

Personal Study Guide

*Jesus and the Awakening to God-
Consciousness*

with

Deepak Chopra and
Rev. Wendy Craig-Purcell

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All page references indicated in this text refer to The Third Jesus: The Christ We Cannot Ignore (Harmony Books) by Deepak Chopra.

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Week 1

Who Is Jesus and Why Does It Matter?

During the first Webcast, Dr. Deepak Chopra and Rev. Wendy Craig-Purcell discuss the following sections of the book:

- Introduction [Pages 1-4]
- Redeeming the Redeemer [Pages 7-20]
- Who Is the “Real” Jesus? [Pages 129-139]

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- What do you find most striking about Chopra’s descriptions of the three Jesuses?
- What are your thoughts on this idea that Jesus was an enlightened master such as Buddha or the Vedic sages?
- If Jesus was an enlightened master, what do you think this might mean for Christianity?
- Respond to the notion that a person’s level of consciousness impacts their interpretation of the message.
- Did you find any of the five arguments [Page 130] of who the “real” Jesus is surprising? Did you find that you had strong feelings one way or the other about any of these? Why do you think that is?
- How has your personal religious background impacted your spiritual beliefs today? Does it make reading a book like this a breath of fresh air or does it bring up less positive feelings? Do you experience inner conflict when you consider the idea of the third Jesus?

Week 2

Opening to the Path

During the second Webcast, Dr. Deepak Chopra and Rev. Wendy Craig-Purcell discuss the following sections of the book:

- Part Three: “Taking Jesus as Your Teacher: A Guide for Seekers”
“The Search for Higher Reality” [Beginning Page 143]
- Step 1: The Kingdom of Heaven is within you. [Pages 144-145]
- Step 10: You must be born from above. [Pages 160-162]
- Step 2: Be in the world but not of it. [Pages 145-146]

Scripture Reference:

“And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17:20-21 (KJV)

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- Discuss what this teaching—“The Kingdom of Heaven is within you”—means to you personally.
- How is it reflected in your life?
- How might you bring this teaching into your life in a more intentional and consistent way?

Scripture Reference:

“Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” John 3:3 (NRSV)

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- What does it mean to you to be born from above?
- What choices would you be making in your life if your decisions were “born of the Spirit”?

Scripture References:

“And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.” John 8:23 (KJV)

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." John 17:15-17 (KJV)

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- Discuss your experiences with being "in the world but not of it."
- What makes this most difficult for you?
- Describe experiences that you may have had where it came with greater ease.

Week 3

A New Way of Being

During the third Webcast, Dr. Deepak Chopra and Rev. Wendy Craig-Purcell discuss the following sections of the book:

- Step 3: For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. [Pages 146-147]
- Step 12: So do not worry about tomorrow. [Pages 164-166]
- Step 4: Ask and you will receive. [Pages 147-150]
- Step 15: What does it profit a man to gain the world if he loses his soul? [Pages 172-174]

Scripture Reference:

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30 (NRSV)

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- Think of a time in your own life when you were able to truly experience the ease and grace to which “For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” is referring.
- What do you see as the greatest obstacles to “going with the flow”? What are some of the things that trigger an automatic, conditioned response?
- What are some specific steps that you can take to approach life in a more open way?

Scripture Reference:

“Therefore, do not worry, saying ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.” Matthew 6:31-34 (NRSV)

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- In general, what kinds of things fill your present moment?
- What changes would you like to make in this regard?

Scripture Reference:

"So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened." Luke 11:9-10 (NRSV)

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- Describe a time when a prayer was answered in a surprising or unexpected way.
- Think of a time when you didn't feel that a prayer was answered. In retrospect, how was it answered that you weren't able to see at the time?
- What might you do now that will help you more readily see an answer to a prayer that you may not have recognized in the past?

Scripture Reference:

"And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? " Mark 8:34-36 (KJV)

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- Respond to this notion that our spiritual growth does not happen automatically, like a child's growth does, and that it is important to keep your spiritual vision in front of you.
- What do you currently do to reinforce your spiritual growth?

Week 4

When the Rubber Hits the Road

During the fourth Webcast, Dr. Deepak Chopra and Rev. Wendy Craig-Purcell discuss the following sections of the book:

- Step 7: As you sow, so shall you reap. [Pages 153-155]
- Step 5: Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. [Pages 150-152]
- Step 8: Resist not evil. [Pages 155-157]

Scripture References:

“Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit.” Galatians 6:7-8 (NRSV)

“Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” Matthew 6:11-12 (NRSV)

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- Chopra says that forgiveness isn’t an act of moral courage or superhuman tolerance, yet it can feel like a difficult thing to do. Have there been times in your life when you found forgiveness of yourself or another difficult? How were you able to eventually reach a place of forgiveness?
- If there are things that still need forgiveness in your life, how could you apply this teaching to that situation?

Scripture Reference:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile.” Matthew 5:38-41 (NRSV)

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- The interpretation that Chopra provides in Step 8 (Resist not evil), calls for a true shift in perspective. How might a shift to this way of thinking about evil be helpful to you personally?
- During the Webcast, Chopra clarifies what he calls a mistake of the intellect that has confused differentiation with separation. What does that mean to you?
- When discussing the idea of “turning the other cheek,” Chopra tells us to avoid spiritual one-upsmanship and agreeing with someone in a passive-aggressive way. How do you interpret turning the other cheek? How could you, or do you, apply this in your life?

Week 5

What to Expect When You're Expecting Enlightenment

During the fifth Webcast, Dr. Deepak Chopra and Rev. Wendy Craig-Purcell discuss the following sections of the book:

- "How the Path Opens" [Pages 175-192]
- "The Middle of the Journey" [Pages 193-208]
- "Where the Soul Never Dies" [Pages 209-219]

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- How did you come to walk the spiritual path that you are now on?
- Describe your own turning point.
- Chopra states that "If you are on the path, two things should happen: 1) you should be experiencing diminished anxiety and more lightheartedness and 2) you are experiencing a state of grace or a sense of being supported by the universe."
- What are some of the specific experiences of diminished anxiety and/or having the sense that you are being supported by the universe?
- What are some of your experiences with "the honeymoon is over" as you walk your spiritual path?
- How do you motivate yourself to continue the journey?
- Have you used some of the methods Chopra suggests? Which have been most helpful?

Week 6

Jesus Without Dogma

During the sixth Webcast, Dr. Deepak Chopra and Rev. Wendy Craig-Purcell discuss the following section of the book:

- “What Would Jesus Do?” [pages 220-234]

Questions for Personal Reflection:

Look at the following excerpts from the last chapter of the book that describe actions that an individual can take that are in accordance with Jesus’ teachings. Respond to the questions that follow each excerpt.

Courage

“The enemy of courage is fear, which wears many masks. You can fear being different, or failure, or humiliation, or ostracism. Yet these are only reflections of a single condition: living behind boundaries. Bigots may seem brave, yet because their fight is always to build the walls and shut others out, intolerant people are acting from fear. When you realize that, the spiritual path opens up. You find that a single goal—overcoming fear—is the primary purpose of any quest. Courage renews the self by breaking boundaries.” [Page 230]

- Where do I see evidence of courage in the world?
- In what circumstance or situation could bringing more courage provide a higher level of healing?
- What can I do as an individual to be more courageous? Be specific about what you can do and in what area or situation you would like to focus your actions.

Truth-telling

“Because the truth sets people free, Jesus used the truth as an agent of change. When you tell the truth, you speak to the truth in others. They may hide from their own truth, but you are seeking to free them, and in the process you make your truth stronger. The crucial words here are ‘your truth,’ which is personal, relative, and never the same as God’s absolute truth. But to call the truth relative isn’t the same as calling it weak. Relative refers to the fact that we each have a personal perspective and cannot see through anyone else’s eyes.” [Pages 230-231]

- Where do I see evidence of truth and honesty in the world?

- In what circumstance or situation could bringing more truth bring a higher level of healing?
- What can I do as an individual to be more truthful? Be specific about what you can do and in what area or situation you would like to focus your actions.

Sympathy and Tolerance

“In a divided society there are many reasons not to offer sympathy to others ... Imagine the people whose values are dead set against yours, and know that they and their kind feel just as right as you do. It’s difficult to let this truth sink in, but nothing is more important. Two contending sides are equal at the level where ‘I am right and you are wrong’ exists. This ego-driven voice is an enemy to spiritual growth. The ego refuses to give up its certainty, isolation, competition, and antagonism. Jesus saw the problem clearly, and his answer—one of the most consistent answers he ever gave—was to see the world from the viewpoint of the humblest, weakest, and poorest. Jesus taught humility not just as an antidote to pride but as another way to become free. The ego, with all its wishes, fears, ambitions, likes, and dislikes, dominates everyone’s existence, and therefore almost no one sees the truth, which is that the ego is an enormous burden.”

[Page 231]

- Where do I see evidence of sympathy and tolerance in the world?
- In what circumstance could bringing more sympathy and tolerance to a situation bring a higher level of healing?
- What can I do as an individual to be more sympathetic and tolerant? Be specific about what you can do and in what area or situation you would like to focus your actions.

Love and Forgiveness

“Love is many things, but two stand out in particular: It’s the truth, and it’s an experience. Jesus said that by experiencing the truth of love, you grow beyond nonlove and nontruth. In the early part of the twenty-first century, there is more than enough nonlove and nontruth for everyone to claim a portion. You and I know whom we don’t really forgive and whom we pretend to tolerate. We know what it’s like to wear a mask for social reasons that have little to do with our deepest feelings. Moving out of that predicament is what spirituality is about. The soul loves and forgives automatically; it sees beyond all divisions, however deep; it wears no masks. And the soul isn’t a distant goal but a hidden aspect of the self.” [Page 233]

- Where do I see evidence of love and forgiveness in the world?
- In what circumstance could bringing more love and forgiveness to a situation bring a higher level of healing?

- What can I do as an individual to be more loving and forgiving? Be specific about what you can do and in what area or situation you would like to focus your actions.