

LifeChange

A NAVPRESS BIBLE STUDY SERIES

*A life-changing
encounter with God's Word*

WHO JESUS IS

*Jesus' bold statements
of identity and relationship
can transform how we live.*

OVER 2.5 MILLION SOLD

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NavPress 

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Who Jesus Is: A Bible Study on the "I Am" Statements of Christ

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Objectives

The topical guides in the LifeChange series of Bible studies cover important topics from the Bible. Although the LifeChange guides vary with the topics they explore, they share some common goals:

1. to help readers grasp what key passages in the Bible say about the topic;
2. to provide readers with explanatory notes, word definitions, historical background, and cross-references so that the only other reference they need is the Bible;
3. to teach readers how to let God's Word transform them into Christ's image;
4. to provide small groups with a tool that will enhance group discussion of each passage and topic; and
5. to write each session so that advance preparation for group members is strongly encouraged but not required.

Each lesson in this study is designed to take forty-five minutes to complete.

Overview and Details

The study begins with an overview of the “I Am” statements of Jesus. The key to interpretation for each part of this study is content (what is the referenced passage *about?*), and the key to context is purpose (what is the author's *aim* for the passage as it relates to the overall topic?). Each lesson of the study explores one of the “I Am” statements of Jesus, with a corresponding passage from the Bible.

Kinds of Questions

Bible study provides different lenses and perspectives through which to engage the Scripture: observe (what does the passage *say*?), interpret (what does the passage *mean*?), and apply (how does this truth *affect* my life?). Some of the “how” and “why” questions will take some creative thinking, even prayer, to answer. Some are opinion questions without clear-cut right answers; these will lend themselves to discussions and side studies.

Don't let your study become an exercise in knowledge alone. Treat the passage as God's Word, and stay in dialogue with Him as you study. Pray, “Lord, what do You want me to see here?”, “Father, why is this true?”, and “Lord, how does this apply to my life?”

It is important that you write down your answers. The act of writing clarifies your thinking and helps you to remember what you're learning.

Study Aids

Throughout the guide, there are study aids that provide background information on the passage, insights from a commentary, or word studies. These aids are included in the guide to help you interpret the Bible without needing to use other, outside resources. Still, if you're interested in exploring further, the full resources are listed in the endnotes.

Scripture Versions

Unless otherwise indicated, the Bible quotations in this guide are from the New International Version of the Bible. Other versions cited are the English Standard Version and the New Living Translation.

Use any translation you like for study—or preferably more than one. Ideally you would have on hand a good, modern translation such as the New International Version, the English Standard Version, the New Living Translation, or the Christian Standard Bible. A paraphrase such as *The Message* is not accurate enough for study, but it can be helpful for comparison or devotional reading.

Memorizing and Meditating

A psalmist wrote, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11). If you write down a verse or passage that challenges or encourages you and reflect on it often for a week or more, you will find it beginning to affect your motives and actions. We forget quickly what we read once; we remember what we ponder.

When you find a significant verse or passage, you might copy it onto a card to keep with you. Set aside five minutes each day just to think about what the passage might mean in your life. Recite it to yourself, exploring its meaning. Then, return

to the passage as often as you can during the day for a brief review. You will soon find it coming to mind spontaneously.

For Group Study

A group of four to ten people allows the richest discussions, but you can adapt this guide for other-sized groups. It will suit a wide range of group types, such as home Bible studies, growth groups, youth groups, and workplace Bible studies. Both new and experienced Bible students, and new and mature Christians, will benefit from the guide. You can omit or leave for later any questions you find too easy or too hard.

The guide is intended to lead a group through one lesson per meeting. This guide is formatted so you will be able to discuss each of the questions at length. Be sure to make time at each discussion for members to ask about anything they didn't understand.

Each member should prepare for a meeting by writing answers for all of the background and discussion questions to be covered. Application will be very difficult, however, without private thought and prayer.

Two reasons for studying in a group are accountability and support. When each member commits in front of the rest to seek growth in an area of life, you can pray for one another, listen jointly for God's guidance, help one another resist temptation, assure each other that each person's growth matters to you, use the group to practice spiritual principles, and so on. Pray about one another's commitments and needs at most meetings. If you wish, you can spend the first few minutes of each meeting sharing any results from applications prompted by previous lessons and discuss new applications toward the end of the meeting. Follow your time of sharing with prayer for these and other needs.

If you write down what others have shared, you are more likely to remember to pray for them during the week, ask about what they shared at the next meeting, and notice answered prayers. You might want to get a notebook for prayer requests and discussion notes.

Taking notes during discussion will help you remember to follow up on ideas, stay on the subject, and have clarity on an issue. But don't let note-taking keep you from participating.

Some best practices for groups:

1. If possible, come to the group discussion prepared. The more each group member knows about the passage and the questions being asked, the better your discussion will be.
2. Realize that the group leader will not be teaching from the passage but instead will be facilitating your discussion. Therefore, it is important for each group member to participate so that everyone can contribute to what you learn as a group.
3. Try to stick to the passage covered in the session and the specific questions in the study guide.

4. Listen attentively to the other members of the group when they are sharing their thoughts about the passage. Also, realize that most of the questions are open-ended, allowing for more than one answer.
5. Be careful not to dominate the discussion—especially if you are the leader. Allow time for everyone to share their thoughts and ideas.
6. As mentioned previously, throughout the session are study aids that provide background information on the passage, insights from a commentary, or word studies. Reading these aloud during the meeting is optional and up to the discussion leader. However, each member can refer to these insights if they found them helpful in understanding the passage.

A Note on Topical Studies

LifeChange guides offer a robust and thoughtful engagement with God's Word. The book-centric guides focus on a step-by-step walk through that particular book of the Bible. The topical studies use Scripture to help you engage more deeply with God's Word and its implications for your life.

INTRODUCTION

Who Jesus Is

WHO IS JESUS? Ask any number of people, and you'll get any number of answers. Was He the greatest teacher who ever lived? A wonderful moral example? A prophet? God?

Many people put their own spin on the person of Jesus. Some view Him as a failed prophet whose movement outlived Him. Others suggest that Jesus was simply a philosopher, a teacher of wisdom in the Cynic tradition (meaning he “renounced worldly goods and social conventions”). Still others believe He was simply a revolutionary who was influenced by the Zealot movement.¹

But very few people try to argue that He wasn't a real person—and that's because we have access to vivid detail we don't get about many historical figures: extensive accounts about Jesus' life and ministry in the four biblical Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). People who walked with Jesus (Matthew and John) or people who knew those who walked with Jesus (Mark and Luke) carefully wrote down what they considered most important about Him—not just events but things He said—and the Gospels as a whole paint a remarkably consistent picture. The reality is, when we don't take the Gospels into account in our understanding of Jesus, our views of Jesus end up reflecting who we want Him to be, not who He really is. And when we take Jesus at His word, we see that He was far more than just a prophet or a teacher.

The Gospels paint a picture not just of the life of Jesus—from his genealogy, to his birth, to his life and death—but zoom in to give us His very words, the things He considered most important to pass along during His time on earth. The Gospel of John shows us a series of extraordinary claims Jesus made about who He is and why He came.

In this LifeChange study guide, we will look at eight amazing “I Am” statements Jesus made about Himself. Each session in the guide will focus on a key passage of Scripture that explores one “I Am” statement and its context. There will also be suggestions at the end of each session for studying related passages.

Jesus wants every Christian to know who He is and what He has done for us. This LifeChange guide will lead you through what Jesus has said about Himself, revealing that the Messiah and Savior is far greater and more powerful than anyone could have imagined.

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:25-59

IS THERE ANYTHING BETTER than fresh-baked bread? When I was in elementary school, we went on a field trip in Dallas to the headquarters and factory of Mrs. Baird's, a bakery known for its bread. After we watched the dough being poured into pans on an assembly line and then cooked in an oven, we were each given a small, fresh-baked loaf of bread that was still warm and covered with butter. We all thought it was the best bread we had ever eaten!

In our day, bread is often an optional part of a meal. But in Jesus' day, bread was the most significant part of the meal and the primary means for satisfying people's daily hunger. In a very real sense, their lives depended on bread. In this passage, which follows the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus claims to be the Bread of Life—spiritual sustenance that enables those who eat it to live forever!

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1. Read John 6:25-59. Which of Jesus' statements stands out to you most? Why?
