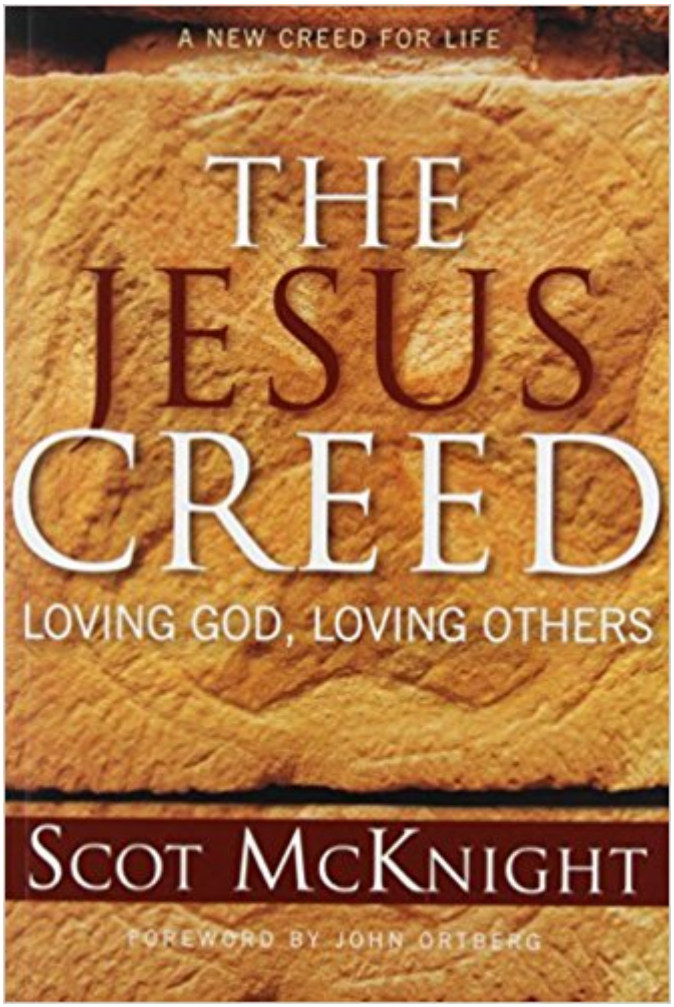
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The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others



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Synopsis

Winner of the 2005Ã Â Christianity Today Book Award When an expert in the law asked Jesus for the greatest commandment, Jesus responded with the Shema, the ancient Jewish creed that commands Israel to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength. But the next part of Jesus' answer would change the course of history. Jesus amended the Shema, giving his followers a new creed for life: to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, but also to love others as themselves. Discover how the Jesus Creed of love for God and others can transform your life.

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Customer Reviews

Amid a sea of books on Christian spiritual formation, McKnight, professor of religious studies at North Park University in Chicago, brings us a simple, highly readable one focused on the weightiest teaching of Jesus: love God and love others as yourself. The "Jesus Creed" of the title is a trimmed down version of the Shema of Judaism (Deut. 6:4Ã¢â ¬â œ9), which declares we are to love God with all our being, amended to include caring for one's neighbor as oneself (Lev. 19:18). Packed with vivid and touching storiesÃ¢â ¬â •from the Bible, history and the author's lifeÃ¢â ¬â •this book covers important aspects of what it means to love God and others. McKnight shows great respect for the Jewish heritage of Jesus and offers readers scholarly, yet highly accessible, illustrations of the sociocultural landscape of first-century Palestine. The book is slim on doctrine, making no comment on the thorny theological squabbles that divide many Christians. That's refreshing for the reader tired of the squabbling, but may leave others wondering what love does require in certain

difficult situations. Still, this book is an excellent introduction to Christian spirituality. Its pages glow with compassion, generosity and the invitation to understand what was important to Jesus and what is crucial for Christianity. Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

This fascinating book explains that the gospel is about the restoration of "cracked Eikons" (fallen humans) so that humans can be in union with God and in communion with the saints. In the candid and lucid style that has made McKnight's THE JESUS CREED so appealing to thousands of pastors, lay leaders, and everyday people who are searching for a more authentic faith, he encourages all Christians to recognize the simple, yet potentially transforming truth of the gospel message: God seeks to restore us to wholeness not only to make us better individuals, but to form a community of Jesus, a society in which humans strive to be in union with God and in communion with others. Prisim ePistle July 26, 2006 With a degree of theological insight that is refreshingly "meaty," The Jesus Creed is an excellent resource for anyone desiring life-changing, Christ-centered, spiritual growth. CBA Marketplace September 24, 2004 Amid a sea of books on Christian spiritual formation, McKnight brings us a simple, highly readable one focused on the weightiest teaching of Jesus: love God and love others as yourself. . . . McKnight shows great respect for the Jewish heritage of Jesus and offers readers scholarly, yet highly accessible, illustrations of the sociocultural landscape of first century Palestine. Publishers Weekly August 24, 2004 <hr>

The Jesus Creed - Loving God, Loving Others by Scot McKnightSummary by G. Stephen GoodeFrom the Preface --"A Jewish expert on the law once asked Jesus what was the most important thing for spiritual formation. Jesus' answer turned history upside down for those who followed him. This book is an invitation for you to explore Jesus' answer to that man. I call it the Jesus Creed, and what he said should shape everything we say about Christian spirituality. Everything."Jesus knows what life is all about. He was born into a Jewish family and culture but he was more than Jewish. He took the Shema which was central to Judaism but he added to it to make it the Jesus Creed. It is simple, yet it will cost us our lives, living it out. Love God. Love others. It is central to who Jesus was and is the core of who we should/can become. Jesus gave us the Creed and a model to follow.Dr. McKnight is a Old Testament scholar but he does not write like one. I have to admit that I sought out this book because of the loving others part. I think we in the church should be doing that better and more often in order to demonstrate the love of God to the Muslim, Hindu,

Buddhist, animist, to the poor and other unreached worlds. It also has to be integrated. Loving God and Loving others is like a coin. You cannot have one side without the other and yet it seems like we continue to get pulled from one side or another. Either just loving God or loving one's neighbor. We cannot do one without the other. God help us to be more like Jesus.This book helped me a great deal as I started reading it during our response to the Asian tsunami. Loving God and our neighbor has been there from the beginning. Listening to those who suffer, entering into their grief and bearing their burdens helps us to fulfill the love of Christ. Compassion in the Jesus Creed is on every page of this book just like it is in the four Gospels. I think we forget that sometimes but Jesus did not. That is why He made it the center.From page 117"Jesus doesn't act in compassion in order to dazzle people into adoring him. He acts out of love and to transform the life of the grieving person. The widow gets her son back and has an income again. The prostitute's life is transformed from impurity to purity. Each woman of Luke 8 - Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna and others - has a special story to tell about what Jesus has done: one tells a story of spiritual cleansing, another of physical healing, and others(if I may guess) of learning that Roman money is to be distributed to the needy, including Jesus. Wealthy women at the time of Jesus-- and these women were evidently wealthy -- did not pay taxes. Instead, if they had good hearts, they distributed their funds to charities. The chosen charity of these women was Jesus, whom they support and follow his entire life. It is these same women who become witnesses of Jesus' death and resurrection....."So may we continue to love God and others and fulfill the same creed that Jesus did.

InÃ Â The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others, Scot McKnight introduces us to a new way of approaching life organized around what he believes was the central truth in the life of Jesus "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."As a good Jew in the first century, Jesus would have been expected to make the Shema (Hear, O Israel)...his primary confession of faith, and he did. To this Jesus added the confession that we should love our neighbor. These central truths dictated Jesus' teaching and his living and even his prayer. Because they were central to Jesus, they should guide our lives as well.From that truth, McKnight goes on to show how this thinking is seen throughout the New Testament and works its way into the relationship that Christians are called to have with Jesus and with others. Our love for God and our love for others is what life is all about. McKnight organizes his thinking around central biblical stories and sprinkles in many helpful stories from the lives of Christians. The book is also strengthened by many quotations from spiritual

giants from the early church through the present. This is an excellent work on what it means to live the Christian life.

There have been many volumes of books written on the subject of spiritual formation, some forming their arguments listing for the reader some fundamental disciplines to be considered for spiritual growth. In "Jesus Creed" written by a prolific New Testament scholar, Scot McKnight who is also a ardent blogger for a blog with the same name as the book, has written a volume specifically on spiritual formation. But his direction takes the reader into a different direction. McKnight invites his readers to discover what Jesus' answer to spiritual formation was. It is a fresh approach to spiritual formation one that focuses on how Jesus would present his direction upon it.McKnight's book is divided into five parts on which he weaves around the understanding of what he calls Jesus Creed; Jesus' answer to spiritual formation. Those five parts can be divided again into two sections that I have identified by which the first explores the foundation and vision of the Jesus Creed and the second part is a response to the creed.In the first section of the book McKnight presents his thesis of his book. It starts with a creed which is a statement of truth that forms as a mechanism of recitation for someone. Jesus' creed is not something Jesus invented out of the blue. As McKnight explains, it is Jesus' amendment of the Shema which can be found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5, a Jewish creed and combined that with Leviticus 19:18. In a nutshell the creed focuses on Loving God and loving others. According to McKnight this was what formed Jesus, his creed and it was the answer he gave when he was asked what was important for life by a Jewish expert on the Law. McKnight goes on to developed imprints of this creed in the prayer Jesus taught his disciples and making expositions of the creed to give a clear understanding of what it is. As he develops this he directs the reader's attention to those who have experienced the Jesus Creed in the form of characters in the gospel. The creed is not just merely directed at personal formation but hinged to a larger vision which is connected to a society that is formed and living out the Jesus Creed to impact a larger scope of life; the world.The second section which focuses on a response to the fundamental vision of the Jesus Creed dealt with in another two parts. The first part is McKnight's exposition of how someone responds in devotion to Jesus as the creed entails that following Jesus is how God would see someone loving him. And what it means to follow Jesus is to love him. The second part of the second section requires the reader to respond by participating in the life of Jesus. Correct devotion is not just a heart bent posture. It needs completion, and that completion is the participation in the life of Jesus which initiates action. Here McKnight focuses on six important events in the gospels to carry the point through.Most of the things that McKnight presents in the book are not new but I

would consider them as fresh undertakings especially in the direction of spiritual formation. Many have written on spiritual formation introducing readers to ancient practices such as contemplation, solitude, lectio divinia and many others which are good and they are indeed important. Coupled with this the direction has been to get some biblical reference to support the bulk of their argument. But not many writers have explored what Jesus might think about the whole dimension of spiritual formation. McKnight has a clever way of presenting this and argues in the direction of a New Testament scholar and his findings are a welcome addition to spiritual formation. The important thing to note here is that McKnight sees the formation of a creed for recitation and meditation used for the formation of the believer. The constant recitation and meditation of a creed, in this manner the creed Jesus formed had dimensions forms within the individual a thought vision of responding to it. This is not a usual practice undertaken by myself personally or the church which I attend but it encourages a deep reflection of what matters most to Jesus.There is much to agree with the author on what he calls the Jesus creed. A minor question would rather be "Did Jesus actually recited it as McKnight had presented?" Well that could be a side issue judging from the fact that Jews were people who did a lot of recitation and that could have given weight to the probability of the argument. But what is important here is the fact that Jesus did hold to the fact that loving God and loving others were things that were foundational for people who wanted to obey and worship God. So for me there is nothing for me to disagree with the book.In reading the book the author has widened my vision on spiritual formation. Devotion to God is not just an inner affair which we are called to privatize form others. But like what McKnight presents in his book spiritual formation is very much engaging. The initial response to loving God by following Jesus entails another perspective which we commonly neglect which is loving others as well. For Jesus that was an integral part in what he calls for as foundational tenants in what was important in life. The book is also strong on community and gives a strong argument for the importance of church, the community that is founded by people who share a common faith found in Jesus. It is good for a book promoting spiritual formation to hold this as important because in the modern age, spirituality is only viewed as a private affair.I have also gained a new appreciation on reciting a creed. Once thought of as mechanical and dead has now been resurrected as a new thing to rediscover and learn. Reciting a creed is very much connected with the discipline of meditation, contemplation and prayer all at once and that could be a helpful thing in reminding me of what matters most to God and in that manner reminded to live what is being prayerfully meditated out in real life. There are many strengths and help that the book has gleaned on me but the most important thing that it contributes is that devotion to God entails us to follow his son, Jesus. But we are not to stop there, people matter and as the

creed helps unfolds, we are to love others as well.

While this book will be viewed as too elementary by some serious theologians, I find that it touches me at the foundations of my faith. It's always worthwhile to be reminded of the heart of worship and our calling to serve the Lord. This is an easy read, but well worth the effort for Christians at any point in their walk of faith.

Good

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