

Doctrine of Human Behavior and Consequence

Lesson 8 – Jesus Christ our Ultimate Example

John 1:14 - And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

INTRODUCTION

In our last lesson, we lingered in the wisdom literature, where Proverbs and Ecclesiastes laid out practical paths for navigating life in a broken world. Those books grounded their counsel in the fear of the Lord, showing how choices lead to natural outcomes in relationships, work, and society. Solomon's observations revealed a world of vanity without God, yet one where wise living brings a measure of contentment and stability. That emphasis on discernment and godly perspective now leads us to the New Testament, where Jesus steps into history as the living fulfillment of those principles. He does not just teach wisdom; he embodies it perfectly, showing what human behavior looks like when aligned fully with God's will.

THE WORD BECOMES FLESH

Jesus arrives as the Word made flesh, the ultimate image-bearer who reflects the Father's character without flaw. Unlike the patriarchs or prophets who stumbled amid their faith, or the kings who strayed despite their wisdom, Jesus lives out every aspect of God's design for humanity. His life serves as the model, not through superhuman feats for His benefit, but in everyday choices that reveal obedience, compassion, and truth. We see in Him how to respond to temptation, injustice, and suffering, always rooted in love for God and others. This lesson explores Jesus as that perfect example, drawing from the Gospels to highlight His behavior in key areas. As we study, remember that His life points us to grace, inviting us to follow not by our strength, but through reliance on Him.

The Incarnation is God in human form, behaving as intended from the foundation. Understanding Jesus' behavior starts with His identity. John 1:1-3 declares that the Word was with God and was God, through whom all things were made. Then verse 14 adds that this Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The Greek term for *dwelt*, σκηνώω (skēnoō), recalls the tabernacle, where God's presence resided with Israel. Jesus “tabernacles” among people, fully human yet fully divine, experiencing hunger, weariness, and temptation as we do. Hebrews 4:15 affirms this: "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

This incarnation means Jesus behaves as the ideal human, fulfilling the role Adam that was lost in the fall. Where Adam rebelled, Jesus obeys. Jesus exercises perfect volition in His humanity, choosing obedience amid real trials. Hebrews 2:17-18 notes, "Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since

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He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted." His choices demonstrate reliance on the Word of God, modeling how humans, though fallen, can pursue right behavior in a world ruled by Satan and filled with temptation.

JESUS' TESTED BY THE ADVERSARY

Matthew 4:1-11 records His temptation by Satan. After fasting forty days, Satan urges Him to turn stones to bread, but Jesus replies, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" He quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, prioritizing God's word over physical need. When tempted to jump from the temple pinnacle, He responds, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test,'" again, from Deuteronomy 6:16. Finally, offered kingdoms for worship, He commands, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only,'" drawing from Deuteronomy 6:13. In each case, Jesus chooses obedience, using Scripture to counter deception. His behavior models resistance to sin through truth, not willpower alone.

THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

This pattern extends to His ministry. Jesus heals the sick, feeds multitudes, and raises the dead, but these acts are, in part, a ministry of compassion, not showmanship. Mark 1:41 describes Him touching a leper: "Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed.'" The term for *compassion*, σπλαγχνίζομαι (*splagchnizomai*), conveys deep, emotional love. He risks being outcast by the Pharisees, showing behavior that values people over human traditions. In John 11:35, "Jesus wept," He shares human grief for people and their lack of understanding and belief. His actions reflect God's heart, merciful and near to the broken.

THE AUTHORITY AND HUMILITY OF JESUS

Truth with grace - Jesus' dealings with people reveal godly behavior, wielding authority without arrogance. In Matthew 7:28-29, after the Sermon on the Mount, the crowds are amazed because "He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." Yet He serves humbly. John 13:3-5 records Him washing the disciples' feet: "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from the supper, laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded." This act, typically for slaves, teaches, "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to

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wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). Authority pairs with service. Speaking the truth pairs with humility.

THE GRACE AND MERCY OF JESUS

With sinners, Jesus extends grace without compromising truth. In Luke 23:39-43, the thief on the cross next to Jesus did nothing worthy of Jesus' favor, yet Jesus told him, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." The thief was a pariah of the community, hated and found guilty of sedition and thievery, but Jesus is gracious and proclaims life to him. Luke 19:1-10 shows Him with Zacchaeus, a tax collector. Jesus doesn't wait for Zacchaeus to clean up his life or prove his worthiness. He initiates the conversation, inviting Himself to the home of a notorious sinner, publicly associating with him despite the crowd's grumbling. This act of grace shocks everyone. Zacchaeus responds to Jesus' message by voluntarily making restitution, not as a condition for acceptance, but as a voluntary response to having received grace. Jesus declares salvation has come, not because of Zacchaeus's good works, but because Jesus came to seek and save the lost. It's pure, initiating grace: Jesus pursues the undeserving sinner, offers salvation freely, and salvation arrives through faith in Him. This beautifully shows Jesus' grace reaching even the most socially and morally ostracized, offering immediate acceptance. It's another clear picture of undeserved favor poured out on the unworthy.

THE WISDOM OF JESUS

Even with opponents, Jesus responds with wisdom. When some Pharisees question paying taxes to Caesar (Matthew 22:15-22), He asks for a coin and says, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They reply, "Caesar's." Then, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." He navigates the trap, teaching submission to authority while prioritizing God. In anger, like cleansing the temple (John 2:13-17), His zeal is righteous: "The disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Your house will consume me.'" He drives out merchants, but without personal malice, protecting worship's purity.

JESUS' PRAYER LIFE AND DEPENDENCE ON THE FATHER

A key aspect of Jesus' behavior is His consistent pattern of prayer, which demonstrates volitional dependence on the Father. Luke 5:16 records, "But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray." This habit fueled His actions and decisions. Before choosing the apostles, Luke 6:12 notes, "It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God." Mark 1:35 adds, "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded

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place, and was praying there." These moments show how Jesus aligned His will with the Father's through careful, mindful prayer, modeling that perfect human behavior stems from relational communication with God. This contrasts with our tendency toward independence, pointing to the role of God's truth in similar circumstances.

THE SUBMISSION OF JESUS

The cross is the ultimate model of Jesus' suffering and obedience. This example of submission peaks in His path to the cross, where obedience meets suffering. In Gethsemane, Matthew 26:39 records, "And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.'" This highlights submission to the Father's desires. Despite agony, He chooses obedience, fulfilling Isaiah 53:7: "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth."

On the cross, He forgives: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). He cares for his mother, entrusting her to John (John 19:26-27). Even in death, his behavior reflects love and trust: "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46). Hebrews 12:2 describes Him as "who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." His resurrection vindicates this path, showing that godly behavior, even unto death, leads to exaltation.

OLD TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT AND CONTINUITY

Jesus' behavior fulfills Old Testament expectations, embodying prophetic and wisdom principles. Isaiah 11:1-5 foretells of a Messiah who judges with righteousness and equity, filled with the Spirit's wisdom: "And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD." Jesus lived this in His teachings and mercy, surpassing Solomon's insights in Ecclesiastes by bringing eternal purpose to life "under the sun." Micah 6:8 calls for doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God; Jesus exemplifies this in interactions like healing the leper or dining with tax collectors, showing God's unchanging character across eras.

CONSEQUENCES OF JESUS' BEHAVIOR

Jesus' perfect choices yield both immediate and eternal outcomes, aligning with the series' focus on behavior's results. His obedience is a clear depiction of the Father being well

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pleased. Compassion and humility foster relationships, help believers understand the way of God, but also provoke opposition. Ultimately, His submission to the cross leads to suffering yet achieves redemption: Romans 5:19 states, "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous." His resurrection and exaltation (Philippians 2:8-11) demonstrate that godly behavior results in God's good rewards in the next life.

TIMELESS PRINCIPLES

Jesus' life distills principles for us:

1. Behavior roots in identity and relationship with the Father.
2. Truth confronts error lovingly. Ephesians 4:15 echoes this: speaking truth in love.
3. In conflict, we forgive as He did.
4. In service, we humble ourselves.
5. In temptation, we wield Scripture.
6. Jesus shows that godly behavior begins with a mind that is aligned with God, and a compassion that emulates Christ.

Conclusion: Jesus stands as the pinnacle of human behavior, the Word incarnate who lived wisdom perfectly. From incarnation to resurrection, His choices reflect God's character, offering mercy, truth, and obedience amid a fallen world. He turns vanity into victory, showing how reverence shapes eternal legacy.