

Why People Need Jesus

Four deep needs every person has, and how Jesus meets each one

But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

MATTHEW 9:36

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	Under the surface, everyone you know has four deep needs: meaning, focus, hope, and clarity. People try to fill them in many ways, but only Jesus truly meets them. Seeing these needs helps us understand our own hearts, and helps us care for our friends the way Jesus does.
SCRIPTURE	Matthew 9:36 · John 10:11 · Luke 10:38-42 · Psalm 42:5 · 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 16 · Matthew 11:28 · Psalm 119:105 · John 8:12 · Colossians 1:17
LENGTH	About 20 minutes
BEST FOR	Middle school and high school; works well for an outreach night
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles; a handful of puzzle pieces from a jigsaw puzzle, and the puzzle box with its picture

Start here: what Jesus saw

When Jesus looked at the crowds, He didn't see an audience. "He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). He saw people with deep needs. Let's look at four of them, and at how Jesus meets each one.

1 People lack real meaning and direction

Sheep without a shepherd wander. They don't know where food or safety is, and they're easy prey. Many students feel the same way: "What's the point? Where is my life going?" They chase grades, popularity, or the next thing, but still feel lost.

Jesus meets this need. He said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (John 10:11). He doesn't just point the way; He leads us, and He gave His life to bring us home.

2 People struggle with distraction

When Jesus visited Martha and Mary, "Martha was distracted with much serving" (Luke 10:40). Jesus gently told her, "You are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part" (10:41-42).

Today we're more distracted than ever: notifications, games, videos, endless scrolling. Even good things can crowd out what matters most.

Jesus meets this need. He is the "one thing" that brings everything else into focus. Time at His feet, listening to His Word, quiets the noise.

3 People get distressed, defeated, discouraged, and depressed

The psalmist asked himself, "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God" (Psalm 42:5). Life knocks people down: family problems, broken friendships, failure, loss.

Jesus meets this need. He invites, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Paul knew hard times, yet he wrote, "We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair" (2 Corinthians 4:8). "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (4:16).

IF YOU'RE REALLY STRUGGLING

Jesus cares about your whole life, and He often helps us through people. Depression can be a real medical condition, and getting help from a parent, pastor, counselor, or doctor is not a lack of faith. If you ever feel hopeless or think about hurting yourself, tell a trusted adult right away. In the U.S., you can call or text **988** (the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) any time.

ILLUSTRATION

Hand out a few puzzle pieces. Ask: "Can you tell what the picture is?" Probably not. Life without Jesus can feel like a pile of pieces that don't fit: events, feelings, and questions with no big picture. Then hold up the box. Jesus is the picture on the box. "He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17), meaning that in Him everything holds together.

4 People lack clarity

Many people don't know what's true, what's right, or how to decide. Opinions are everywhere, and they change constantly.

Jesus meets this need. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). And Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12). God's Word shows us the next step, and Jesus Himself is the light.

What this means for you

First, look at your own heart. Which of these needs do you feel most? Bring it to Jesus. Then look around. The students at your school aren't just classmates; they're sheep without a shepherd. Ask Jesus to give you His compassion for them, and be ready to point them to the Shepherd.

TALK IT OVER

1. What do you think Jesus saw when He looked at the crowds in Matthew 9:36?
2. Which of the four needs do you see most in students today?
3. What distracts you most from the "one thing" that is needed?
4. How does the puzzle illustration help explain what Jesus does in a person's life?
5. Who is one friend who seems like a "sheep without a shepherd"? How could you show them Jesus' compassion?

TAKE IT HOME

This week, ask Jesus to let you see people the way He does. Write down the names of three friends and next to each, the need you think they feel most. Pray for them by name every day, and look for a chance to share how Jesus meets that need.

Meaning, focus, hope, and light: everyone needs Jesus.

From fifty years of youth ministry by **Ron Whittam**. Share freely with your students and leaders. · The Youth Ministry Living Room · qrprogramming.com/livingroom

Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.