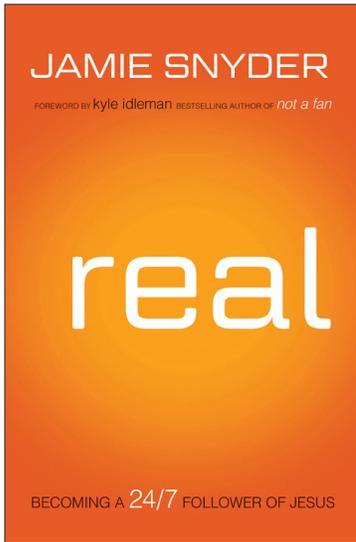




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH JAMIE SNYDER



1. *Real* is a simple, yet bold title for a book on following Jesus. How did you choose this title?

Real captures the essence of this book, but also explains its purpose. Many Christians, including myself for many years, have settled for a life less than what Christ has called us to. In John 10:10, Jesus says, “I have come to give you life and life to the fullest.” It isn’t difficult to hear Jesus saying, “I have come to give you REAL life.” The REAL life Jesus has called his followers into is about far more than showing up at a building at a certain time on a certain day of the week.

2. In the first chapter you ask a provocative and perhaps uncomfortable question: “If Sunday didn’t exist, would anyone know you were a follower of Jesus?” When did that question cross your mind for the first time?

During the Thanksgiving season of 2011 my wife asked if I had been considering writing a book. Though I had dreamed of writing a book, doing so felt a bit unrealistic because as a lead pastor I am constantly preparing to teach and preach on a weekly basis, which leaves very little time for creative writing. However, the very next week I was driving down the highway and the “If Sunday didn’t exist” question hit me in my heart and mind. I literally felt like God whispered the question into the depths of my soul and I began writing that night. The question haunted me a bit in the beginning, because for the first twenty years of my life, though I grew up in the church, I would have had to answer the question with a resounding NO.

3. Who did you write for specifically?

Real was written for anyone who claims to be a follower of Christ. All of us can benefit from self-reflection, which is often the key to transformation. Any Christ-follower who believes they are beyond honest self-reflection in regard to their faith, is the person in most need of it.

4. What was the greatest challenge you faced during the writing of this book?

The greatest challenge by far was trying to reduce the REAL life Jesus has invited us into down to words. There is one place in the book where I acknowledge the inevitability of failure in my attempt to articulate REAL life. Beyond the difficulty of articulating the nature of REAL life, I am only beginning to live such a life myself. As Paul said when writing to the Philippians, “Not that I have already obtained all of this...” (Philippians 3:12). Anyone who reads this book needs to know up front that I in no way claim to be an expert on what it is and what it means to follow Christ. However, in the midst of my imperfection and limited understanding, I desire to learn and help others learn about the life Christ offers.

5. You talk about how for generations Christianity has been largely defined by the Sunday morning worship experience. How have we gotten to this place and what can we do to get away from the “Sunday best” pressure that you refer to?

For generations Christianity has been largely defined by the Sunday morning worship experience because it is the most basic, tangible expression of our faith. Unfortunately for many Christians, including myself for many years, the Sunday worship experience is not only the most tangible expression of our faith, but the only expression. I think the best way to get away from the “Sunday best” pressure begins with acknowledging the reality of it. In other words, if we are willing to expose the reality of the situation, we can then challenge one another to a greater level of sincerity and transparency. When we come to the realization that Sunday is certainly sacred

JAMIE SNYDER

FOREWORD BY Kyle Idleman BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *not a fan*

real

BECOMING A 24/7 FOLLOWER OF JESUS

Real

Becoming a 24/7 Follower of Jesus

by Jamie Snyder

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but at the same time simply an extension of our 24/7 faith, there is no longer the pressure on Sunday to be someone other than who we really are. The Christian community should be the easiest place to exhibit and experience transparency, and yet at times the opposite is true.

6. How can we keep Sunday sacred without it becoming about rules and regulations?

Sunday can remain sacred by placing appropriate significance on the day without using it as a tool to measure our faith or the faith of others. In our weakest moments, Sunday gets used as an opportunity to keep score on ourselves and others. A Sunday worship gathering is beautiful, holy, and compelling when we are reminded that the experience is not about us but about God. Perhaps it is best said like this: Sunday becomes sacred and remains sacred when we view the time not as an opportunity to consume, but to be consumed by the love of God. When we treat Sunday as an opportunity to consume, what is intended to be sacred becomes secular.

7. How has our call to pick up our cross, as you say, “gotten lost in translation?”

In the first century the invitation to pick up a cross meant one thing . . . suffering and death was soon to follow. People living in the first century did not need anyone to explain to them the implications of carrying a cross; they had seen the real thing too many times. These days a cross is most often seen as a decoration, a piece of jewelry, or an accessory, and so much meaning has been lost. Though Christians are still inclined to think about carrying a cross as a symbol of suffering, we oftentimes misunderstand or misinterpret the level of commitment we are agreeing to by picking up our cross and following Jesus. When we agree to follow Jesus, we are not simply saying we are willing to endure a tough day on the job, difficult relationships, or ridicule on behalf of Jesus. We are agreeing to follow him into death, so we can follow him into REAL life. Bottom line, carrying a cross is not a matter of mere inconvenience or discomfort, or even a matter of life and death. Carrying a cross is a matter of death.

8. What advice would you give to someone before they read *Real*?

Do not approach this book as a measurement of whether or not you are really a Christian. I believe there have been books written that have left readers thinking they are on the outside looking in, or at least that they fall short. If you approach *Real* with this mind-set, you will miss the message. So as you read, don't get lost wondering, “Am I in or am I out?” Rather, through challenge, inspiration, and conviction, allow your appetite to be whetted in regard to the life that is not only possible in Christ, but the life he has invited you to live.

9. Why do you think books on following Jesus continue to top the bestseller lists?

I believe among Christians there is a general sense we have settled for something less. This sense of holy discontent is not confined to one denomination, socio-economic level, or demographic group, but has crossed all lines. I believe God is breathing a new wind of revival in his church, and it may begin with the question, “If Sunday didn't exist, would anyone know you are a follower of Christ?” And the question is not rhetorical.

Additional Talking Points:

- What it meant to be a disciple of a rabbi in the first century.
- How *Real* differs from or complement other works, such as *Not a Fan* and *Radical*.