

## What Kind of Person is Jesus?

I [N] had never seen that kind of wetsuit—all red with one wide white stripe around the middle. But that is what one surfer began to wear surfing during the Christmas season. He also had the matching white-tipped red hat. The beach attracts its share of unusual characters and this middle aged guy would show up to surf at Christmas time in a Santa Claus wetsuit. He was a sight to behold but besides noticing him teaching some kids how to surf, I did not know much about him.

That all changed the Christmas of 1997. Our family had recently moved to the beach and John, our 15 year old son, was eager to catch some waves on the first day of his Christmas vacation. It was early in the morning. Nobody else from our family was surfing with him, but the waves were good and he was going for it.

After his first ride, he jumped off his board and landed on a broken bottle on the bottom of the ocean. It gashed his foot open. His foot was numb from the cold so he did not, at first, realize what had happened. As he paddled past the middle aged Santa Claus, the man drew John's attention to the gash.

Then this middle aged surfer helped John to the shore and brought him to his first aid kit. It turns out the man had a medical practice and taught surfing on the side. He cleaned John's wound, applied a temporary bandage and drove John to our house. I rushed John to the doctor, his injury required 14 stitches, and everything healed beautifully because of the prompt and expert attention he received from this kind surfer.

I did not know this surfer before the accident, but afterwards I felt a deep respect and thankfulness for him. What kind of person would leave a good surfing session, bandage a stranger's kid, and drive him home so he could get immediate medical

attention?—a kind, compassionate, and giving individual. I came to know this person by watching him in action.

We come to know God the same way—by watching Him in action and asking ourselves, “What kind of person would do that?”

It may sound unusual at first, but God has a personality. That is *not* to say God is finite or limited in any way. Rather, it is to say we can have a personal relationship with Him. As we watch Him in action through the pages of the Bible, we get a sense for how He reacts to things and can begin to understand Him in the same kind of terms by which we understand our other friends.

There is no clearer way to see God in action than to watch Jesus in action because Jesus is God in the flesh. The way Jesus reacts to situations during His earthly ministry shows us how God reacts to them. Some things bring Jesus joy, other things anger Him. At times He is moved to compassion and at other times He is moved to warn.

As you watch Jesus in action, notice what He values and ask yourself, “What kind of person values that?” Notice what moves Him to compassion and ask yourself, “What kind of person is touched by that situation?” Identify what angers Him and ask yourself, “What kind of person is angered by that kind of thing?” These questions help you understand Jesus’ personality so you can trust Him the way you trust a true friend.

God does not present Himself to us as merely a collection of spiritual absolutes. He presents Himself as an infinite and divine person that is touched by our feelings and can be known like we come to know a friend. Do not miss the opportunity to know God.

## Organization of the Study Guide

This *Study Guide* takes you through several gospel passages that show Jesus in action and lets you decide for yourself what kind of person He is.

The format of this *Study Guide* encourages you to surface whatever you notice in the passages and respond to God accordingly. Then as you explore these passages, also be alert to notice what you can learn about what kind of person God is.

If you are not familiar with the *4 Step* method of studying the Bible, there is a *Skill Time* section on pages 8ff that will explain what to write in the 4 panels associated with each passage.

A devotional commentary is also included after the passages that covers what you have just studied. This gives you something to compare your work against. The commentary also suggests a number of personality traits that can be learned about Jesus from the passages.