

# Introduction

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 07 February 2010

Preacher: Jason Webb

[0:00] Well, this morning we're going to start a new series in this class. We're going to start going through this book. It's called A Quest for More, Living for Something Bigger Than You.

! It's written by Paul David Tripp, the same person who co-authored the last book that we did, How People Change. And it definitely has a gimmicky title, doesn't it?

A Quest for More. It seems like you could probably pick that up on a Walmart bookshelf and it would be, you never know what you would get. Thankfully, he is very biblical in his explanation of how we need to be living for something bigger than ourselves.

And he's going to base his whole argument on the Word of God. And so we're thankful for that. I'll let Tripp introduce what the book is about.

And we'll go on from there. Some books are a concentrated examination of a topic. Other books lay out a set of skills or techniques for a certain aspect of life.

[1:07] Some books record a person's experience or journey. Others are funny or sad. The book you have, you're about to read, doesn't fit into any of those categories.

Here's my best attempt to tell you what you are about to read. This entire book is meant to stimulate you to think about one central biblical concept, the kingdom of God.

But this book is not a theology of kingdom, nor an exposition of the kingdom passages in the Bible. No, it's simply a meditation on what Jesus meant when he called us to seek first his kingdom.

What does it really look like to expand our lives to contain, to touch the size of his kingdom? So this book is a meditation on what it means to seek first his kingdom.

What it looks like to expand everything in our lives, everything our lives contain, to touch the size of God's kingdom.

[2:15] Now, does anyone know off the top of their head where that phrase, seek first his kingdom, comes from? Very good. Matthew 6, 33. Let's turn there in our Bibles.

Matthew chapter 6. And we'll begin reading at verse 31. I've asked Dennis Beery to read verses 31 through 34. So we just read of two ways to live.

You can live like a pagan, or you can live like a disciple of Jesus Christ. So let me ask you, how do the pagans, how do they live? What's a pagan life like?

They have no concerns. Are you sure? They have more concerns. In what sense do they don't have concerns? Mm-hmm. That's very good. They don't have a conception of, they don't have a long-term view of anything, do they?

They're very focused on what is now, and they're not worried about anything in the future. But in another sense, they are very, they have a lot of worries and concerns.

[3:20] What other things, what other ways could we characterize a pagan life? There. No God consciousness. So they're not thinking about God.

There's no room for God in any of their thoughts. Anything else? Yes. They live for themselves. How do you see that? Okay. Very good.

They're very self-centered, self-focused people. What else do we have? Mike. Right. They're focused on their immediate needs that are pressing in upon them right now.

Anything else? They're full of worries. They are full of worries. Even though they don't have any concern for the long term, they have a very limited sort of concern.

They're full of worry about it though. Anything else? Dad. They have all the wrong answers. Okay. That's true.

[4:18] What do you mean? Right. That's true. That's very true. That they're asking the wrong questions and they're coming to the wrong answers at the same time. They live very constricted lives, don't they?

What are the things that they're concerned about? You see that in verse 31. Do not worry, saying, what shall we eat, what shall we drink, or what shall we wear? Who's the subject in all those verses?

Me. And what I need. So their lives are as big as me. We. So they live very constricted lives. They don't live any bigger than themselves.

My food, my clothes, my family, my life. And they're concerned only for their needs, for the most part. And someone could say, well, those are needs.

Those are real. It's what my, what should I wear? That's important. And what should I eat? We need those things.

[5:23] I need those things. And that makes Jesus' statement all the more radical. Because what he is saying is you need to live for something bigger than even what you need.

You need to live for something more than you. You should be living for the kingdom of God and for his righteousness. And if you are concerned about those things, then he says, my father will take care of everything else.

And that's why we can live for his kingdom with that promise. Because if we don't have that promise, then all we can do is worry about what I need for myself.

So what does it mean to seek first his kingdom? And that's what Paul Tripp is going to be talking about. How we can avoid this pagan, small, shrunken, tiny, little life.

And how we can live for something bigger and better and greater and more meaningful and more wonderful than just me. And he's going to tell us how we can get out of ourselves and live for something that is really great.

[6:31] And everyone wants that. Everyone wants to live for something bigger than just themselves. That's how God has made us. In Ecclesiastes 3, God has put eternity in the hearts of men.

What does that mean? Well, it's eternity. It means eternity. So in the middle of our day in and day out lives, you're living them. I'm living that kind of life.

It means inside of us, there is this infinite chasm of time and space that I am desperate to fill, to understand.

And we want to rise above our small life and we want to live something very big because that's the way God has made us. Well, you see it in a beauty pageant.

So there you are at the beauty pageant, we'll say. You're watching it on TV. And there's the contestant. And she's so beautiful. She's smiling so big. And the question comes from the panel.

[7:36] What would you like to accomplish in your reign as Miss America? What kind of things does she say? World peace. And I'm sure she'll do it.

What else does she say? I want to help people. What else? I want to end world hunger. I want to stop poverty.

And talk show hosts and comedians might make fun of her answers. And they are probably a bit far-fetched. But it does show us that inside of her, at least, there is this desire to live for something greater than herself.

Than her normal. She wants to live more than a normal, meaningless sort of life. A self-sized life. Or you can see it.

You're going to see it tonight at the Super Bowl. And... Not me. Not you. That's a kind of... It's an example.

[8:49] They're not perfect. So somewhere right now, a fan is saying, this year is our year. Tonight is our night. We won't be denied. Our man, Peyton, he is going to tear that Saints defense up.

There's no way they're going to be able to stop us. And then, maybe on the other side, you have this guy. He's saying, this is our year. This is the year we rise from the rubble of Katrina and we are put back on the top of the world.

Well, did you hear all those pronouns? We's and ours. He's owning this. What is he saying? Or who's saying that? Who's saying it?

Well, it's some guy that's going to sit in front of his TV all night tonight and he's not going to touch the ball one time and the only time he's going to sweat is when he's eating a whole big bucket of Three Mile Island Toxic Fire Buffalo Chicken Wings.

That's the only time he's going to work up a sweat. But his destiny, his life, is connected to his team.

[10:01] And through his team, he is connected to all the Colts fans or all the Saints fans and he is part of something that is bigger than himself. He's rising above his own little small everyday life to take part in something that's bigger than himself.

And he isn't doing something silly or trite. He's acting very human because God has hardwired us for transcendence to live bigger than ourselves.

He's programmed us to live that way. Now, the thing that that fan or that beauty contestant is living for, they might be worthless in a lot of senses.

They might be useless. But they are seeking. They are showing that they were meant for transcendence. It's something that we as humans need. It's a very human thing to want to be bigger than ourselves.

So, are you following me? Do you understand what I'm saying? Are there any questions or comments that you want to add? Okay. Well, then let me ask you, how else do people show that they were meant for something bigger than just themselves?

[11:18] What are some other examples that you can think of? Chuck. Right. Corporations love to inspire that kind of thinking. But yeah, you're a part of the, you're a part of this and we're moving forward and this is, you're a part of it.

What else? Okay. That is, that's a good thing, isn't it? And we love to be a part of it. We want to live more than a selfish life.

What, can anyone think of it? Dare. Oh, Billy. Okay. What do you mean? Okay. Yeah, that's a, that's a good thing. They don't want to just live and spend all their money on themselves.

They think, you know what, I want to improve education for some individual. I want to provide that and so I'll give of myself. So, they're trying to get out of themselves and that's, those are good things.

Anything else? Jackie? Okay. That's a biblical, very good way and we're going to be talking about that. Yeah. Paul says, you're my partners in the gospel.

[12:24] You, we are a part of something bigger than ourselves and it's the, this gospel effort to get to the, the gospel to the ends of the nations and so we, sitting here, never talking to a single Muslim or something like that and by our prayers, we're helping someone in Turkey or wherever to speak, to give the gospel.

well, I think of maybe a college kid on the campaign trail and he's, you know, he's nothing but a gopher in the trenches.

He's, he's stuffing envelope after envelope but he is certain that his candidate is going to make a difference in the world. He is part of something bigger than himself and he's, he's thinking that by taking part of this, I am in, I'm in this big movement to bring about, you know, change that we can hope in or whatever and so he's rising above his own concerns, his own worries, his own comfort. He's sacrificing in order to advance his cause. Well, that's how God made us. We can go back to the garden, the garden of Eden and there's Adam and Eve and were they made for foraging? Were they meant to scurry about like a squirrel finding nuts just for themselves? Well, they weren't. They were given stewardship and we're going to talk about this later but they were given stewardship over everything.

[13:58] They were made to rule over the plants and the animals and the environment. They were to rise above the animals and so they were a part of the creation but they were to be above the creation.

They were a part of it and they were in a certain way not on the same level and so when we only live for our personal lives, for our personal cares, then we deny our humanity.

We deny what God made Adam and Eve when we only live for what I want, for what I need and so we reduce our kingdom down to one person and that's me and that's my kingdom and that's what I care about and so we quit living as above and more than creatures instead we start living like animals and this can play out in very real tangible ways.

Listen to one man's story his name is Jim. Jim sat before me his slumped body a testament to the depression that gripped him.

He said he had awakened a few months earlier and realized that there was no one who cared if he woke up that morning. No one cared if he was healthy or sick.

[15:24] No one cared if he was happy or sad and he said I get up in the morning and I put on great looking clothes leave my beautiful modern condominium get in my luxury car and drive to my

high paying job only to go back to my beautiful condominium at the end of the day to start it all over again.

I could die today and no one would even notice. I have it all. Why can't I be happy? And Jim did have it all yet in getting it all he had denied his own humanity in his quest for everything.

Jim had missed the one thing that separated him from everything else that God made. Jim had constructed his own kingdom indulged his every dream and met his every need.

He had ruled in his kingdom with discipline and success but he discovered that it was an empty kingdom and he was an empty king. It was not that Jim had attempted too much the tragedy was that he had settled for way too little and that is exactly what he got.

Well how about you? How about you? Are you settling for something entirely too small? Are you living just for you?

[16:47] Well many Christians forget this whole idea that we were made for the kingdom of God and they view the gospel as the invitation to live a good life now.

They take God's grace and his wisdom as the invitation to better marriage and a better career and a more fulfilling life a better relationship with their children and basically they take it as an invitation to live your best life now.

And that's a phrase that Joel Osteen popularized and we rightfully disdain what he is doing to the gospel and saying that it's an invitation to live your best life now with no consideration for heaven.

But it's one thing to say that we hate his message and it's another thing entirely to actually live a different kind of life. A life that is so much bigger than me and my concerns and living my best life now but a life that is touching always and filling the kingdom of God.

And so it's basically to say I'm not trapped in this prison of my own life.

[18:09] I'm not trapped there. It's one thing to say that but it's very much a different thing to actually live a transcendent life where you're not only concerned about yourself.

So I'd ask you again what are you living for? What are you living for? What gets you stirred up? What gets you angry and upset?

What keeps you up at night? What raises your blood pressure? And what makes you want to scream and cry? So what are you living for?

Why are you getting up? For you or for the kingdom of God? And the message of the Bible is that God's grace is cutting a hole into our prison and inviting us to come out.

And more than inviting us, he is pulling us out and he's pulling us into something very big. So much bigger than ourselves. He's pushing us into the kingdom of God.

[19:07] And he's pulling us into something that is so huge and so significant and weighty and meaningful that the Bible has one word for it. And the word is glory.

We were meant for glory. That's how God made us. And in redemption, that is what he is bringing us to. And so we're all glory junkies.

We all live and love glory. We love those things that make us say, oh, man, I cannot believe that. Or that was so awesome.

I don't even know what to say. That's what we were meant for. And humans are different because of that. When a penguin jumps off of an iceberg, the other penguins aren't standing around giving him a score, are they?

They're not saying, that was really good, that was really beautiful. What are you going to see this month at the Olympics? People will be judged on how glorious they are.

[20:10] The ice skater will be judged on her artistry and beauty. And they will twirl and they will jump and they will spin and they will get scores based on how beautiful and glorious they are.

That's how humans work. And so humans are different. We stand in line at the amusement park for an hour and a half to go on a one-minute ride because we want to feel the rush of something that is bigger and stronger and faster and more powerful than we are.

And so we feel most alive when we feel the smallest and the most insignificant. When we feel like we are a part of something that is big and powerful and glorious and beautiful, that's when we feel most alive.

Well, God has made us for that kind of glory. He's meant us for that kind of glory. glory. Well, there's four transcendent things, four kinds of glory that God has made us for, and that's how we're going to finish this morning out.

And the first is the most important. It's the most important one, and all the other glories that we as humans take part of should flow out of this one glory.

[21 : 32] And the first is that we were meant to live for God's glory. trip says, we were made to experience, to be part of, to be consumed by, and to live in pursuit of the one glory that is truly glorious, the glory of God.

So people are always looking for glory. They want to experience something awesome and thrilling. And they can never find rest.

They can never have that desire satisfied until they experience the glory of God. And so, they climb up mountains, and they stand at the peak, and they feel insignificant, but at the end, they feel like they need to do it again.

And so, young people, they skateboard, and they snowboard, and they do all sorts of crazy tricks to feel something glorious. And middle-aged men buy gadgets, and technology to get that next greatest thing that will awe them.

And people, they date people, they marry, they take vacations, they're always searching, searching for something. And Augustine said, we are restless until we find our rest in thee.

[22 : 59] And so, when the sinner sees finally the glory of God, that's it. That's it. They come home.

The search is over. They have found what they've been looking for. And it's only when God becomes the all-glorious one, when my life is consumed by experiencing, by showing God's glory. Does everything else fall into place? So, in one sense, and listen to me carefully, in one sense, God's glory absolutely ruins all other glories for us.

I'll say that again. In one sense, when we taste his glory, he absolutely ruins all other glories for us. and what I mean is this, the mountains and nature and people and husbands and wives and children and sports and gadgets and vacations and everything else that people live for, they can't be our God anymore.

God ruins that potential. But, in another sense, in another sense, when God becomes this all-consuming desire of our lives, he gives us all those things back and he makes them better than ever.

[24 : 30] They become more glorious than they ever were before. And so, we enjoy mountains and nature and people and husbands and wives and children and sports and everything else, and we enjoy it the way that we were supposed to enjoy it.

And it becomes something richer because in all those things, we reach through them and we taste God's glory. We see his goodness in them.

And so, they become something better than they ever were before. And we were meant to live like that. We were meant to enjoy all those things and in all those things to enjoy God.

And so, God has meant us, he has made us to be fully engaged and connected to his glory where that is the north star of our life.

That is where we are always pointed. And everything else, any other way of living is a diminished life. It's a small life.

[25 : 35] It's a meaningless, worthless life. And like I said, all the other glories flow out of it.

The second glory is this, stewardship glory. And this is what I talked about earlier. Adam and Eve were put into the garden. And they were given care of the garden.

They were called to take care of more than just themselves. And we as people are called to take care of more than just ourselves. They were creatures, or we are creatures, but we're transcendent creatures.

We are in the creation, but we're not altogether of it. And so, Adam and Eve, and us, we are meant to have our heads up, and we're to be looking around and ruling the environment that we live in.

We're to take care of the environment. And that means that we are responsible to care for the animals, and the plants, and the resources, and our homes, and everything else that God has put into this world.

[26 : 43] He's made us stewards of those things. And so, we were never meant to live just for me, for my desire. We were always to be thinking about this world that we're living in.

And you see this in your children. All children, I think, want a puppy to take care of, don't they? They know that they're different.

They know that they are going to take care of the puppy. The puppy is not going to take care of them. You see it in the way that they care for their stuffed animals. They're responsible for them,

and they take care of them.

My daughter Eowyn has been playing a lot with a stuffed kangaroo the last week, and I'm sorry to say that that kangaroo has suffered many, many broken arms.

And thankfully, Eowyn knows how to take care of a kangaroo's broken arm. she gently wraps up his arm in a toilet paper cast, and she puts it into bed, and she cares for it.

[27 : 50] And when she does that, she shows some of the glory that she was meant for, and that sin has now shattered. So we see in our children this shattered reflection of what we were meant to be before the fall.

we were meant to be stewards of this world. That's the second glory. The third glory is community glory. We were made for relationships.

Who was Adam's best friend? It's really obvious. It was Eve. It wasn't Adam. It was Eve. And God said it's not good for man to be alone.

And so God gave Adam a wife. And God created us to have lives that are shaped by others.

Isn't that true? It isn't natural. It isn't healthy. It's not good. It's not right for a person to go out and live all by themselves.

[29 : 03] Those people become not better people. They become worse people. It's harmful to their souls. It's harmful for their understanding of themselves and for the world.

It's not good for them. And so God has meant us to live in this great tapestry of human life, of human culture and civilization.

We were meant to live in homes, in marriages, in cities, in towns, in states, in churches, in neighborhoods.

We were meant to always be living in these kind of contexts With other people all around us! And what that does is that pulls us out of ourselves!

It makes us live for something bigger than ourselves! So Adam was never to shrink back and to isolate himself into just caring and concern only for himself!

[30 : 08] Well, the fourth one, the fourth glory, is truth glory. We were made to live in the light of revelation.

We were to transcend the boundaries of our own thought and experience. And don't anyone think I'm talking about Eastern mysticism and transcendental meditation.

I'm not talking about that. We were never meant to be intellectually isolated people. God created us to live from the very beginning in the light of his word.

So, we're going back to the garden and how did Adam and Eve live? What was their routine? they took care of the garden and what happened in the evening?

They met with God. God came and walked and talked with them. I don't know what God was telling them. He was telling them how to take care of the garden.

[31 : 17] He was communicating his love and concern for them. He was a part of their life. He was talking into their life. life. And that is how we were meant to live.

We were always meant to walk and live in this world with God's voice in our ears. And so Adam and Eve and you and I were given ears and mouths to speak and to live and to communicate with God. He was always supposed to be informing us of what is true. And so we were meant to think God's thoughts after him.

So he thinks them. He tells us what he thinks. And then we just accept that as truth and then start living in light of it. Well, when we close ourselves off from God and we stop listening to God, we don't read our Bibles, we don't listen to preaching, we live totally separated intellectual lives.

What kind of people do we become? Do we become narrow or broad people that are loving and generous for everyone? No. No.

[32 : 32] We become cranks. We become hard-hearted and narrow-minded. And the lie is that if you throw God off, then you can have this huge view of life and you can embrace everyone and love them all.

And in reality, what happens? You only love yourself and everyone else becomes wrong and you start hating other people. And your way is the only way and everything is black and white and you are the God who determines what is black and what is white.

And if they don't step in and walk into your world, then you let them know. And so from the very beginning, we were meant to live with God telling us how to think.

And when he tells us how to think and we believe it, we rise up. We rise above ourselves and we live in light of God's truth. Well, someone might say, and maybe some of you are thinking this, I don't know.

This is all really out there. This is interesting, I understand it, but what does this have to do with Tuesday morning, when I have a stack of laundry to do, and when I have to change diapers, and when I have to change the oil in the car?

[33:57] What does this have to do with fixing my budget, and saving money, and getting a job, and keeping my job, and loving my wife?

What does it have to do with any of those things? What does it have to do with my relationship problems? The cares that I'm carrying around? Well, this has everything to do with all of that. It has everything to do with all of that, because what seeking first, his kingdom means, is that in all those situations, we are seeking his kingdom.

We're letting these truths, these glories, these things that we were meant to live for, influence the way that we do things. Now, you're immediately going to run into a problem on Tuesday morning. And the problem is, when you start living, you say, I want to live for God's glory. I want to see and experience God's glory in this minute situation. And then you start living that way, something is going to happen.

[35:09] you're going to run into opposition. Because in this world, and if you think about it, this is so true, in this world, there is this pressure always pushing us down into ourselves.

Advertisement, talk show host, everyone in this world is pushing us to think only about ourselves. ourselves. And then, we have a traitor within.

It's called the flesh. And when we run into a problem, the flesh starts pulling us down into ourselves. And we start only thinking and caring about what we want and what we think.

Well, so how do you live on Tuesday? Well, when you're changing diapers and you're talking with your wife and you're doing your mundane job, instead of thinking, how does this affect me? Why don't they think about me?

Don't they care about my feelings? Why won't they help me? How is this going to affect my job and my life and my family? Instead of all the focus on me and letting your kingdom, letting your kingdom set the priorities for your life and how you think and how you feel and what you're going to respond, how you're going to respond, remember what God has called you to.

[36:31] He's met you for glory. He meant you to live in light of his truth. He meant you for you to enjoy his glory, to take care of your world, to take care of people, to live in a community.

You were meant to live for him and you were meant to live for his kingdom and not your own kingdom. And so if that's true, that we were meant to live for his kingdom, then that should affect everything that we do.

Well, our time is almost up. The series, Lord willing, I hope it will be an encouragement for you to start actually, and I'm not saying you're not, but more and more, to live larger, more God-centered, more kingdom-oriented lives.

And if God blesses, we, as his people, will begin thinking bigger thoughts about him and smaller thoughts about our own agenda and bigger thoughts about his kingdom.

And so if this book gets a hold of us and the truth in it gets a hold of us, we're going to start, instead of sitting in the camp with Saul and saying, everything is terrible, we don't have any weapons, we don't have anything that we need, and so we're only thinking about us.

[37:57] If this book gets a hold of us, we'll be saying with Jonathan, you know what, we're going over, and you know, perhaps the Lord will act on our behalf, and we're going to start going out.

And we'll start saying with William Carey, we're going to attempt great things for God, and we're going to expect great things from God. And as the weeks go by, we're going to unpack all of what this means, and all the implications that it has.

we're going to do. But before we go, let's pray that God would transform us, that he would renew our minds with his truth, and that we would really start living kingdom-oriented lives instead of self-oriented lives.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, thank you. Thank you for your word that pulls us out of ourselves. who we have such a tendency to go around and around and be consumed and be caught in our own orbit, where we're just going around ourselves and thinking about our lives.

[ 39 : 01 ] Thank you for your grace that reaches into our prison and pulls us out to live for something bigger and more meaningful than ourselves. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for dying on the cross to give us a new way of life, to rescue us from the old way of living.

And Lord Jesus, I pray that you would become more and more our focus, that we would attempt great things for you and expect great things from you.

Lord, will you renew our minds and transform us? We pray this for your glory. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.