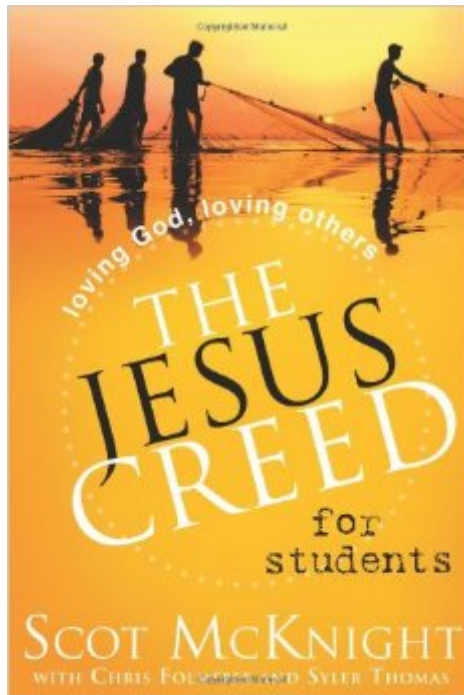


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The Jesus Creed For Students: Loving God, Loving Others



Synopsis

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Book Information

Paperback: 112 pages

Publisher: Paraclete Press (April 1, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 155725883X

ISBN-13: 978-1557258830

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.4 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (3 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Recently, Paraclete Press sent me a review copy of "The Jesus Creed for Students" by uber blogger and biblical studies professor Scot McKnight (with help from two youth guys, Syler Thomas and Chris Folmsbee). McKnight has three versions of this book, the first of which easily makes my top 10. The second version ("40 Days Living the Jesus Creed") is a devotional lent-based book. I strongly recommend any of the three to you, dear reader. Actually, pick up anything written by McKnight if you get the chance. The first JC is by far my favorite, but can be academic and unapproachable for some (it is a college-level book). If you are concerned by the thickness of the

first, or just want to get the gist, "The Jesus Creed for Students" is right up your alley. I appreciate that McKnight has recently rekindled his heart toward youth and young adult ministries. It is evident throughout his blog, and now his book writing, that McKnight understands the importance of all ages in the Kingdom of God. He also understands that adolescents deal with unique challenges. Where most student literature is paltry in depth and entirely situational, JC4S is different. Scot et al focus on the simplicity of Jesus. They bring out some cultural nuance (though not nearly as much as the original). They focus on how Jesus should make a difference in our life today. Perhaps my favorite aspect of the book is that it encourages students to look up these stories of Jesus on their own. Students are encouraged to pray the Lord's Prayer and Jesus Creed (the two greatest commandments) in the morning, at night, and any time they think to in between. JC4S is a book about transformation through proximity to Jesus. If we think the way He thinks, we will live the way He lived.

What defines the Christian faith? Historically, councils, denominations, bishops, congregations, and theologians have attempted to answer that question with creeds, systemic theologies, credos, and other statements of faith. Some have been relatively brief and others have been extensive, and what's essential to one might not be essential to another. History also shows that not everyone follows the dictum of Rupert Meldenius that in "essentials unity, in nonessentials, liberty, and in all things charity." An evangelical college professor (North Park University), biblical scholar, author (The Blue Parakeet: Rethinking How You Read the Bible, among others), and blogger (Jesus Creed), Scot McKnight has proposed an answer to this question, which he calls the Jesus Creed. That creed can be simply stated as "loving God, loving others," which briefly restates the two great commandments established in the Pentateuch and reaffirmed by Jesus (Mk. 12:29-31). The Jesus Creed for Students takes this concept, which McKnight first developed in The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others (Paraclete, 2004), and applies it to the needs of high school students - with the assistance of Chris Folmsbee and Syler Thomas. Folmsbee, director of a youth ministry training organization called Barefoot Ministries, and Thomas, a youth pastor in Lake Forest, IL, are credited with helping McKnight focus the book toward a younger audience than he's probably used to working with.

The Jesus Creed for Students is an accessible look at what can be a life altering understanding of what it means to follow Jesus. To say that we are supposed to love God and love others is a simple statement that will take a life time to live out. This short book takes the concept and puts in terms

that most students won't struggle to understand. The content of the book is incredibly relevant to the needs of teens. Issues of identity and worth are looked at through God's eyes, and I believe it could offer students hope out of the endless cycle of trying to find worth in fads or social acceptance. It's worth the price of the book for Chapter 5 alone, as it deals with the importance of forgiveness. I've found that this is the most difficult topic for teens to wrestle with, especially when it refers to forgiveness of one's enemies. Teens have real enemies in their social lives and the call to love them is a great challenge. At the end of chapter 11, "You are Jesus (seriously.)" I made the following note, "What an arresting chapter, I hope they devour it." This book looks seriously at our role as Jesus' embodied presence in the world today. It is convicting in ways that typical church speak misses. It calls us to a life that submits to our vocation to be Jesus' representatives to the people around us, while recognizing that we do so as clay pots, imperfect vessels for God's perfect love. On the whole I love this book and I'm looking forward to doing it as a small group with my high school students this summer. At times it seems that there was too much effort made to sponge out the "church language" and that muddies the water a bit, but this is rather rare and the book as a whole is pretty clear.

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