

Consider:

When Jesus sees our faith, what exactly does He see?

Conversation:

In this story Jesus sees people:

1. **Going through the _____.**
Mark 2:2

2. **Going through the _____.**
Mark 2:6-7

3. **Going through the _____!**
Mark 2:3-5, 10-12

Challenge:

When Jesus sees your faith, what exactly does He see?

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SPREAD THE WORD

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MONDAY

FEBRUARY 13, 2012

Detachment

 **MARK 2:14-16**

The name Levi, in Hebrew, means “attached.” One day, Jesus approached Levi, a tax collector, and invited him to follow. When Levi left his tax collection booth and decided to follow Jesus, he left everything he was attached to. He left his attachment to his job, his livelihood, where fellow Jews hated him because he worked for the Romans. He left an attachment to a life where his only friends were the Roman guards who protected the booth from thieves. He left his attachment to a life where he was considered an outcast, a swindler, a sinner, a person unfit to even go to synagogue.

Levi, the “attached,” left it all to follow Jesus. And in his following, Jesus gave him a new life, a new purpose, new friends and a new heart. Jesus also gave him a new name – Matthew – which means “gift of God.” When we follow Christ, we leave behind things we are attached to. Some of these attachments are bad habits, friends who are not good for us, sins we like, and thoughts that bind us. When we follow Christ, He frees us to receive the many gifts He has for us – the most precious being the gift of God himself.

TUESDAY

FEBRUARY 14, 2012

More than a Feeling

 **I CORINTHIANS 13:4-7**

Years ago we had a 15 year-old baby-sitter named Megan. She was telling me about her boyfriend and how in love they were. I asked her, “How do you know you are in love?” She said, “I just feel so good when I am with him.” I thought, “Yuk!” Pizza makes you feel good when you are hungry. A warm bath makes you feel good when you are tired. Is that what love is, whatever makes you feel good? Is love just a warm, fuzzy feeling?

In John 15:12 Jesus commands us to love each other. He doesn't say “my desire for you, my hope for you, my prayer for you” is that you love each other; he *commands* us to love each other. Sure, love has romance and sweet feeling, but it is also an act of the will. Sometimes you don't feel like loving but Jesus says love anyway. Love is not always easy.

Love one another in the same way Jesus loves you: sacrificially, unselfishly, unconditionally and forever. Love will never end and never die when you love like Jesus. Together, with the people you love the most, read I Corinthians 13 today and love like that.

WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 15, 2012

Light in the Darkness

 **MARK 2:17**

Jesus got slammed with criticism because He hung around sinners. His response to His critics was, “Healthy people do not need a doctor, sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.”

Jesus knew it was risky to His reputation but He knew the lost and hurting are not reached by throwing stones from a distance. He ate with sinners. He touched sinners. He was a friend of sinners. It is good news that Jesus loves sinners like you and me!

Amy Grant was deeply criticized when she moved from a purely Gospel music world into the secular world. She was hanging with sinners. She talked about the pain she felt from the criticism of other Christians. I love her response: “Some people think I should stand in the light and give my witness. I believe God has called me to go stand in the dark and shine the light.”

We have to take the light into this dark world. I hope we all get criticized by others for associating with sinners. We will be in the company of Jesus and doing the work He calls us to do.

THURSDAY

FEBRUARY 16, 2012

So Much to Celebrate

 **LUKE 15:7**

Levi is walking away from the tax collector's booth. One might think he would become worried, anxious with the realization that he had just quit his job and had no income. But, just the opposite happened. Levi, walking away from his job, feels the love and peace of God for the first time. Can't you see him shake his head as if to clear out the cobwebs, smile a big grin, throw his arm over Jesus' shoulder and say, “Let's have a party!” The weight of the world has just dropped from Levi's shoulders, and he wants to celebrate.

When the prodigal son came home, his father threw him a party, too. When the woman found the lost coin, she called in her neighbors to celebrate. Revelation teaches us that one day there will be a huge feast, a celebration, in Heaven. When Jesus comes into a life, the heart wants to celebrate. Are you inviting Jesus to a party – every day – where you celebrate the peace, security and love of God, the fact that you are God's child, a citizen of heaven and co-heirs with Christ? We have so much to celebrate!