

The Twelve:

JUDAS

BIO

Name: Judas Iscariot - Judas means praise or God leads.

Marital Status: Unknown

Home town: Kerioth. The Hebrew word for Iscariot means 'man of the village of Keriyoth'. Kerioth was about 25 km south of Hebron, in southern Judea, Israel. Judas was from the tribe of Judah, the same as Jesus.

Profession: Unknown

Age: 25-30 years old (unreliable source)

Relatives: Father: Simon Iscariot (John 6:71)

Social status: Unknown, but again from unreliable sources, these state that he must have been an educated man to be trusted as the treasurer.

Personality: Devious, underhanded, sold out to money and greed, despicable, a coward, untrustworthy, hypocritical, a disappointment and a betrayer!

Best remembered for: Selling Jesus out for 30 pieces of silver, and betraying Jesus with a kiss.

Position amongst the twelve: His name is always mentioned last in the list of disciples, and is accompanied by the statement that he betrayed Jesus. He was appointed by Jesus to be the treasurer. (John 12:6; 13:29)

Death: After realising what he done to Jesus, he hung himself.

LESSONS WE LEARN FROM JUDAS' LIFE

Acts 1:17-20

For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) “For it is written in the Book of Psalms, “May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it’; and “‘Let another take his office.’

There are three things we can pick out from the Scriptures about Judas that are relevant for us today:

- 1. He never responded to correction**
- 2. We have a choice over our future**
- 3. The love of money destroys**

Let's take a look at each of these.

1. He never responded to correction

Correction is part of the discipleship process. When we look at the Gospels we see that Peter seems have more character flaws than Judas. Without knowing the story, we could easily say that if any one of the disciples was going to fall away, it was going to be Peter. He seems so unstable, always putting his foot into it, doing the wrong thing, and receives repeated correction and rebuke. Jesus rebuked Peter by saying, “Get behind me Satan!” while Judas receives only a mild rebuke in John 12 when Mary anoints Jesus' feet.

John 12:3-8

Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, “Why was this ointment not sold for

three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

Judas knew that he could get that money from the perfume if it had come into the treasury. He then reacts to this mild rebuke from Jesus and later on (after the Last Supper) runs to the Jewish authorities to sell Jesus out for just one month's salary (30 pieces of silver). It's not like he could live luxuriously or pay off any debts with it! Why is it that Peter could take such hard correction but Judas can't even handle the mildest of corrections?

See, Judas reacts while Peter responds. Peter sticks with it. After correction he always comes back, he always puts up his hand to do what's necessary, and he loved the presence of the Lord (Matthew 17:1-7). The challenge in the process of being Christ-followers is do you respond and can you be corrected? Only you and God know the answer to that question. Can you be challenged? When you connect with people with Biblical values, do you find yourself challenged? Do you duck and dive or do you respond to God? When leaders come alongside you and challenge you about what's in your life, how do you react? It will come.

John 13:27-30

Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

Judas' state got so bad because he never knew how to take correction and then Satan himself entered him - not a minion but the CEO of evil himself! The enemy's plan was to get Jesus killed, not knowing that God's plan was to turn that into a victory, but we see that possession was the end result of not responding to Jesus' correction.

Correction goes against our human nature. Nevertheless, we must respond to it. When a leader confronts you on something, what are you going to do? Leave this church for another where they just leave you alone? If you have stuff in your life that needs to be

corrected you need to submit and respond, otherwise you will always be running.

Judas chose disobedience! At most, he only ever changed his mind about what he did and then he responded to that by hanging himself. There was no real repentance and therefore no restoration.

James 1:12-18

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

2. We have a choice over our future

Ephesians 1:3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Are we like lab-rats put in a maze? Are we nothing but biological robots? We must ask this question otherwise none of us have hope for a future. Our hope today is that we can change through Christ giving us the strength and power and understanding. Paul encouraged Timothy this way - in 2 Timothy 2 he tells him to flee youthful lusts and become a vessel of gold. We can't let our life's work be wood, hay and stubble.

In Christ, we are all chosen for salvation. The whole world is chosen for salvation but not all accept. We have to understand that God chooses and that man has free will. We cannot believe that people are chosen for salvation and others for destruction. There is a brand of teaching that says that, but that's when the idea of predestination is taken to its ungodly conclusion.

Here's the thing - God knows, he foreknows it all. He knows everyone's decision and wills that all men be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). Does that confuse you? Actually, it should. The key issue is that we need to choose the destiny God has for our lives - if salvation is offered to you, what should you do? Choose salvation.

Do you feel that you're chosen to be the Judas in your group of friends? You're wrong. We've got to take hold of the opportunities God gives us. None of us have been chosen for insignificance. Every single one of us have been chosen in Christ for something specific. We all have a destiny in God.

Was Judas made to betray Jesus? Jesus picked him out as one of his disciples to turn the world upside down for the Gospel. Jesus saw potential in him for the Gospel. But Judas chose destruction.

"If I find it taught in part of the Bible that everything is foreordained, that is true; and if I find in another Scripture, that man is responsible for all his actions, that is true; and is only my folly that leads me to imagine that these two truths can ever contradict each other. I do not believe they can ever be welded into one upon any earthly anvil, but they certainly shall be one in eternity. They are two lines that are so nearly parallel, that the human mind that pursues them farthest will never discover that they converge, but they do converge, and they will meet somewhere in eternity, close to the throne of God, whence all truth doth springs." - Charles Spurgeon

What's interesting is that Judas never called Jesus "Lord" like the other disciples. He only called him "Rabbi", meaning "teacher." Is Judas in heaven or hell? From the Scriptural evidence he doesn't seem to have made Jesus his Lord. But, hopefully in the throes of death he reached out to Jesus.

3. The love of money destroys

Who is this relevant to? Us. Think about how Johannesburg was founded - because of a gold rush. Lots of bad things happened because of money. That spirit lives here and we need to overcome it. In this city we can all get into that hamster wheel and have to keep pedalling otherwise we're going to get smacked in the back of the head. So we need to constantly address this issue of finance - Jesus continuously about it, with some commentators saying that two thirds of his teachings included something about money and stewardship!

The love of money corrupts and destroys. Judas obviously showed an aptitude for good stewardship, which is why Jesus put him in charge of the treasury, but he didn't overcome his love for money.

1 Corinthians 4:2

Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

Every one of us has been given some sphere of influence. Whatever comes your way, God is requiring you as a steward to be found faithful.

2 Corinthians 8:20-21

We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, for we aim at what is honourable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man.

Judas allowed the slow rot of entitlement and privilege to take place. At first, you dip into the bag because no one will notice and you're in need of something, believing you're in control. But eventually, the bag is in control of you and owns you!

Truth ignored is disobedience. Judas chose to walk in the dark, disobeying and

rebellious against God's word. It's not just about not doing the wrong thing, it's also about doing the right thing. You can't not act on the truth. Judas should have gone to Jesus and told him that the burden of being the treasurer was too much. That would have been a response to Christ and would have gotten his heart sorted out. And he had plenty of moments to do that - he heard every teaching Jesus taught on money! He was there!

Matthew 6:19-24

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Judas was there when Jesus taught this, but never responded.

Matthew 19:21-23

Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

And Jesus said **to his disciples**, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.

Judas was there when this happened, but never responded. Judas would have seen how money owned the rich man in the event above, but never responded.

The challenge from this scripture above is this: whatever you think owns you, can you give it away?

1 Timothy 6:6-10

But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. **For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.** It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Judas didn't have a real relationship with Jesus. He never called Jesus "Lord" like the other disciples but only ever "teacher" (Matthew 26). The only way we can counter a love for money is by having a real relationship with Jesus. We cannot allow what we have to own us, so therefore let's handle finances God's way! This will test our hearts like nothing else.

Obedience is the best way to condition your heart. Tithes is Old Testament - it was law and if you didn't do it there were consequences. Today we don't respond to it as Law but we do use it as a guideline to discipline our heart. God pays every one of us and we must be good stewards of what he's given us.

2 Corinthians 8:7

But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you – see that you excel in this act of grace [the context is GIVING] also.

We need to excel in the grace of generosity. When it comes to followership this is going to be one of the biggest issues which are always going to distract us. The cares of this world and riches of this life can easily drag us down. Do you want to be free? We're looking at this subject of being followers of Christ and we don't want anything else to own us. Let us be free in this.

QUESTIONS WE NEED TO CHALLENGE OURSELVES WITH

- 1. Do we respond to God in the discipleship process and can we be corrected?**
- 2. Are we intentional in choosing God's best for our lives? Or have we become fatalists?**
- 3. Has the love of money gripped our hearts?**