesus was murdered. But instead of calling down the wrath of heaven—which He had every right and the ability to do

(understatement)—Jesus asked God to forgive the people who were mocking, torturing, and killing Him (Luke 23:34).

He turned His cheek. And He's who we follow.

We're called to forgive as our Lord and Savior forgives (Col. 3:12–13), trusting that when we do, He'll be the One to avenge, protect, comfort, and heal us. This makes our forgiveness of others an act of faith that God sees and cares for us, that He uses all things for our good and His glory (Rom. 8:28).

Of course, in our measly, sinful strength, it is indeed an impossible exhortation. But Jesus said, “What is impossible with man is possible with God” (Luke 18:27)! By way of

Shalom:
a Hebrew salutation used by Jewish people at meeting or parting, meaning peace, wholeness, completeness, soundness, health, safety, and prosperity, carrying with it the implication of permanence.

the narrow gate, He has offered us His *shalom*: peace with Him and peace with others. Oh, that we'd trust Him enough to walk through the gate, to let Him fully care for us, and to allow Him so much access to our hearts that He'd complete the work of forgiveness in and through us.

Your Turn

8. No one is a mature follower of Jesus when they first come to faith. Read Philippians 1:6. Over time, and as we follow Jesus, what does the Bible promise God will do?

Prayer Focus

Praise God for loving you as His creation despite your sinfulness, for sending Jesus to be the sacrifice for that sin, and for extending radical grace and forgiveness to you. Ask Him to help you do the hard work of forgiving others. Remember, forgiveness is sometimes a process—we don't always get there right away, which means we have to keep bringing our struggle and pain to the Lord each day. Thank Him for His promise to change your heart when you do, and for His faithfulness to make you more and more like Jesus.

Sample Prayer

Dear God,

Thank You for loving me even though I have been rebellious against You—sometimes in my heart and sometimes in my actions. Thank You for sending Jesus to provide the way of salvation, and to restore me to a right relationship with You. I acknowledge I can't earn Your forgiveness and must receive it as a gift paid for by Jesus. Thank You that Your forgiveness can change my life, including the way I respond to others. Give me the ability to forgive and the courage to ask for forgiveness when I'm the one who needs it. "Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit," so I can invite others to do the same (Ps. 51:12).

Amen.

EXT. MARY MAGDALENE'S APARTMENT (DAY)

(Andrew approaches the front door and knocks. After a moment, Mary opens.)

MARY MAGDALENE (*confused*): Shalom.

ANDREW: Shalom. I won't take much time.

MARY MAGDALENE: It's fine. Do you need anything?

ANDREW: I just want to say something. In Rabbi's sermon, He said to reconcile with someone first before worshipping. And I need to apologize to you.

MARY MAGDALENE: You don't owe me—

ANDREW: Yes, I do. I said awful things to you because I was scared, which Rabbi also talked about. He talked about many things. I've got a lot to work on, actually.

MARY MAGDALENE: Me too.

ANDREW: But I said awful things to you. You didn't deserve it. And I'm really sorry. (*Mary smiles.*)

ANDREW (CONT'D): So ... that's all.

MARY MAGDALENE: I'm sorry, I'm not sure what to say. I think this is the first time anyone's ever said sorry to me for anything.

ANDREW: You don't deserve that, either ... Things are better now, huh?

MARY MAGDALENE: Yes. A lot. Thank you for this.

ANDREW: Shalom.

MARY MAGDALENE: Shalom.

Copyrighted Material