



These discussion questions can be used the week following the message. You can use these questions for personal growth and development, or as a guide for your Connect Group discussions.

Message Recap:

Read Matthew 13:53-58

In a world where we have so many shortcuts and hacks to make living easier, it's easy to apply those shortcuts to our faith. But in matters of faith, trying to take shortcuts belittles Jesus. There will always be an energy in us that downplays Jesus—his name will always be offensive to a self-worshipping world. Because the name of Jesus is the key to life, all of hell is working to erase his value and blind us to the power and glory of God. We are pressured to not speak Jesus first and to downplay his relevance to salvation. When you let the name of Jesus be the real energy of your life, your life will have more meaning. The smaller Jesus is to you, the smaller your life will be. The bigger Jesus is to you, the bigger your life will be. Stop letting earth-bound reason be the compass of your life and let Jesus be at the forefront of everything you do.

Pray

Jesus, you did not take any shortcuts when you were nailed to the cross. You took my punishment so that I can have forgiveness for my sins by the power of your name. Help me remember not to belittle your name. Help me have the kind of passion for you that always puts you first in every moment of my life. Let your name be my energy and my purpose.

Getting Started

- They say, “You can’t go home again” (Thomas Wolf). Have you ever gone back to your hometown after being gone for a while? Did you find this statement to be true or not?
- How would you describe the power of the name of Jesus to someone who didn’t know him?

Listening Deeply

1. Read Matthew 13:53-58. How did the people go from being amazed (verse 54) to taking offense at the name of Jesus (verse 57)?
2. There has always been an energy in this world that downplays Jesus. Do you see that in your life (either personally or in situations you’ve witnessed)?
3. Once we learn about Jesus we will either grow in him and draw nearer to him, or turn from him and embrace the world. Where are you on that scale?
4. Compare and explain these two statements:
 1. The smaller your Jesus, the smaller your life
 2. The bigger your Jesus, the bigger your life
5. Read Colossians 1:15-23. Discuss how this can give you the courage to stop downplaying or belittling the work of Jesus in your life.
6. Take Action:
 1. Stop being embarrassed by the name of Jesus. Claim a situation and share it with your group about where you will put Jesus first this week.
 2. Stop making the name of Jesus smaller than the fears of life. Share with your group where the name of Jesus needs to be bigger than your fear.
 3. Stop letting earth-bound reason be the compass of your life. Share with your group a time where you let the world’s advice have more authority than Jesus, and discuss how you will change that reaction.

Living Wide in Jesus

The closer you grow to God, the more you will speak the name of Jesus to yourself and others. The farther you are from God, the farther Jesus’ name is from your lips. Who will win in your life? Jesus or the enemy? Let the name of Jesus be the real energy in your life. Meditate on the glory and power of the name of Jesus. Consider how you will bring the name of Jesus to the forefront of every moment of your life (Philippians 2:9-11).