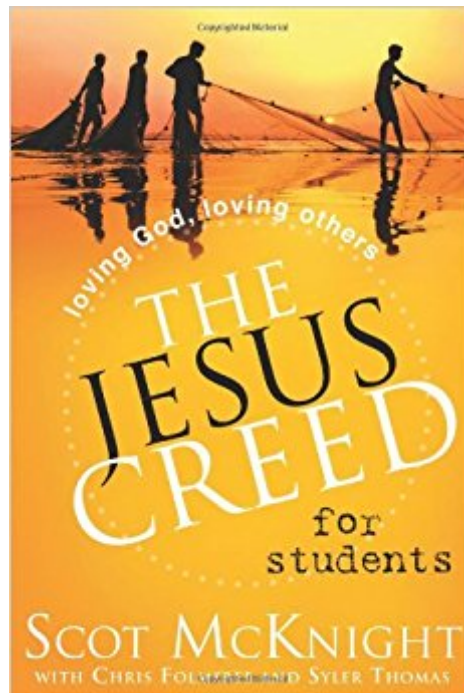




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The Jesus Creed For Students: Loving God, Loving Others



Synopsis

The essence of Jesus's moral vision is this: His followers are to love God and to love others with everything they've got. Love is not one of the virtues but the essence and summary of all virtue. Scot McKnight calls this double commandment to love "The Jesus Creed." We can't wait until we're adults to begin loving God and loving

others. The Jesus Creed for Students is practical, filled with stories, backed up and checked by youth pastors, and it includes questions for further study.

Book Information

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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. The only thing missing in this book, hence only 4 stars, is a decent set of discussion questions for each chapter. The book isn't just about information, but a good discussion will make the content accessible for more learning styles. As such, it is a better read individually than with a group. Soon there will be a video discussion curriculum, though. To sum up, this book is good enough for me to use with my group of students, and that actually means something. We will be using it for a small group this summer.

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. Thus, the concepts and basic framework are McKnight's but the style is somewhat different from what I've become accustomed to as I've read his other work. Being that it's been a while since I was either a high school student or a youth minister, I decided to read this book from the perspective of a left of center Mainline Protestant pastor who's been asked to recommend resources for youth to use in deepening their faith. As I began to read the book, I started with the assumption that the author stands to my theological right (although I didn't read the original Jesus Creed book, I've read enough of his works to get a good sense of his theology). From that standpoint, I decided that this book would be very appropriate for most Mainline Protestants. That's not to say that it is liberal. It's just straightforward biblically based wisdom. The point of the book is to help high school students understand what it means to love God and love others. He does this by not only focusing his attention on the great two commandments, but also the Sermon on the Mount, which stands at the heart of this conversation. In the course of this conversation he discusses the beatitudes, wherein he distinguishes between blessedness and happiness, which he says "describes the person whose central principle is 'love myself'" (p. 21). The discussion continues on by addressing Jesus' expectations (Jesus' expansion of the law) and what he calls spiritual branding, by which he means seeking to impress God and other people with our spirituality. Later chapters explore the Lord's Prayer, forgiveness, one's priorities in life, discipleship, and how one understands the person of Jesus. Finally, he invites the reader to be a "boundary breaker." In this final chapter McKnight he invites the reader to consider what it means to follow Jesus by taking up a life of ministry (not professional ministry, but ministry in general), a calling that three characteristics: forgiveness, fellowship, and freedom. In the closing sentences of this chapter he suggests that "loving God and loving others is the path we are made to travel, and that when we love others genuinely, forgiveness and fellowship and freedom flow like a river" (p. 100). Although this book could be used in a bible study, it's really designed for personal use. McKnight invites the reader to begin each day by reciting the Jesus Creed and then recite the Lord's Prayer each evening, so that these foundational Christian statements can penetrate the heart and mind. Again, the idea here is to establish habits (reciting the Jesus Creed in the morning and the Lord's Prayer at bedtime) that will inform the moral vision of the young person. Although I'm neither a youth nor a youth minister, and so I can't speak to whether the style is appropriate to the audience, I do believe that this book should prove to be a valuable resource for helping young people develop a moral vision and a deeply rooted Christian faith, whether they're Evangelical, Catholic, or Mainline Protestant. I might

quibble with something that's said here or there, but there's nothing that stands out as a barrier to this being used by youth in my church. After all the premise here is to imbibe the vision that we are called to love God and love others! This book was provided for review by Paraclete Press

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