

~~FRAGILE~~
~~COMPLIANT~~
~~IRRELEVANT~~
DANGEROUS
JESUS

PARTICIPANT'S
GUIDE

A six-session study based on the book & video series

KEVIN "KB" BURGESS

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Dangerous Jesus Participant's Guide: A Six-Session Study Based on the Book and Video Series

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A NOTE FROM KB

What do you think about when you hear the word *dangerous*?

Or maybe, more specifically, *who* do you think about?

I spent a lot of my life wanting to be dangerous. To me, being dangerous meant being someone whose presence commanded respect. Someone whose presence brought admiration, but maybe a little bit of fear too. Someone with influence. Someone with almost godlike status. Resources, power, and respect are hip-hop's holy trinity—and as a hip-hop artist, I wanted them all. That's what being dangerous looked like to me.

But the more I studied Jesus and the more I experienced Jesus, the more I realized that I was missing it—I was missing *Him*. Because no one has more resources than Jesus. No one has more power than Jesus. And no one deserves more respect. The Bible tells us that for Jesus *every* knee will bow and *every* tongue will confess that He alone is king. Not only does Jesus have resources, power, and respect, but if anybody else has them, it's because He's allowed it.

This Jesus is more powerful than the powers that once overpowered me. His hold on me is stronger than the strongholds that once held me. Everything and everyone in all of creation is influenced by Jesus. Jesus puts danger in danger.

What I've learned and I want you to see is that there is no one more dangerous than the Lord Jesus Christ.

This study is for anyone searching for the real Jesus, and for those who are growing weary, confused, and maybe even a little disillusioned by how He's misrepresented. And you should know up front—I don't come in peace. I come in hopes of tearing apart a construct of Jesus that's not only inaccurate but destructive.

I come in hopes of recasting Christianity in a culture of knock-offs where we've become so accustomed to the counterfeit that the real thing sounds like fiction. Imposters? Yeah, they're dangerous. But I have every confidence that very soon the fake and the phony will give way to what's *really* dangerous: the real Jesus.

Because the only thing more dangerous than getting Jesus right . . . is getting Jesus wrong.

STUDY FAQs

This participant's guide is a companion to the six-session *Dangerous Jesus* video curriculum, available for online streaming at RightNow Media. You can also find out more at whoiskb.com. I recommend using this guide and the videos together for a study on your own, with your small group, or with a circle of friends that want to know the truth about who Jesus is and what Jesus stood for when He walked the earth.

Over the next six sessions, we'll explore the dangerous aspects of our Lord and our faith. We'll cover our dangerous Jesus, the dangerous gospel, dangerous love, dangerous community, dangerous blessing, and our dangerous identity.

The study is meant as a complement to my book, *Dangerous Jesus*. To maximize your experience, I suggest reading the book in full before beginning this study. However, the study will still be beneficial if you haven't made your way through *Dangerous Jesus* just yet.

My heart's desire for you in the coming weeks is that you'll come to know Jesus as the dangerous, countercultural, radical leader that He was. And along the way, I pray you'll also come to realize your own potential to be dangerously good in the Kingdom of God.

Here are some answers to FAQs to help get you started.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO THIS STUDY?

To complete this study, you need this participant's guide, the book *Dangerous Jesus*, a Bible (or a Bible app on your phone), and the video sessions.

The book *Dangerous Jesus* takes an honest and indicting approach to the study of who Jesus really was during His time on earth and how we may have either gotten Him wrong or not gotten Him at all. I take a look at our interpretation of the gospel and how we may hold an incomplete version of the Good News. I also ask some tough questions about why most churches today look very different from the early church.

The videos serve to take you deeper into the content of *Dangerous Jesus* and help you personalize and apply some of the book's principles.

CAN I DO THIS STUDY ON MY OWN, OR DO I HAVE TO BE IN A SMALL GROUP SETTING?

As is the case with most topics of faith, unpacking our long-held beliefs may be a difficult task if done alone—difficult, but not impossible. We will do an entire session on the importance of dangerous friendships, and I recommend completing this study with at least one other person. Now, if you don't have anyone to complete this study with, you certainly can still participate. I'll be your partner, riding this journey with you.

I WANT TO LEAD A SMALL GROUP THROUGH THIS STUDY. HOW DO I GET STARTED?

First of all, good for you. Thank you for stepping up and leading the charge. If you aren't already plugged into a small group, I'd recommend starting with your friends first. "But KB," you might say, "my friends are wilding. My friends don't do the whole Jesus or church thing."

That's exactly who I wrote this study for.

I'd ask them just to show up for session 1 to see what they think. If they want to bounce after that, that's on them. But this isn't your typical Bible study. In fact, it's the opposite. This is a ruthless evaluation of the disparity between who the world thinks Jesus to be and who He really is.

The videos will do most of the legwork for you. Press play, then let Jesus do the rest. For more tips, see the "Tips for Leaders" section immediately following this one.

HOW LONG SHOULD EACH SESSION TAKE TO COMPLETE?

I'd carve out an hour for each session, including the time it takes to play the videos. Leave some time after the video to discuss any questions in this participant's guide that might benefit the group. If you're leading the group, I suggest preselecting which questions you'd like to raise.

Each session includes general questions, as well as five "at-home" days for participants to complete on their own. These entries should take about fifteen to twenty minutes to complete. Not only will they keep the introspection and conversation about our dangerous Jesus alive in your group's hearts and minds but they will also help you develop a consistent pattern of reading God's Word regularly (if that isn't your habit already).

All you need is access to a Bible and something to write with. There will be space in this participant's guide for you to write down your responses.

TIPS FOR LEADERS

First of all, you're a hero. Whether this is your first or your hundredth time leading a study, I'm thankful that you're answering the call to shepherd souls through this journey. I pray that as you lead this study, your faith will be multiplied exponentially.

Your main responsibility in leading is simply to stoke the fire of conversation that follows each video session. I'd also ask that you do the suggested reading prior to each session so your input is robust and aligned with the study.

If you're still a little unsure about how this should all go down, here's a few suggestions.

1. PUT IN THE WORK AHEAD OF TIME.

Coming prepared is the minimum requirement to successfully leading this study. Do the reading—and I mean *reading*. Skimming won't cut it in a study this complex. Take notes, jot down page numbers, underline quotes. If the room falls silent after the video plays, your legwork will be the difference maker in helping people open up and begin the discussion. Ideally, you'll have read the entire *Dangerous Jesus* book before the study starts.

I also recommend putting a star beside any of the group discussion questions you really want to cover. I've purposefully written more questions than you'll likely have time for to ensure a robust discussion.

2. BE VULNERABLE.

If you show up with your walls up, your group members are likely to follow in kind. You don't have to lead from your deepest, darkest secrets, but you may have to be the first one to share honestly.

3. STAY ON TOPIC.

It'll be tempting to share the latest scores and family updates, but try to keep the conversation focused on the study. If you have a particularly chatty group, plan fifteen to thirty additional minutes at the top of the study to catch up. But once the video starts playing, stay off the rabbit trails and on the road toward discovering a dangerous Jesus.

I'd also have a "share time" limit. Some group members may try to dominate the conversation. Placing a three-minute maximum on shares will keep the conversation moving.

4. DON'T WORRY IF YOU'RE NOT AN EXPERT.

Look, you don't need to be a Bible scholar to lead this study. All you need is to be willing to try. Saying, "I don't know, but I'll find out for you" is a sign not of weakness but of courage. No one has all the answers, and you don't have to either.

5. COMMIT TO PRAYING.

Pray for your group. Then pray some more. Prayer is a powerful tool that we have unlimited access to. Pray for your sessions. Pray that people's lives will be changed. Pray for your group members by name. And pray for yourself, asking God to give you His words and wisdom throughout the course of this study.

DANGEROUS JESUS

The only thing more dangerous than getting Jesus right is getting Jesus wrong.

DANGEROUS JESUS, CHAPTER 1

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

*Read chapters 1 and 2 of the Dangerous Jesus book.
Meet with your group and watch video session 1.*

ACTIVE LISTENING QUESTIONS

As you watch the video, listen for the answers to the following questions. Jot down a few notes for each one.

1. Jesus puts anything that would stand against His _____ and our _____ in danger.

2. What were the three ways the coming of Jesus was a threat to Caesar? He would
- out _____
 - out _____
 - out _____
3. Jesus' life was the embodiment of all that was good, true, and beautiful, and when He invades a world that is the opposite of all three, His very existence is what?
4. What three commands does Jesus ask of us?
1. _____ your enemy.
 2. _____ to those who can't give back to you.
 3. _____ in a way that is upside down.
5. How did Jesus show His dangerous love for us?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Work through the following questions with your group. Make sure to leave enough time at the end to share prayer requests and spend a few minutes in prayer.

1. Before beginning your *Dangerous Jesus* journey, what words or phrases would you have used to describe Jesus?

2. Why do you think so many people struggle with the concept of a dangerous Jesus?

3. Rodney Stark, a sociologist of religion, lists three ways Jesus' ministry went from twelve disciples to millions of followers:¹
 - People from different ethnic and social groups treated each other as family.

- Women were given higher social status and were allowed to lead in worship.
- Early Christians practiced radical hospitality toward one another and toward outsiders.

Of the three, which would have had the biggest influence on you choosing to follow Christ?

4. What do you think was the most countercultural message Jesus preached when He was on earth?

5. What does the following statement mean to you: “As Christians, each of us carries within us the potential to be dangerous”?

6. What is meant by the term “Christianity of the Land”?
What evidence of its existence have you seen or experienced in your own life?
7. Chapter 1 of *Dangerous Jesus* describes many of the misrepresentations of Jesus. Which of these do you think is the most common?
- Is He ultra-right-wing Jesus, who spins a Christianity that is hostile toward the vulnerable and defensive of the powerful?
 - Is He condemnation Jesus, who spins a Christianity that insists people know they are wrong without insisting they know they are loved?
 - Is He patriot Jesus, who spins a Christianity that places America at the center of the universe, making the success of the United States tantamount to the success of God Himself?
 - Is He weak Jesus, who spins a Christianity steeped in fear and fragility, consumed with threat-finding and a subsequent retreat from culture?
 - Is He “vibes” Jesus, who spins a Christianity that is partner to our good time but never challenges us to be righteous?
 - Is He winning Jesus, who spins a Christianity that associates the presence of God with success with little to say about suffering?

- Is He overspiritual Jesus, who spins a Christianity that scoffs at therapy, science, and any kind of “worldly” pleasure?

8. In Matthew 16:13-16, we read,

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

“But you,” he asked them, “who do you say that I am?”

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Now, how about you? Who do you say that Jesus is?

9. Chapter 1 of *Dangerous Jesus* says,

This is precisely why so many of us think spirituality is merely doing our devotions every morning—just us and God. Devotions are important, but true religion—the religion God is pleased with—is demonstrated in action. Christianity is doing what Jesus did. He lived among us, loving, healing, and caring for others, along with teaching about His Kingdom.

What would have to change about your life to make you more aligned with how Jesus lived His?

NOTE TO LEADERS

Close the session by asking if anyone has a specific prayer request to share with the group. Then lead the group in a prayer to close. You can also ask someone else in the group to lead the closing prayer.

INDIVIDUAL STUDY

Participants are to complete the following questions on their own, ideally over the course of five different days. If there are any questions you didn't get to during the group discussion, you may want to work through them during the at-home study time.

DAY 1

At the end of the video session, I challenged you to consider a few questions. Write out your responses to these questions. Be brutally honest!

1. What makes me feel defensive?
2. What breaks my heart?
3. Where do I spend my time?
4. How do I use my money?

What do your answers to these questions reveal about who Jesus is in your life? Do you need to make any changes? If so, what?

DAY 2

Read John 5:16-22.

The Jews began persecuting Jesus because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

Jesus responded to them, “My Father is still working, and I am working also.” This is why the Jews began trying all the more to kill him: Not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God.

Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, the Son is not able to do anything on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son likewise does these things. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing, and he will show him greater works than these so that you will be amazed. And just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son also gives life to whom he wants. The Father, in fact, judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son.”

1. What is revealed about Jesus' relationship to God in this passage? How does that speak to how dangerous Jesus is?

2. John 14:12 records Jesus' words: "Truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father."

If we're to do "greater works than these," how does that speak to our own potential to be dangerous?

DAY 3

Read Jesus' words from Luke 6:20-36:

Then looking up at his disciples, he said:

Blessed are you who are poor,
because the kingdom of God is yours.
Blessed are you who are hungry now,
because you will be filled.

Blessed are you who weep now,
because you will laugh.
Blessed are you when people hate you,
when they exclude you, insult you,
and slander your name as evil
because of the Son of Man.

“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy. Take note—your reward is great in heaven, for this is the way their ancestors used to treat the prophets.

But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your comfort.
Woe to you who are now full,
for you will be hungry.
Woe to you who are now laughing,
for you will mourn and weep.
Woe to you
when all people speak well of you,
for this is the way their ancestors
used to treat the false prophets.

“But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If anyone hits you on the cheek, offer the other also. And if anyone takes away your coat, don’t hold back your shirt either. Give to everyone who asks you, and from someone who takes your things, don’t ask for them back. Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even

sinner love those who love them. If you do what is good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do what is good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High. For he is gracious to the ungrateful and evil. Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.”

1. What is the most countercultural statement Jesus makes in this passage?

2. Which of the principles that Jesus discusses is the most challenging for you personally?

3. In order to be like our dangerous Jesus, what are three steps you can take *this week* to be more aligned with the Christianity He outlines in the passage above?
 - i.
 - ii.

iii.

DAY 4

Chapter 1 of *Dangerous Jesus* says,

Dallas Willard used the term “vampire Christians” to describe those who say to Jesus, in essence, “I’d like a little of your blood, please. But I don’t care to be your student or have your character. In fact, won’t you just excuse me while I get on with my life, and I’ll see you in heaven.”²

The blood of Jesus and what it affords us—eternal life and forgiveness of sin—are the essential perks of the package. But we try to bifurcate the perks of His blood from the person who shed that blood. In other words, we want what He can do for us, but we don’t want to engage with what we are called to do through Him. It is of little benefit to have the words of Jesus in our mouths and not the ways of Jesus on our feet.

1. Why do you think so many Jesus followers have a “vampire Christian” mindset?

2. Have you ever been guilty of having Jesus’ words in your mouth and not the ways of Jesus on your feet? Reflect on a few examples.

3. What does it look like to have the ways of Jesus on your feet in your day-to-day life?

DAY 5

Jesus was dangerous because He came as an affront to popular culture. His message was confounding—scandalous, even—to the religious leaders of His day. Jesus came as a light in the darkness, exposing things and people that had previously been in the shadows. He was a danger to danger because He brought love, compassion, and hope to *all* men and women—not just a select few.

1. On a scale from 1 to 10, how dangerous do you feel as a Jesus follower right now? Circle your response.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. What are three ways you could increase your level of Christlike danger in the coming weeks?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.

DANGEROUS REFLECTION

Before you begin the next session, spend a few moments reflecting on what you've learned in session 1. Here are a few questions to reflect on.

1. How have I grown spiritually?

2. What new ideas have I embraced?

3. What have I learned about who Jesus *really* is?

4. What is one thing I *cannot* forget that I learned during this session?

