

Morality: Choosing God
Lesson 13 - To Live a Christ-Centered Life

1. How do we live in this world without being overtaken by this world?
 - 1.1. Have you ever had a part-time job?
 - 1.1.1. While I was in college I earned a little extra money by working some hours when I was not in class.
 - 1.1.2. You do the minimum required to get the job done while you are at work.
 - 1.1.3. You never seem to have the time or aspiration to “go beyond” what is required at that moment.
 - 1.2. Many approach their Christianity in the same way
 - 1.2.1. They use it as a spare-time way to “earn” a feeling of rightness with God, which they would otherwise miss. They are only “on duty” when they have nothing “more important” to do
 - 1.2.2. Matthew 7:22-23 - Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!
 - 1.2.3. One person wrote: “You will not fight very valiantly for the life you do not live.”
 - 1.2.4. Another said, “He who is not a Christian all the time is not really a Christian any time.”
 - 1.2.5. David observed, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful,” (Psalms 1:1, NKJV)
 - 1.3. How do we ensure that we are Christians all the time?
 - 1.3.1. Luke 9:23 - And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me
 - 1.3.1.1. To deny oneself means he must give up anything that stands in his way of following Jesus. He must do this daily. This shows it is an everyday occurrence not just an occasional one. A Christian must say no to self and yes to God. This means that a Christian must live what Jesus prayed, “Not my will, but thine be done” (Matthew 26:39). He must be willing to suffer or bear whatever burden is necessary.
 - 1.3.1.2. James 1:2-4 - My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.
 - 1.3.2. Peter in 1 Peter 2:21-24 tells us: For to this you were called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps: Who committed no sin, neither was deception found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed.
 - 1.3.3. What does Christ say?
 - 1.3.3.1. John 14:15; 23-24 - “If you love Me, keep My commandments... If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.”
 - 1.4. The only cure to part-time Christianity is a major turn-around in our lives.
 - 1.4.1. We must decide that we are Christians FIRST and anything else second (Matt. 6:33).
 - 1.4.2. When we get our priorities in order and set heavenly goals working for the Master will take its rightful place (Colossians 3:1-10).
 - 1.4.3. Thank God that Christ Jesus is not a part-time Savior!
2. It is a challenge to live a Christ-centered life. It requires us to live for a cause bigger than one's self. It requires us to change our priorities and channel our efforts. It requires asking of ourselves, “Am I living as Jesus himself would live if he walked in my shoes?”
 - 2.1. Paul shares his attitude in this regard when in Philippians 1:21-24 he states:
 - 2.1.1. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.
 - 2.1.2. Paul has a grasp on the true value of life and of his relationship with Jesus. He sees the glory and wonder of an eternal home in heaven, but also understands his enormous responsibility to

teach those still living about Jesus. We sing a song with the words "OH TO BE LIKE THEE BLESSED REDEEMER; THIS IS MY CONSTANT LONGING AND PRAYER; GLADLY I'LL FORFEIT ALL OF EARTH'S TREASURE, JESUS THY PERFECT LIKENESS TO WEAR". The question we want to address is, do I really mean that. Do I really strive to be like Jesus and live a Christ-centered life?

3. What does a Christ-centered life consist of?
 4. First, we must have our priorities in order.
 - 4.1. Christ tells us in Matthew 6:33: Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness
 - 4.2. For the first century Christian, religious devotion was a consuming fire within. It was not something to be worked in on the weekend or whenever it was convenient. It was the essence of living.
 - 4.3. The attitude of the first century Christian is clearly laid out for us in Acts 2:42-47.
 - 4.4. Paul said in Galatians 2:20: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me
 - 4.5. It is an undeniable reality that for many members of the church, Christianity is but a tiny compartment of their lives. We are "so busy"; who has time for church.
 - 4.5.1. We have school events, recreational activities, and employment concerns.
 - 4.5.2. These have thrust Christian dedication into the background. Vast numbers feel no necessity to faithfully attend the services of the local church. In many congregations, Sunday evening attendance is half what it is for the morning service, and the situation is even worse for mid-week Bible study.
 - 4.6. In Luke 9:23-26 Jesus tells us: If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what advantage is it to a man, if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.
 - 4.7. A life, where the priority is on anything other Christ will, in the end, mean nothing.
 5. A Christ-centered life demands obedience, just as Jesus was obedient.
 - 5.1. Obedience is essential if you wish to live eternally in heaven.
 - 5.2. In looking at the example Jesus set for us, Philippians 2:8 tells us: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross
 - 5.3. Can you imagine waiting in the middle of the night for your captors to take you to your death? You could have snuck out of city. But what do we find Jesus doing?
 - 5.3.1. Turn to Matthew 26 and let's look at both verses 39 and 42:
 - 5.3.1.1. V39 - And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.
 - 5.3.1.2. V42 - He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.
 - 5.3.1.3. Jesus was praying.
 - 5.4. What does our obedience consist of? First, we must have or develop a good and honest heart.
 - 5.4.1. In Luke 8:11-15, Jesus tells us: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are they that hear; then comes the devil, and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.
 - 5.5. Second, you must want the truth. You must love the truth, not just a doctrine; you must want to know what to do to be saved (2 Thess. 2:10). You must desire not simply to be religious, but to be religiously right. Jesus claimed to be the personification of saving truth (John 14:6), and he claimed that saving truth could be found (John 8:31-32).
 - 5.6. Third, you must then seek for God and truth. God wants to be found. He is not far from any of us (Acts 17:27). He wants us to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). When one truly seeks after God and the

truth, you remember the words of Matthew 5:6, which state; Blessed are they, which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

- 5.7. Fourth, having found the truth, you must not only accept it as truth, you must obey it (2 Thess. 1:8). You must submit to the gospel and become a Christian (Mark 16:16). There is no biblical authority for becoming a Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, or a member of any denomination. There is Biblical authority for one's becoming a Christian. And when one becomes a Christian, he becomes at the same time a member of the Lord's church (Acts 2:47).
- 5.8. Fifth, you must live a faithful Christian life day by day. Jesus faced temptations. Heb 4:15 - For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.
 - 5.8.1. Yet his obedience to God in all things made him the perfect sacrifice.
- 5.9. And while we are tempted also, I Corinthians 10:13 states: No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.
 - 5.9.1. Part of our obedience should include faithful attendance at the services of the saints (Heb. 10:25), weekly observance of the Lord's Supper on SUNDAY (1 Cor 11:17-34 & 1 Cor 16:1-2), giving of one's means each Sunday, and righteous living (Tit. 2:11-14).
- 5.10. Our obedience and faithfulness must be real and sincere.
 - 5.10.1. In Revelations 3:15-16, the writer says: I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.
6. Living a Christ-centered life means I live a life of humility like Jesus.
 - 6.1. Philippians 2:3-8
 - 6.2. The gospel, salvation and all that God has to offer is available to all mankind.
 - 6.2.1. Galatians 3:28 tells us: For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
 - 6.3. So many things today, in and out of the church, are done out of hearts full of pride. So many times reflecting the personal arrogance in the lives of individuals. Notice how Jesus epitomizes the humility that we Christians are to possess and demonstrate. Though he is GOD-a status that none of us could even begin to lay claim to - he humbly, willingly, and submissively relinquished divine equality in order to become a human. His humility even extended to his willingness to be subjected to the humiliating treatment associated with the cross.
 - 6.4. I John 2:16 tells us one of the ways Satan tempts people to sin is in regards to the pride of life. Indeed Satan is guilty of this himself by setting himself in opposition to God (I John 3:8). A Christian must be in possession of a sober, accurate assessment of his own person.
 - 6.4.1. Romans 12:3 tells us: For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith
 - 6.5. Christ wants his followers to be meek and poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3, 5).
 - 6.5.1. Even when Jesus expressed righteous wrath as he did in John 2:13-17 when dealing with the moneychangers or uncompromising intolerance as in Matthew 23:13-38 when condemning the Pharisees, his actions conveyed control and continued submission to overriding principles and objectives of the Father.
 - 6.5.2. Even in the midst of a horrible death, when resentment, resistance, and stubborn defiance could have flared, he maintained a controlled humility.
 - 6.5.3. In Matthew 20:28, Jesus defined the parameters and substance of his existence on earth when he rebuked his disciples by reminding them that he came to serve.
 - 6.6. We should approach our daily living and the interactions, which we have with family, business associates, classmates, and fellow Christians upon the basis of these biblical principles.
 - 6.7. Living a Christ-centered life means loving, as Jesus loved.

- 6.7.1. All the issues we have talked about this morning, having you priorities right, living in obedience to God, and living with the humility that Jesus did, would come naturally if we loved as Jesus loved.
- 6.7.2. He exhibited the type of love that is a willed love that does not depend upon the worthiness of its object. It is the kind of love that seeks the best for others, friend or foe.
- 6.7.3. Its fullest demonstration was the Lord on the cross – because he LOVED me so. Love is the basis of all godly characteristics and is emphasized over and over in the way Jesus lived his life.
- 6.7.4. The other parts of the fruit of the spirit such as – joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control – can never flourish or mature without this kind of love.
 - 6.7.4.1. Think of Christ on the cross
- 6.7.5. Christ himself tells us in John 13:15 - For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.
- 6.7.6. What has Jesus done “to us?”
 - 6.7.6.1. Paul tells us in Romans 5:6- 8: For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die. But God demonstrates his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- 7. No greater “hero” has ever walked the face of this earth than Jesus.
 - 7.1. He came to this earth and died; fully aware of the fact we sin, and that only through his death, burial and resurrection would we have the hope of salvation.
 - 7.2. It is impossible for us to comprehend the inexhaustible love that prompted Jesus to clothe himself with lowly humanity, and all for the sake of wretched man.
 - 7.3. Paul put it best in 2 Corinthians 9:15 when he states: Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.
- 8. While I said it is a challenge to live a Christ-centered life that does not mean it has to be hard.
 - 8.1. It requires us to do what the savior says and follow the example he left for us.
 - 8.1.1. Understanding His word is our study next week.
 - 8.2. The challenge and difficulty comes from the fact we try to live outside those two principles.
 - 8.3. We make living a Christ-centered life difficult.
- 9. The life of a genuine Christian is:
 - Challenging.....Luke 14:33
 - Loving.....1 Corinthians 16:14
 - Personal.....Galatians 2:20
 - Serious.....Psalm 27:4
 - Worthwhile.....Psalm 84:10
 - Abundant.....Luke 6:38
 - Joyous.....Romans 5:5
 - Rewarding.....Matthew 8:11
 - Unselfish.....Romans 12:1
 - Influential.....Philippians 2:15