

Missions: An Adventure In Faith

STUDY NO: 3

TOPIC: Jesus – The Word Made Flesh – Incarnating The Gospel – Incarnational Missions

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 1:1-18, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Corinthians 9:18-23, 10:14-33; 2 Corinthians 8:9

HOW TO STUDY THIS LESSON:

Open in prayer asking God for truth and wisdom from His Word.

Read the Bible passage

Answer the questions, writing the answers in the space provided.

Take about 3-5 minutes per question.

Fill in the "Personal Application" section

If you have time write down prayer points for members of the group.

Close in prayer.

Sometimes the culture (and the wealth) of the missionary can hinder the gospel message. At other times it can give offense (e.g. eating pork in the Middle East). A missionary has to adopt the language, culture and lifestyle of the people he/she is ministering to – as far as possible without sin (e.g. he cannot take up their magic practices). Just as Jesus left Heaven behind, and became a man, a normal "average" Jew, born of a woman, under the Jewish Law, (Galatians 4:4,5) so the missionary has to "incarnate" the gospel in the new culture. This is a difficult process to get right and needs much wisdom from God.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Read John 1:1-18 & Philippians 2:5-11 - What are some of the things that happened when Jesus became the incarnate Word of God? How can the gospel become "incarnate" through the life of a missionary?

2. What sacrifices / changes did Jesus have to make? (Philippians 2:5-11, 2 Corinthians 8:9)

3. How did Paul change his lifestyle to suit the people he was ministering to? 1 Corinthians 9:18-23, 10:31-33

4. What sort of lifestyle changes do effective cross-cultural missionaries have to make?

5. Read 1 Corinthians 10:14-33 - Are there some cultural practices that a missionary can never adopt? Are there some others that can be exercised with caution?

6. Jim is a new missionary in Africa and the tribal chief presents Jim with his daughter and asks Jim to take his beautiful daughter as a second wife. (Jim is already married). Polygamy is not actually banned (in an outright fashion) in the Scriptures. What should Jim do?

7. You are ministering to young people on the street. The Old Testament Jewish Law bans body piercing & tattoos (Leviticus 19:28) – should you get a tattoo to gain acceptance? What does being free from the Jewish Law now mean? (Romans 7:1-11, Galatians 4:1-10)

8. You are ministering to Jews In Israel. Do you keep the Jewish Sabbath? (1 Corinthians 9:18-23, Colossians 2:16,17, Galatians 4:10) What was Jesus' attitude to the Sabbath? (Matthew 12:1-8)

9. You are a missionary in the Philippines and you are presented with "dinuguan" a dish that looks like chocolate but is pig offal cooked in pig's blood. The eating of blood is banned in both Old and New Testaments (Acts 15:19-21, Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 17:10,11). What should you do? If No" how would you "get out of it" without causing offense?

10. Should missionaries be much wealthier than the people they serve? How can the perception of a major lifestyle difference hinder the progress of the gospel?

11. The wife of William Carey's (a famous Baptist missionary to India) went insane from the stress of missionary life. How much stress can we put on family and loved ones for the sake of the gospel? (1 Timothy 5:8, Mark 7:9-13)

12. How much equipment (e.g. a car) might be needed for ministry? Should you risk your health (e.g. by living in a house without a functioning toilet or drinking the polluted village water) for the sake of being "incarnational"? Are there limits to this missionary principle? (Personally I insist on physical safety, clean water, safe food, and functioning plumbing.)

PERSONAL APPLICATION – a command to obey, a warning to heed, a promise to claim, a deed to do, an attitude to change....

PRAYER POINTS - Use "Operation World" by Patrick Johnstone to pray for: Japan