

A Jesus Focused Life

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[0:00] Well, if you're visiting, we're going through this book, A Quest for More Living for Something Bigger Than You, by Paul Tripp.! Let's go over some of the ground that we discussed earlier.

We saw two weeks ago that the big kingdom, the kingdom of God, is centered on Jesus Christ. And He is really the center of everything. He's the center of everything that we see, of creation. Colossians 1.16 says this, For by Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.

All things were created by Him and for Him. So the creation that we live in, that we are enjoying the signs of spring, that creation is for Christ.

It was by Christ and for Him. Christ was the instrument that God used to create this world. And this creation was a gift to His Son. And so every rock and tree and every field and stream and every boy and every girl and every man and every woman and every angel and every demon was created by Christ and for Christ.

[1:27] And so right now, if you want to look out at your flower beds, they're sprouting up, aren't they? And they're sprouting up for Jesus. And so you can smile and be happy about that.

You had no idea that your flower beds were such completely religious places. But they are. They're for Him. Christ is the center of the new creation.

Colossians goes on to say that He's the firstborn from the dead. He's the beginning. He's the beginning of the resurrection. And so when Christ was raised from the dead, then the world to come, the eternal kingdom, broke into our world.

And it began there. Christ is the center of God's plan for salvation. And today that's unpopular, to say the least.

You have your way, and I have my way, and we can all be right and let a thousand flowers bloom. And the Bible just won't let us say that.

[2:33] God will not submit His plan of salvation to a popularity contest. salvation is not a democratic effort. God didn't ask you, how do you want to be saved?

And then He didn't ask me, how do I want to be saved? Salvation is God saving us in Jesus Christ. And that is all it is. So apart from Jesus, crucified and resurrected, there is absolutely no salvation. Jesus is the center of all salvation. Well, because Christ is the center of everything, created, the new creation, our salvation, He should be the center of our lives.

He should be our motive, our goal, our source, our hope. And so to live a big kingdom life, to live for something bigger than yourselves, it means to live for Christ.

So all the spokes connect to Him. Every aspect of our life needs to be connecting to Him. So Christ is the King.

[3:45] He's the King of kings. He's the King of God's kingdom. And so it's about His authority and His will and not mine. And so to seek first the kingdom of God means that we're going to seek Jesus Christ first in everything.

That He's going to become the functional center of our lives. Now, last week we talked about how do you actually begin to live a Christ-centered life?

How do you actually begin to do that? Now, does anyone remember how you actually begin that journey into a Christ-centered life? With our death. Death.

Why do you have to die? What does that mean? Why do you have to die in order to live? Born again. Okay. Can you go on?

Well, we died to the old self and raised through Christ. Okay. Why does the old self have to die? It lives in the little kingdom. Okay.

[4:50] It lives in the little kingdom. What else can we say about that? That's true? What is it about the little kingdom that makes it impossible to live for Christ in the big kingdom?

Dale. It lives in Christ's kingdom. Right. Because of why? What's the little kingdom all about? Self. So, the big magnet in the middle of the little kingdom, which is me, has to die if Christ is going to take its place.

And so, we have to die. We have to die in our death to sin as we're united with Christ and as we're raised again in the new birth. But functionally, ourselves, we have to die continually to our self and our plan.

And that's what we saw in Luke 9. And we need to make this crystal clear. In Luke 9, Jesus says this, If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross.

Now, who is Jesus talking to there? He's talking to his disciples. He wasn't talking to the unbelievers. He was talking to you and to me.

[6:00] He's telling us that we have to die. And the context of Jesus' words is Peter's confession of the Christ. Peter has said, you're the Christ, the son of the living God.

And Jesus, in return, said, now, if you want to follow me, you are going to have to die. So, you're going to have to take up your cross. I'm going to die. And you need to die, too. So, Jesus is talking to us.

And he's telling us that if we are going to follow him, if we're going to be a disciple, we have to die. And so, that death has to be worked out in our lives. And that isn't optional.

That is what being a Christian is all about. So, we've been circling this target of what it means to live a big kingdom life, to live a Christ-centered life.

And today, hopefully, we're going to hone in on exactly what that means. So, we know so far that to live a big kingdom life, to live for something bigger than you, is to live for Christ.

[7:03] And it requires the death of ourself and our scheme of things, our agenda, our plan. And today, what we're going to talk about is, what does that mean concretely?

In your everyday life, in my everyday life, what does that look like concretely? Well, this is how Ted Tripp answers the question briefly. Big kingdom living at the street level is Jesus-focused living. Big kingdom living at the street level is Jesus-focused living. So, this is what he goes on to say. Big kingdom living is living with the purpose, the character, the call, the grace, and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as the central motivation and hope for everything that you think, desire, do, and say.

So, big kingdom living, let me repeat that, is focused on Christ and his purpose, character, call, and glory. And that he, who he is, and what he's done, and what he's called us to, and how glorious he is, that becomes the motive, the central motive for why I do everything that I do.

[8:24] Now, let's think about the first lesson that we went over. We talked about transcendent living, and that God meant us to live for his glory, right?

His glory, we were to live for the truth. We weren't ever to think only inside of our own heads. We were meant to live with him speaking to us. And we were meant to live for community and for stewardship.

And so, if we put those two things together, if we're going to live for something bigger than ourselves, then we are going to have to focus on who Jesus is and what he has done for us.

His purpose, his grace, his glory. Well, what does that look like in real life? The Bible tells us in lots of places, but we're going to turn to Deuteronomy chapter 10.

Turn there, if you will, Deuteronomy chapter 10. And Moses is explaining to the Israelites what God asks of them.

[9:25] And you might think it's strange that we're going to an Old Testament passage to talk about a Jesus-focused life. And I guess my answer is this, that Jesus is the Lord of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

All scriptures are pointing to him. And so, this passage that we have here, Deuteronomy 10, verse 12 and following, it's talking about what God expects us, how we are to live Jesus-centered lives. God didn't essentially expect one thing from Israel and something totally different from us. So, this passage is for us. So, let's turn to Deuteronomy chapter 10, verse 12, and we'll read 12 through 22. And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I'm giving you today for your own good.

To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. [10:37] Yet the Lord set his affection on your forefathers and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations as it is today. Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer.

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.

He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.

Fear the Lord your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name. He is your praise. He is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes.

Your forefathers, who went down into Egypt, were seventy in all. And now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.

[11:41] Moses begins with a question. See that in verse 12. O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you? And then he gives a number of things that God expects of his people.

And it's in these expectations that we see what it means to actually live a Jesus-focused life. Now, what is the first one?

Fear. You can see it there in verse 12. Fear. Fear. What does it mean to fear the Lord? And awe. Reverence. Reverence. All other things. Right. Fear. Reverence. Awe. Do you think there's love and admiration mixed in that fear?

What is someone saying? Yes. There's love mixed in there. Let me ask you a little bit of a harder question.

[12:41] Do you think there's a little bit of maybe terror mixed in there? Yes. Is there a sense that there's not terror mixed in there?

Someone tell me why terror is not in that sense of fear. Because of Jesus Christ. Okay. Right. We, as saved believers, don't fear.

We're not in terror of his wrath for our sin anymore. Because of Jesus Christ. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

But it's a yes and no aspect of the terror. Because there's still something more to it than I think that the word respect at least includes in our language.

Do you remember what the author of Hebrews calls God? A consuming fire. Do you trifle with a consuming fire?

[13:48] There's a little bit of terror when you're standing in front of a consuming fire. And the author of the Hebrews is not telling that to unbelievers. He's telling it to people who have been called to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Who've been washed in the blood of Jesus. And even then, there is something that we need to stand shaking in our boots, as it were, of the majesty of God.

And so when Isaiah, he saw the Lord Jesus. Remember, he was high and lifted up in the year King Uzziah died. Do you think Isaiah knew something of terror as he stood there?

He said, woe is me. I'm undone. I'm ruined. I'm coming apart at the sinews. I'm done for because I've seen the king. Or when John, the apostle John, saw Jesus in the book of Revelation, he went down on his face in absolute terror like a dead man.

God is good. But he's not safe. He's not tame. Jesus is the Lion of Judah. And you don't just respect a lion.

[15:00] You fear a lion, even as you love and admire him. And so we have to balance what Moses is saying. We're not afraid of God and wrath like he's going to beat us over the head.

But there's still, nevertheless, something in God that we don't trifle with, that we walk carefully around because he is not like us.

He is a consuming fire. Now, let me ask you, Moses says, that's what God asks of you, to fear him. What will that mean concretely in your life?

And let's talk about what will that mean for you in your job? And I'd like to hear your response.

Whatever your work is, how will the fear of the Lord affect that?

Give me some concrete examples. In my work, in my work, some customers I work for, they trust me to turn in the correct amount of time and not skim.

[16:06] So being honest in all my dealings with my customers. That's right. It's very easy to be dishonest. But if you know that a consuming fire is standing by you, I think you'll be a little more careful.

Well, then also, to go along with that case, I have to say, knowing this, don't keep me from doing this, but knowing if I do something wrong, often I expect the Lord to bless me.

I'm not doing what's in accordance with his will. Very good. It's just generally hard to complain when you're standing in the presence of the king.

Roger? Knowing that you're the Lord, you can explain that. It's just to be a kid. Knowing who God is, the spirit, and the consuming fire that he is, as we deal with other people, we see what they say, even though they are blind for it.

Yes. That puts a spur in our evangelism. That we don't go to work just as ordinary workers. We go as people that can save them, pluck them as brands from the fire.

[17:14] Michael? Being diligent is fantastic. Right. Very good. Very good.

Steve? Just take Jim's a step further when I am dishonest, a little white lie. I have to confess it. I can't just let it be.

I have to go make it right. Amen. Right. In one sense, you don't want to be on the outs with the king of kings, do you?

You want everything, all, everything to be clear, everything to be repented of. Let's talk about parenting. How should the fear of the Lord influence your parenting in concrete ways, in everyday, ordinary ways?

We're to raise our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. So, what does that mean? Mike? Very good.

[18:20] Yeah. It's no news to anyone, but children catch a lot more things than they're taught, don't they? They're going to sense if you are careful with your Lord and the way that you live.

And I think God can use that. Yes. What else? Parenting. Yes, Jackie. I was thinking of the same thing Mike said. We memorized the verses we did the second part of the verses so through the fear of the Lord we have a voice and people.

And thinking of that, our children are watching us and we're not avoiding people. We're not teaching them that a Christian always hears the Lord because they avoid people.

We have no same person who hears the Lord because they won't have people. So to show them that, I think it's very important that we are not trifling with evil but it's the way to get that's a strong word.

Yeah. Yeah. You're keeping far from it. You don't, I don't know, you just don't mess around with evil because that's to go against God.

[19:32] Death. You have to teach the children that there are consequences of the sin. When you catch your children in sin you have to think of realize the consequences just as God makes us realize the consequences of our own sin.

They have to learn that they are sinners. great. Very good. We have to keep moving.

What, that was all very good, thank you. Moses gives us the second thing we're to do and he says we're to walk in all of his ways. We're to walk in the Lord's ways. So big kingdom living, Jesus focused living, it's not just an attitude of our heart, it's not just fearing the Lord, it is that, but it's living in obedience to his commands.

If you're living a Jesus focused life, you're going to be focused on obeying Jesus. And that, that might sound like mundane or nothing new, but if our lives are not marked by concrete acts of obedience to Jesus and to his commands, then whatever we say and maybe whatever we feel, we're not living a Jesus centered life.

There should be activities in your life that can only be explained because with the, with the idea that I'm obeying Jesus. Why are you doing that? Because Jesus told me to.

[21:17] So Jesus focused living is, is living in response to his commands. And, and we find those commands in the Bible. That's clear. And so our walk, our lives should reflect his commandments.

And James said the same thing. Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and after looking at himself goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard but doing it, he will be blessed.

And those words are so common. But are you doing it? Are you living with this book in front of your face and you're looking at it and when you see the command, you're going and doing it because it's here, because it's Jesus' words.

is your life lived consciously with Jesus' commands in your mind in light of Jesus' specific commands?

[22 : 33] So Jesus' focused living is an obedient life and it's more than just the abstract. It is the particulars of our life. And so let's think through an example. Let's think through marriage.

what passages of scripture, what commands should we be living in light of in our marriage if we're married? Mom.

Right. That's very good. That's a clear command. Wives, submit to your husbands, respect them. There it is.

It's not unclear. It is absolutely clear what Jesus expects of brides. And so are we doing it? What other passages should be in our minds and reflected out into our lives?

It should be hopefully easy. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the church. Right.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loves the church.

[23 : 33] I thought of that in the sermon yesterday at the wedding. Jesus gives the responsibility to submit to the wives and he gives the responsibility to die to the husbands.

It's not easy on either side. And that word should be pounding in the head of every husband. When you wake up, when you're arguing about who gets the last bowl of cereal, when you're arguing about the mundane things of who's in the bathroom and how long it's taking, husbands, love your wives as Christ loves the church.

If you're not doing it in those little things, I guarantee you you're not doing it in the big things. What other passages can you think of? One of the Ten Commandments says, you shall not commit adultery.

That passage should be in our head. Hebrews 13.4, our marriage should be honored by all and the marriage bed kept pure for God will judge the adulterer and the sexually immoral. Our lives are to be completely pure.

Our marriage beds are to be completely pure because Jesus has told us so. So when you're living, when your marriage is Jesus-focused, then you're going to be living in light of his commands.

[24 : 52] And we could go through all the different aspects of your life and say the same things. And it's something that you probably should do. And I think we see from this how important it is to actually have the word of God in front of us and with us.

Now it's impossible to take a copy of the scripture in most cases with you everywhere you go and be able to turn up wherever you are in whatever situation. What does Jesus command me in this situation?

But we can memorize his commands. And if we're going to live a Jesus-centered life where we're obeying what Jesus says, then we need to have his commands in our heads and in our hearts and so they become a part of who we are.

And so in every circumstance, every event in our life, Jesus is telling us what to do and we're hearing him and we're obeying him. Moses gives a third thing there.

What is the third thing that the Lord asks of us? You see it there in Hebrew? Love. Right. To love him.

[26 : 03] Jesus-focused living is conscientious living a life of love for Jesus. So you are showing your love in the way that you live and that you are actually loving him.

Let me ask you, where is the kingdom of God? In your heart, right? The kingdom of God is a heart commitment. It's about who has captured your love. Who owns the love of your heart?

And when you're living a Christ-centered life, Jesus has captured your heart. He's captured your love. And so the kingdom of God is bound and it's shaped by the supreme love that we have for God.

And if you love him, it's going to pour out in all aspects of your life and the way it's going to determine the way you react to all of life. And so, big kingdom living and little kingdom living, when you're living for yourself or when you're living for Christ, it's all about who owns the love of your heart.

Who has that love? And now, if you're Jesus-focused, then you're going to live like Paul. And we said it today, the life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

[27 : 23] The love of Jesus owned Paul. It owned Paul's heart. And so Paul said, love constrains me. Love compels me.

I have to live in a certain way because I've tasted his love and there's no going back. And so when we're born again, we do have these new taste buds put into our heart. We once loved ourselves and loved our agenda and our plan and the world and what it could do for me.

But at the new birth, God puts new taste buds on our tongues. And from that point on, we are going to live for the love of Jesus. I love because he first loved me.

He gave himself for me, so now the natural thing is I'm going to give myself to him. And so you obey and you live because he's captured your affections.

He owns them. Well, Moses says several other things. We don't have time for them.

[28 : 23] I do think if you read them, it says, you'll serve the Lord, you'll observe his commands. They kind of all fit into this fear, obey, and love.

And so we're going to keep moving on. In the next verses, in verses 14 through the end of the chapter, Moses tells them to remember some things.

Remember them. Jesus' focused living begins with remembering certain realities about God and about Jesus.

So fear, obedience, love, those are flowers that grow in the soil of a thick soil of remembering who God is and what he has done for me in Jesus Christ.

So let's look at verse 14. To the Lord your God belongs the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. That's the first thing that Moses tells the Israelites they need to remember.

[29 : 27] That's the first thing that we need to remember. Jesus' focused living is always remembering the very concrete fact that Jesus owns everything. So, everything that you have, everything that I have, it belongs to Jesus.

The grass that you mow in your yard is Jesus' grass. Your house is Jesus' house. Your car, that belongs to Jesus.

Your checking account, your savings account, your retirement account, the spare change in your pocket, it belongs to Jesus. Your business, your furniture, your property, your food, everything that you have, it belongs to him.

Now, let me ask you, how should that affect what you do with the things that he's given you, he's entrusted you with? What kind of life will you really live if you have that in your head, that that is a category there, that this stuff, it doesn't belong to me, it belongs to Jesus?

Roger. I bring hold on to everything loosely. It's not the end of the world. It's not the end of the world. Yep.

[30 : 51] You have to hold loosely because it's not really ours. And he might just take it back and give it to someone else. What else, Jim?

I've got to remember what Job said when the Lord said the Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Right. Very good. Chuck. You'll be a good steward of it.

You'll be a good steward of it. Jesus told parables about that. And he was applying it to spiritual realities and I think you can definitely apply it to the physical realities that if you're the kind of person that hides their talents, hides their money in the ground and you don't use them, then he is going to require it of you.

But, on the other hand, if you waste what he has given you, then you are wasting what doesn't belong to you. That's like taking money out of my pocket and then going and spending it because that's what you're doing.

Anything else? Mike? It's not mine. It's his. It shouldn't be your own. Yeah. It's not an idol. Amen.

[32 : 02] What else? What other concrete ways should this realization affect the way we live? Would you be a generous giver? It's not an idol.

It doesn't belong to you. He's going to take it away. He's going to take it away eventually anyways and give it to someone else. You should be a generous giver. Donald Whitney put it like this.

The question is not how much of my money should I give to God? The question is rather how much of God's money should I keep for myself? When we live a Jesus-focused life we remember that

Jesus owns all of our things and it's his.

He owns it. Moses goes on to say yet the Lord set his affection on your forefathers and loved them and he chose you your descendants above all the nations as it is today.

the second thing Moses wants them to remember is that everything that they are everything that we are everything that we have is his grace.

[33:08] It's his grace. He's the sovereign ruler. He owns everything and yet he chooses to love. He chooses to love us and have mercy on us and he chooses us to be his people.

That is his grace and action. And so we need to remember that everything that we are everything that you are whatever you are it is by his grace that that's what you are.

What makes you to differ? So we live on grace. He didn't he didn't look down into my life and think that I was worthy of being chosen of he wasn't I wasn't worthy of choosing.

I wasn't worthy of love. He gave me that love on his own. And so what effect should that have on your life?

What kind of person should you be if you realize you know what I am what I am because of what God has done in my life and it's just grace. What should that do to us?

[34:11] What kind of people should we be? Thankful. Thankful. You know what a privilege it is to live in the United States of America.

Did you pick this country? Most of you I'm sure didn't. Some of you picked Canada and that's okay too. Do you know you're going to be thankful.

What else are you going to be? Joyous. If you're swimming in grace that's a happy place to be. If you think that you've earned all this stuff and then when it's taken away you're going to be miserable your whole life because you've got to work for it all.

But you don't. You haven't. He's given it to you and you don't deserve it. What else? Humble. Humble. We all have a Pharisee's heart.

I'm sure of it. I look at what I've done and I look at where I'm at and I think I've done this. Look at this great nation that I have built. We're going to be humble.

[35:21] But if we remember that what we are is because of God's grace then we're going to find our identity there. We're not going to find our identity in my race in my gender my socioeconomic status.

We aren't superior because we hold to the truth. That's good. We aren't special because of anything in ourselves. We are what we are because of his grace.

We are what we are because Jesus died for me. And so that's going to totally affect the way that I live with my children. I am not going to discipline them because I am right and they are wrong.

I'm going to discipline them because I am wrong and they are wrong and we both need Jesus. Does that make sense? It's going to totally change the way we do everything. Well time's running out.

We don't have time to cover the last two things. Moses tells them to remember in verses 17 through 19 that the Lord is the Lord of Lords and the God of Gods. And so Jesus' focused living is realizing that he is the Lord and there is none other and that has all sorts of effects.

[36:29] And then he says Moses reminds them of what kind of God he is. The Lord defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow and he loves the alien.

Our Savior loves orphans and aliens and he defends their cause. And if we're going to live a Jesus-focused, Jesus-reflected life, then we're going to see that, I guess, that's going to reflect into our life.

We're going to spend our money and our time and our heart and our strength on defending the weak, the orphan, and the widow. And we're going to stand up for their defense because that's what Jesus did for us.

We were orphans. We were in the faraway country and he went and found us and he died for us to gain us a standing with the Father. And so that is going to be reflected in our life if we're living a Jesus-focused life.

Well, time for one quick quote and then we're going to be dismissed. What would a lifestyle of seeing the Lord look like?

[37:39] It would mean that everything that I have or could ever touch or experience did not belong to me for my use but to the Lord for his use. It would mean walking through life not discontent because of all the things I don't have but living with a deeply felt gratitude for all the things that I have but do not deserve.

It would mean living with hope and courage not because I have established my own base of power but because I rest in the power of my Lord and the guaranteed success of everything he has promised.

And it means that I will commit myself to more than personal survival, contentment, and happiness. No, like him, I will be committed to a life of justice, love, and mercy.

And I will allow the size, I will not allow the size of my care and the concern to atrophy to the size of my own life. So I'm not just going to care about myself, I'm going to care about others because that's what Jesus is like.

Thank you.