

Week 3 | Is Jesus an Otter?

Key Scripture: Hebrews 1:9, Psalms 51:12, Luke 10:38-42

Objectives:

- Understand Jesus and joy are a package deal - can't have one without the other
- Learn to be in the moment, whether it's with Jesus or family or neighbors
- Contrast a healthy Otter with an unhealthy Beaver personality

Scripture References:

Luke 10:38-42 (NLT) | 38 As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. 39 Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. 40 But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me." 41 But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! 42 There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

Was Jesus an Otter?

Otter Overview | Otters are fun-loving, enthusiastic, playful and encouraging. They love people and *love* to talk. They're so naturally friendly and engaging, they can form friendship bonds quickly with others and often end up being the center of attention. They can be people pleasers when not healthy. Others may believe they're not serious enough when it comes to important discussions or challenges, or that they're insensitive about not meeting deadlines that affect others.

Most of the paintings we have of Jesus are of a serious looking white dude who either looks high or crazy. We know Jesus loved people, but was Jesus fun? Did Jesus laugh? There are scriptures about him weeping (*John 11:35*), but none about him laughing. **Why do you think that is?**

Can you picture Jesus laughing and being the life of the party?

So how do we know that He was fun? One way is that kids loved him. Kids like happy people. Kids stay away from grumpy weird people. Kids came around Jesus so much that the disciples felt the need to shew them away (it wasn't proper for adults to talk to children).

Jesus was the embodiment of Joy.

Luke 2:10 | 10 but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.

Jesus and joy are a package deal - and it's not just your average joy - it's great joy.

The bible says about Jesus, *You love justice and hate evil. Therefore, O God, your God has anointed you, pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else.*" (*Hebrews 1:9 NLT*)

Jesus is joy. So you can't have Jesus and not have joy. The gospel (good news) should also be a source of joy for us. It's the good news that says Jesus came to forgive us and take punishment meant for us because He loved us first. We're used to bad news. Our society and culture seems to prefer bad news. Maybe because it's human nature to distrust what seems too good to be true. Jesus IS too good to be true. Salvation IS too good to be true. Grace IS too good to be true.

“One of the greatest indictments against Christians is not sin or hypocrisy. It’s our lack of joy. Something is wrong when we call ourselves Christians but we practically have an aneurysm trying to crack a smile.”

- Judah Smith, Jesus Is _____.

Why is there a lack of joy in the body of Christ?

God wants you to be happy, but joy has to be first found in God. Joy has to be first found in the good news of Jesus Christ. When joy is found there, you’ll find joy in everything else.

Where are some places people are searching for joy and not finding it?

Happiness is not dependent on our external circumstances (this is what separates us as believers). Even when things are tough, our faith in God will be our strength. David said, *restore to me the joy of Your salvation... (Psalms 51:12)*. Our joy comes from Him and it’s ok to pray and ask God to restore or revive it in you. The key is in staying connected to the source of our joy.

What disconnects you from Jesus? (schedule, shame, misunderstanding, etc)

Mary and Martha

Jesus visited his friends Mary and Martha for a dinner party that was hosted by Martha. Mary sat at Jesus’ feet. She was in the moment. Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was planning.

What was the personality of Mary? What was the personality of Martha? Why?

Otters lead with their hearts and are excitable.

There wasn’t anything wrong with Martha preparing for Jesus. Her gift was hosting. She was detailed. She was a beaver. The problem was her attitude about what she was doing.

What was behind Martha’s frustration with Mary? What caused Martha to feel that how she was being treated by Mary was unfair? Do you think she was upset at Jesus? Why?

Martha was consumed by her plans for a great meal. It had become her top priority, but others didn’t share her priorities. When she saw that everyone was in agreement with her, she became critical. It was then a matter of, “Hey! How come she doesn’t have to do this?”

How do you feel when others don’t see things the way you do, specifically how or why something should be done?

Jesus told Martha that she had been worried and upset over all of these details. He then said there was only one thing worth being concerned about and that Mary had found it. **What was that one thing?**

Psalm 27:4 (NLT) | 4 The one thing I ask of the LORD--the thing I seek most--is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD's perfections and meditating in his Temple.

Luke 18:22 (NLT) | 22 When Jesus heard his answer, he said, "There is still one thing you haven't done. Sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Philippians 3:13-14 (NLT) | 13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet:

- To sit at the feet of Jesus implies readiness to accept and obey what Jesus teaches
- To sit at the feet of Jesus implies submission to Jesus; rebellion is done with
- To sit at the feet of Jesus implies faith in who Jesus is
- To sit at the feet of Jesus implies discipleship
- To sit at the feet of Jesus implies love

From this story of Jesus, Mary and Martha, we see 3 types of follows of Jesus:

- There are people like Mary: Those who know how to serve and *also sit at Jesus' feet*.
- There are people like Martha: Those who diligently, and with the best intention serve God, but without adding the *one thing* – a continued focus on Jesus – and it results in great frustration.
- There are people who don't do either. They are not even in the house with Jesus, for they are too busy with their own pursuits.

Under pressure an Otter can become a people pleaser. We see Mary content to sit at the feet of Jesus even though her sister was obviously upset with her. She had confidence in Jesus so much so that she didn't feel the need to defend herself.

Martha was focused on what she thought needed to be done and it produced frustration and criticism. Mary was focused on Jesus and it produced confidence and peace.

Joy is one of the best ways we can show that we have Jesus. It's more than an emotion - it's a state of being. Whether you're an otter or not, your life should be overflowing with God's joy, which doesn't come from possessions or good days, but from knowing that our sins are forgiven by a God who loves us no matter what.

In order to be connected to that joy, we have to be willing to sit at Jesus' feet. We do that through forsaking everything else for a little bit of time and listening to him, reading His word, being thankful, etc. Learn to be in the moment with Jesus. Learn to be in the moment with the people around you.

What is your biggest challenge to being "in the moment" with Jesus? With people? What are some steps you could take to make improvements?

Hint: The more connected to Jesus you are, the less worried you are about things outside of your control (work, money, future, etc). You trust Him more. With all that extra head space, it's easier to stop what you're doing and have meaningful time with Jesus and meaningful time with people.

Until Next Week | Take time to sit at Jesus' feet. Make it a part of your day. If you're too busy for it, then you're too busy. When was the last time you took an opportunity to have a meaningful conversation with a neighbor or co-worker or maybe even a family member?

Was Jesus an Otter?

by: April Ashley

What is an Otter?

- Sanguine personality = Optimistic or positive, especially in a bad or difficult situation.
- Enthusiastic, energetic, spontaneous and friendly person.
- They love people and often regale (feed) groups of people with stories.

Otters as Influencers

- Otters are visionary. They think of creative new ideas and have what it takes to inspire others, even to join them in taking risks.

(Luke 5:1-11) **The First Disciples**

⁵ One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee,^[a] great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. ² He noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. ³ Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon,^[b] its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish."

⁵ "Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again." ⁶ And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! ⁷ A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

⁸ When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm such a sinful man." ⁹ For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. ¹⁰ His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed.

Jesus replied to Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!" ¹¹ And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

- Motivators with a motto: "Trust me, it will work out!" People believe in them.
- Teamwork: Networker who will gather resources.
- They are all about **relationships**; do not hold grudges because they genuinely love people. Think about all the times Jesus endured public humiliation and ridicule but still expressed love towards even those who doubted him.
- Sensitive and want other to be happy, offering encouragement and support to others.

- Spiritually: Loves worship and fellowship. Jesus enjoyed spending time with his apostles and followers.
- They can be big prayers, talking to God for hours

(Luke 6:12-13) **Jesus Chooses the Twelve Apostles**

¹² One day soon afterward Jesus went up on a mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night. ¹³ At daybreak he called together all of his disciples and chose twelve of them to be apostles.

- They are great at loving their neighbor.
- They are givers.
- Often find it easy to express their faith verbally in front of others, so raising their hand or walking the aisle is not a big deal.
- Look forward to sharing their new faith with family and friends. ***This is a new believer.

Can you think of any specific examples of when Jesus displayed any of these characteristics?

How about when Jesus was able to influence those who wanted to influence him?

John 8: 1-11 A Woman Caught in Adultery

8 Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives, ² but early the next morning he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them. ³ As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd.

⁴ “Teacher,” they said to Jesus, “this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?”

⁶ They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. ⁷ They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, “All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!” ⁸ Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

⁹ When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. ¹⁰ Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?”

¹¹ “No, Lord,” she said.

And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.”

How is Jesus still influencing us today?

Activity: Good versus Evil

Scriptures of affirmation versus negative thoughts: Have 1 person read the negative thought and the other read the affirmation. Demonstrate how the Word of God still influences us today and can be used as a counter response to negative thoughts.

How do we influence each other?

Proverbs 27:17 – Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That a man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.