

## NOOMA VIDEO DESCRIPTIONS<sup>1</sup>

### ***001 Rain***

Things don't always work out the way we want them to, or the way we think they will. Sometimes we don't even see it coming. We get hit with some form of pain out of nowhere leaving us feeling desperate and helpless. That's the way life is. Still, it makes us wonder how God can let these things happen to us. How God can just stand by and watch us suffer. Where is God when it really hurts? Maybe God is actually closer to us than we think. Maybe it's when we're in these situations, where everything seems to be falling apart, that God gets an opportunity to remind us of how much he really loves us.

Biblical references: Matthew 7:24-27

Themes: hurt, being lost, pain, God's presence, comfort and consolation

Rite 13 Lessons: I Am Made in the Image of God, Lesson Four (page 201); Decisions, Decisions, Lesson Two (page 250)

J2A Lessons: Christian Meditation, Lesson Five (page 269)

YAC Lessons: *none*

### ***002 Flame***

I love those shoes. Really? The same way I love my wife? What's up with the word "love"? It doesn't have much meaning when we use it so loosely. Maybe we don't really get it. Maybe we don't understand what real love is. What it involves to really love somebody. What it means to give yourself to someone else. We mistake things like friendship, commitment, or lust for love, but God wired us a certain way to experience all that love was really meant to be. Not to hold us back or to make us miss out on the best that life has to offer. God created love, and wants us to feel it all in the way it's meant to be felt.

Biblical references: Song of Songs, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Themes: love, sex, friendship

Rite 13 Lessons: Sexual Stereotyping, Part III: Male-Female Relationships (page 317)

J2A Lessons: Sexuality: How Do I Love Thee? (page 146) and Passion in the Bible (page 156)

YAC Lessons: *none*

### ***003 Trees***

We want to know why we are here. If our lives really matter. How our religion is relevant to this life. Today. We want to understand what significance this minute, hour, week, month, and year has to our lives. To our world. We need a God who cares about this life, in this world, right now. We want to understand why everything we think, everything we say, and everything we do matters. We don't want to just sit back and wait for something

---

<sup>1</sup> (Note: descriptions are from the [nooma.com](http://nooma.com) website; themes and J2A lesson plan references are by Jenifer Gamber)

to happen or someday to come. We want to know if all the choices we make now will shape our world and lives for eternity. Because we want our lives to have meaning today, and our lives today to have meaning forever.

Biblical references: Genesis 2:4b-24, Revelation 22:2

Themes: compassion, mercy, partnering with God, salvation

Rite 13 Lessons: Compassion and Acts of Mercy, Lesson One (page 266)

J2A Lessons: Volunteer! (page 114)

YAC Lessons: *none*

### ***004 Sunday***

Why do we do the things we do? Why do we go to church or give money away? Because we're supposed to or because we think God needs it? Do we honestly put on our best clothes for an hour once a week, stand and sit at all the right times, and sing all the appropriate songs for God's sake, or because it'll make us look better to the world around us? We're tired of all the empty rituals and routines. And so is God. God hates it when we call ourselves Christians but ignore all the things he really cares about. He hates it when we go through hollow religious routines out of some feeling of duty or obligation. God doesn't want the meaningless rituals. God wants our heart.

Biblical references: Matthew 23: 1-7, Isaiah 1:2-3

Themes: shema, worship, giving one's heart to God, stewardship

Rite 13 Lessons: *none*

J2A Lessons: Spirituality: Building Community (page 192)

YAC Lessons: *none*

### ***005 Noise***

Why is silence so hard to deal with? Why is it so much easier for us to live our lives with a lot of things going on all the time than to just be in silence? We're constantly surrounded with "voices" that are influencing us on how to think, feel, and behave. Movies, music, TV, Internet, cell phones, and a never-ending barrage of advertising. There's always something going on. Always noise in our lives. But maybe there's a connection between the amount of noise in our lives and our inability to hear God. If God sometimes feels distant to us, maybe it's not because he's not talking to us, but simply because we aren't really listening.

Biblical references: 1 Kings 19: 1-15

Themes: still small voice, silence, listening to God

Rite 13 Lessons: Talking to God, Listening to Silence, Lesson Nine (page 136)

J2A Lessons: Friendly Silence: What Will I Hear if I am Silent? (page 202)

YAC Lessons: *none*

### ***006 Kickball***

We always think we know what's missing from our lives in order to really make us happy, don't we? If only I had that car, or that job, or if only I could lose those 15 lbs, then I'd be happy. Really? How often do we want something only to find out that it wasn't that great after all? Sometimes we ask God for things and if he doesn't deliver right away, we start questioning whether God really understands or even cares. Do we really trust God? Do we trust that God is good and sees a bigger picture than we ever could? It's easy to want what's right in front of us, but maybe God knows what's better for us, and sometimes we just can't see it.

Biblical references: James 1:17, Jeremiah 29: 11-14, Luke 11: 11-13

Themes: wants vs needs, parenting, prayer

Rite 13 Lessons: Compassion and Acts of Mercy, Lesson Five (page 286)

J2A Lessons: Lady Poverty, Love Me Tonight (page 92)

YAC Lessons: *none*

### ***007 Luggage***

Maybe a friend turned their back on you. Maybe someone you loved betrayed you. We all have wounds and we end up carrying around these things that people have done to us for weeks, months, and sometimes even years. It isn't always easy to forgive these people and after a while these hurts can get really heavy. So the only way to feel better seems to be somehow getting back at the people that hurt us, to get revenge. But does revenge ever truly satisfy? Maybe forgiving isn't something you do for someone else to let them off the hook. Maybe forgiveness is about you. God didn't create you to carry these wounds around. God created you to be free.

Biblical references: Romans 12:19, Proverbs 15:3, Luke 6:37

Themes: forgiveness, letting go, reconciliation

Rite 13 Lessons: Talking to God, Listening to God, Lesson Five (page 109); Decisions, Decisions, Lesson 5 (page 264)

J2A Lessons: *none*

YAC Lessons: *none*

### ***008 Dust***

Maybe a friend turned their back on you. Maybe someone you loved betrayed you. We all have wounds and we end up carrying around these things that people have done to us for weeks, months, and sometimes even years. It isn't always easy to forgive these people and after a while these hurts can get really heavy. So the only way to feel better seems to be somehow getting back at the people that hurt us, to get revenge. But does revenge ever truly satisfy? Maybe forgiving isn't something you do for someone else to let them off the hook. Maybe forgiveness is about you. God didn't create you to carry these wounds around. God created you to be free

Biblical references: Matthew 14:25-31, 1 Corinthians 1:26-9

Themes: discipleship, God's belief in us, believing in self

Rite 13 Lessons: *none*

J2A Lessons:

YAC Lessons: *none*

### **009 Bullhorn**

God loves everyone, so a Christian should, too. In fact, Jesus said that the most important thing in life is to love God with everything we've got and love others the same way. But it's not always easy to love everyone around us, is it? Sometimes we strongly disagree with other people's political views, religious beliefs, behaviors, or something else, and it makes it hard to love them when we feel like we're right and they're very wrong. But Jesus doesn't separate loving God and loving others. So maybe the best way for us to show our love for God is actually by loving other people no matter how hard it sometimes is. Maybe it's the only way.

Biblical reference: Matthew 22: 36-40

Theme: witness

Rite 13 Lessons: *none*

J2A Lessons: *none*

YAC Lessons: *none*

### **010 Lump**

A lot of us have done things in our lives that we're ashamed of. Some are small things, and some of us have really big and devastating things. Some of us even have things that people close to us don't know about. Personal junk that we keep to ourselves so we don't have to deal with it. Because we don't know how to deal with it, do we? We're afraid that if we try it's just going to make everything worse. But no matter how big our junk is, no matter how much what we've done has impacted the way other people feel about us or how we feel about ourselves, it hasn't changed how God feels about us. God loves us, he always has and always will, and there's nothing we can do to change that.

Biblical references: Galatians 6:2, 7; Romans 8:38-19

Themes: sin, shame, unconditional love, reconciliation

Rite 13 Lessons: I Am Made in the Image of God, Lesson Seven (page 219); Decisions, Decisions, Lesson Five (page 264)

J2A Lessons: *none*

YAC Lessons: *none*

### **011 Rhythm**

What does it mean to have a relationship with God? What does it look like? For a lot of us it's a hard thing to fully understand. If God is an infinite spirit with no shape or form, how can we possibly relate to that? And what about Jesus? He said he came to give everyone life in its fullest. He came to show us how to live. Maybe it's through trusting Jesus and living the kind of life he taught us to live – a life of truth, love, justice,

compassion, forgiveness, and sacrifice – that we have a relationship with God. Maybe the way we live every day, every single choice we make, determines how in tune with God we are.

Biblical references: Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 4:15-18; John 4:24; John 10:10.

Themes: images of God, prayer,

Rite 13 Lessons: Images We Carry, Lesson One (page 164)

J2A Lessons: *none*

YAC Lessons: *none*

### **012 Matthew**

Suffering the loss of someone we love can be the most difficult thing in life to deal with. One moment we have them and the next they're gone. What are we supposed to do? How are we supposed to feel? The truth is, there's no certain way we're "supposed" to feel. Whatever we're feeling, it's okay. It's okay to feel shock, anger, denial or whatever we may feel. It's okay. And if we don't feel anything at all, that's okay too. It's okay to have no answers and no explanations. Because sometimes all the reasoning and comforting words in the world just isn't what we need. What might help us however is to understand how Jesus dealt with this kind of loss.

Biblical references: John 11:1-44.

Themes: death, loss, grief

Rite 13: I Am Made in the Image of God, Lesson Four (page 201); Decisions, Decision, Lesson two (page 250)

J2A Lessons: *none*

YAC Lessons: *none*

### **013 Rich**

There's a popular bumper sticker that reads "God Bless America," but hasn't America already been blessed? It's easy for us to fall into a mindset of viewing "our" world as "the" world, because it's all we generally see. We're constantly bombarded with images of the latest styles and models of everything, and it can easily leave us feeling like what we have isn't enough because we see people that have even more than us. But how does what we have compare to what most people in the world have? Maybe what we have is enough; maybe it's more than enough. Maybe God has blessed us with everything we have so we can bless and give to others.

Biblical reference: Timothy 6

Themes: compassion, mercy, wealth, giving

Rite 13: Compassion and Acts of Mercy, Lessons One (page 266), Five (page 286), and Seven (page 301)

J2A Lessons: Lady Poverty, Love Me Tonight (page 92)

YAC Lessons: *none*

### **014 Breathe**

With everything that we've got going on every day, how many of us ever think about our breathing, about the meaning of breathing? Yet, for thousands of years, people have understood that our physical breath is a picture of a deeper spiritual reality. In the Bible, the word for "breath" is the same as the word for "spirit." There's an inherent dilemma at the core of what makes us human. We've all been created in the image of God and possess immense power and strength. And at the same time our lives are incredibly vulnerable and fragile. Maybe if we had more insight into the meaning of breathing, we would better understand how God created us as human beings.

Biblical reference: Exodus 3

Themes: awareness of the Holy, made by God, prayer, meditation

Rite 13: Talking to God—Listening to God, Lesson One (page 85)

J2A Lessons: Christian Meditation, An Introduction (page 223) and Lesson Six (page 275)

YAC Lessons: *none*

### **015 You**

Some of the central claims of the Christian faith are the source of many discussions and heated debates. But are we always debating the right things? Maybe some of our discussions would change significantly if we had more insight into the actual circumstances that surrounded the first people of the Christian movement – if we had a better understanding of the things they did in the context of the world they lived in. Maybe some of the claims of the Christian faith that we typically perceive to be unique aren't really that special at all. And at the same time maybe we don't always put enough emphasis on the things that truly should matter in our lives.

Biblical reference: Acts 1: 3-11

Themes: belief, early Christians

Rite 13 Faith and Trust, Lesson Three (page 325)

J2A Lessons: *none*

YAC Lessons: My Credo (page 57)

### **016 Store**

We all get angry about things from time to time – some of us more often than others. For some of us, it feels like we're constantly on the brink of losing it, where it doesn't take much to get angry about anything. And this kind of anger can be seen everywhere we go – at work, in traffic, at the store, at home. But what is really at its root? Anger is often looked at as a bad thing, but are there things actually worth getting angry about? Maybe if we had a better understanding of our anger and where it comes from, we could learn how to channel it towards something constructive – something that's bigger than ourselves.

Biblical reference: Mark 3: 1-2.  
Themes: anger, making choices

Rite 13: *none*

J2A Lessons: Who I Am vs Who I Would Like to Be (page 17)

YAC Lessons: *none*

### **017 Today**

How much time and energy do we spend wishing things were how they used to be? We often think about times in our past when things were different and want our lives to be like that again. Some of us have even come to believe that our best days may actually be behind us. But if we're in some way hung up on the past, what does that mean for our lives now? How are we and those around us affected if we're not fully present? If we're longing for the way things used to be, what does that really say about our understanding and appreciation of our lives today? Maybe we need to learn to embrace our past for what it is, in order to live our lives to the fullest, right here, right now.

Biblical reference: John 20: 11-17.

Themes: change, letting go

Rite 13 Lessons: Images We Carry, Lesson One (page 164)

J2A Lessons: Who I Am vs. Who I Would Like to Be (page 17); Trying on a New Name (page 37)

YAC Lessons: *none*

### **018 Name**

We all compare ourselves to others. We spend our lives wondering what others think and say about us. Some of us even wish we were someone else. We question why we are the way we are and not the way we wish we could be. Some of us have let the expectations of others dictate who we've become. We act a certain way to be accepted but know that we're being untrue. But why are we so concerned with what other people think, say, or look like? What does it say about us if we are unable to accept who we are? Maybe if we really knew our true selves, we wouldn't give so much attention to other peoples' lives and live more in tune with the life God wants for us.

Biblical reference: Genesis 32: 22-27

Themes: identity, stereotypes

Rite 13: Sexual Stereotyping, Part I: Prejudice (page 313)

J2A Lessons: Who I Am vs Who I Would Like to Be (page 17), Trying on a New Name (page 27)

YAC Lessons: *none*

### **019 Open**

Many of us have experienced situations where we've prayed and it felt like God wasn't listening. And yet other times we've prayed or known someone that prayed and the

situation changed. Does God answer prayer? Sometimes, but not all the time? Or does God always answer prayer and it's just that sometimes God says no? Some of us are angry with God for not answering the prayers we've prayed for years. Why did he answer their prayer but not ours? What if there's more to prayer than just God listening and answering? Maybe if we understood how Jesus prayed, our concepts and expectations of prayer would change.

Biblical reference: Matthew 26: 36-39; Genesis 1:1-2; Psalm 13: 1-2; James 5:15-16

Themes: prayer, crisis

Rite 13 Lessons: Talking to God—Listening to God, Lesson One (page 84)

J2A Lessons: Christian Meditation, Lesson 5 (page 269)

YAC Lessons: *none*

### ***020 Shells***

Do you often find yourself saying, “I’m so busy” or “I just have so much to do”? It’s easy to get overwhelmed with appointments, gatherings, to-do lists. But what are we really doing with our time? Many of us are running from place to place and it seems like life is just passing us by. We’re doing so many things, a little bit of everything, and yet it doesn’t feel like much of a life. But most of us find it hard to say no. We feel obligated. There are so many good things to do. So many good causes to join. But while we’re busy doing all these good things, are we missing out on something great? Maybe saying no would be easier if we knew what it meant to say yes.

Biblical references: Mark 1: 35-38; Luke (theme of traveling to Jerusalem)

Themes: making choices, busyness, being able to say “no” to some things so you can say “yes” to other things

Rite 13 Lessons: Decisions, Decisions, Lesson One (page 245)

J2A Lessons:

YAC Lessons: *none*

### ***021 She***

We didn’t have anything to do with our birth. We are all here because some woman somewhere gave us life. Her pain, her effort, for our life. And when a mother gives like that to a child, she is showing us what God is like. But sometimes this part of God’s nature is overlooked. A lot of us are comfortable with male imagery for God. But what about female imagery for God? Is God limited to a gender? Or does God transcend and yet include what we know as male and female? Maybe if we were more aware of the feminine imagery for God we would have a better understanding of who God is and what God is like.

Biblical reference: Job 38:29; Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:28; Isaiah 66:13.

Themes: Images of God

Rite 13 Lessons: Images We Carry, Lesson One (page 164); Sexual Stereotyping (pp 312-319); Faith and Trust, Lesson One (Page 32)

J2A Lessons:

YAC Lessons: My Credo (Page 57)