

# INTERSECT

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## *College Chat Discussion Starters*

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College Chat: **Christ and the Cross**

### **SESSION 1: THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS**

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#### **Intersect the Word**

- Read Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13—53:12
  - Why do you suppose God used a servant instead of a ruler or a king to redeem the world? How do you think you would react differently if God sent someone other than a servant? How might the world have reacted differently?
  - According to these passages, what will the servant accomplish? What characteristics does the servant display?
  - How does the manner in which Christ came determine the way we ought to live?
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#### **I Need a Man**

The Book of Isaiah (especially chaps. 40—66) speaks much of the Messiah whom we know to be Jesus the Christ. T. W. Willingham has written about Jesus as a human man. In summary he says:

I need a man, for only a man could redeem me. The Father could not do that. Blood is required to redeem me, for “without shedding of blood [there] is no remission of sin” (Hebrews 9:22, KJV).

I need a man—a man who would be tempted as I am tempted: tempted to sin, to fall at the feet of Satan and worship. The Father could not meet this requirement, “for God cannot be tempted with evil” (James 1:13, KJV).

I need a man who did not know how to obey except by the process of learning, for here I find one of my most difficult lessons. Jesus learned obedience by the things which he suffered (Hebrews 5:8, KJV).

I need a man who didn’t know it all. My ignorance is appalling; and at times I have been loathe to ask questions, lest my gross ignorance be revealed; and in so doing I have shut the door to knowledge. Jesus was taught of God (John 8:40, KJV).

I need a man who had the need of ministering angels at times. The Father had no such need and could not unite with me in such an hour as that. In the extreme hours of suffering, “Angels came and ministered unto him” (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43, KJV).

I need a man who could die, and the “one God and Father of all” of whom Paul spoke in Ephesians 4:6 could never die.

I need a man who was poor and despised, one who would stoop to the side of the lowest and give aid to those whom others passed by; a man who cared when others cared not, who

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loved when others hated, who would give when the recipient returned no thanks, who would sacrifice himself for others, even the vilest of men.

I need a man whose righteousness would cancel out my unrighteousness, whose obedience would outweigh my disobedience, whose holiness could atone for my iniquity, whose blood would cleanse my sin.

I need a man who is acquainted with the Father—who has the Father's proven approval and can vouchsafe to me the Father's love.\*

- Do you agree or disagree with Willingham's view of Jesus as a man? Why?
- Is it dangerous to emphasize Jesus' humanity to the exclusion of His divinity?
- If Jesus was not both God and Man, could He have accomplished salvation and reconciliation on our behalf?
- How do you view the earthly life Jesus lived as a man? In what ways do you think Jesus was fully man?

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## **The Sign and Symbol of the Cross**

Every religion and ideology has its visual symbol, which points to its history and beliefs. For example, the beliefs of Buddhism are symbolized by the lotus flower, whose wheel shape depicts the cycle of birth and death, and the emergence of beauty and harmony out of chaos. Judaism has the Star of David, a hexagram formed by two equilateral triangles, which symbolizes God's covenant with David. For Islam, the primary symbol is the crescent, depicting a phase of the moon, as a symbol of sovereignty. For the Marxist, it was the hammer and sickle representing industry and agriculture. The prominent visual symbol of Christianity is the Cross. An emblem of failure and shame, it was chosen by the early Christian church to commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus.

- Why do you think the Church chose the Cross as its universal symbol? You might want to do some research on that question this week using your Bible, concordance, and a Bible handbook.
- If you would like to do some more research on this subject, two very good resources for profitable study on the meaning of the Cross in Christianity are the following:
  - *The Cross of Christ* by John R. W. Stott (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1986).
  - *The Empty Cross of Jesus* by Michael Green (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1984).

\*T. W. Willingham, *Crumbs of Truth About Jesus the Man* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1980), 7-10. Used with permission.