

No Ordinary Man

*Some people might call reading,
writing, and arithmetic the fundamentals,
but when Jesus entered the classroom of history,
he taught what matters most of all.*

Introduction

A pastor once had a man in his congregation who would from time to time approach him after the message and, with a twinkle in his eye, say, "Well, Pastor, as you got into your message today, the battery in my hearing aid died."

This was code for "I stopped listening when you hit on a topic (giving, holiness, humble service) that I did not want to hear." Apparently, the man had a bad case of Intentional Selective Hearing (ISH). Sadly, he missed out on truth that would have made his life better and drawn him closer to the Savior.

Even in Jesus' day the crowds, religious leaders, and sometimes the disciples themselves suffered from this sickness. They would ignore or even reject what Jesus said.

Two thousand years later, the teaching of Jesus can still be so piercing, convicting, and painfully true that we intentionally, or unintentionally, shut it off. As his followers, we must resist the occasional bout of ISH and cling to every word of the Savior ... even when those words challenge us to the core of our being.

Talk About It

Tell of a time when you read something in the Bible, heard a sermon, or had God bring a truth to your heart that you initially felt like rejecting or disobeying. What helped you finally come to a place where you accepted or embraced that truth?

DVD Teaching Notes

As you watch the video segment for session 24, use the following outline to record anything that stands out to you.

Jesus is the Master Teacher

Jesus taught in parables

Jesus taught directly

Jesus taught through life experiences

DVD Discussion

1. What are some ways we can really tune in and open our hearts, ready to receive the truth God wants to speak in our life?

*Jesus is the Master Teacher ...
teaching us how to align our lives
in the Lower Story according
to God's Upper Story plan.*

2. In one of Jesus' most famous parables he used agricultural language and imagery to teach powerful spiritual truths (Mark 4:1–20; *The Story*, pp. 335–336). What are the four different kinds of soil in this parable and what do they represent?

How can these same things still get in the way of people receiving God's truth and hearing his message?

3. Jesus told three parables about lost things that were found (Luke 15; *The Story*, pp. 337–339). What similar threads run through these stories and what do you learn about the love and heart of God from them?

4. Jesus taught with stories but also in more traditional messages, such as the Sermon on the Mount, where he called his followers to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13–16; *The Story*, p. 341). What was he getting at with this challenge and how can we be salt and light in our daily lives?

5. Jesus taught his followers how to pray, the so-called “Lord’s Prayer” (Matthew 6:9–15; *The Story*, p. 341). This prayer was not given as a set of words to be repeated over and over with no thought to their meaning. Instead, each line was meant as a springboard to lead us through key areas of concern. What themes does Jesus call us to include in our prayers and how can his words move us to a deeper place of prayer?

We are hungry, need daily bread, hold grudges, and experience stumbles into temptation. This is the Lower Story. So, we cry out to God to meet us in our Lower Story, and he does.

6. Randy noted a third way that Jesus taught: using real-life situations as occasions to communicate deep spiritual truth. Why are real-life situations a good way to teach, particularly for parents and grandparents?

7. What lesson did Jesus teach after Peter tried to walk on the water (Matthew 14:22–33; *The Story*, pp. 348–349), and how can we learn from this lesson today?

8. Jesus is the Master Teacher, and that makes every Christian a student. What is one area of your life in which you feel God wants you to become a humble student and receive the teaching of Jesus?

9. Read movement 5 of *The Story* (p. 11 of this participant’s guide). How does the hope of heaven help you understand God’s work in your life today?