

The Art of Following Jesus

Part 9: Living a questionable life on purpose

Matthew 5:14-16 - [watch online](#)

Summary:

God isn't distant, disinterested, or mad at you. He created you specifically on purpose. He loves you, likes you, and enjoys you! He invites all of us to experience a life more fulfilling and satisfying than we can imagine. We find this life by practicing the Art of Following Jesus.

Main Points:

[01:26] The Kingdom of God is here now and it is discovered by simply following Jesus.

[02:42] Following Jesus is not difficult but it is all-consuming. It is not burdensome but it requires us to completely change our lives.

[04:20] If we want to have untypical lives we have to commit to doing untypical things.

[07:01] When we follow Jesus we can't help but become the light of the world.

[07:47] Jesus Followers shine so that others may see Jesus.

[11:28] The goal of practicing the Art of Following Jesus is to learn how to live a "questionable life."

[16:30] When we practice the Art of Following Jesus our questionable lives will shine the light of Jesus and change the world around us.

Invitation: [12:20]

Make practicing the Art of Following Jesus the rhythm of your life. [Downloadable PDF.](#)

- Take time to practice solitude/silence/prayer
- Commit to training to be outwardly focused together (Radio Tower)
- Purposely and regularly study Jesus (4 Gospels best place to start)
- Practicing blessing 3 people a week
- Take steps to be generous toward the mission of the Church
- Eat and drink with at least 3 people a month
- Find times and ways to worship God for who he is and what he has done
- Purposely choose to enjoy what God has given you as a celebration of his goodness and care

Discussion Questions:

1. What has stood out to you most in this week's message or in this series?
2. Read Matthew 5:14-16 and 1 Peter 3:13-17. What would living questionable lives specifically look like in your sphere of influence?
3. Review the 8 practices listed. Which seem most natural for you? Which seem more difficult? Why do you think that is?
4. Jon said, "Make practicing the Art of Following Jesus the rhythm of your life." What would initiating a plan to put these into practice look like for you over the next 3 months?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

Transcript:

INTRO: If Jesus was right... then God is real. And he isn't distant / disinterested / mad at you.

If Jesus was right then God specifically made you on purpose. He sees/knows/loves you. He likes and enjoys you.

If Jesus was right then it means that every day we have and even every breath we take is a gift from our Heavenly Father and we are invited to use those days and breaths to live a life that rises above the ordinary and mundane... we are invited to live in the Kingdom of God now... today.

This life is discovered, enjoyed, and shared when we practice the Art of Following Jesus... So let's talk about it...together.

WE: Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God wasn't some distant, ethereal mystic existence in the future.

According to Jesus, the Kingdom of God can be lived in and experienced now... We can enjoy a daily life of personal relationship with our Creator.

Having his love, peace, joy, patience, power living in us and through us as we are transformed moment by moment by his own personal presence living in us... the HS.

How do we find this life?

By following Jesus.

The KoG is here now and it is discovered by simply following Jesus.

As Jesus said... **Matthew 16:24**

"If anyone wants to follow Me..." Anyone means everyone, everywhere is invited to follow Jesus and the only requirement is to WANT to follow him. To choose to give our allegiance to Jesus

But to actually follow requires something of us... to give up our own way and take up our cross and follow (be following me)...

And this is what so many who claim the title of JF miss...

We miss it b/c either we just don't know how to do it, what to do, or we think it's too much work, too hard, we're too busy, our routines are too set, that's for 'those holy people,' and besides "this Jesus thing is great but I don't want to be a nut about it. "

But here's the thing... **Following Jesus is not difficult but it is all-consuming. It is not burdensome but it requires us to completely change our lives.**

And that is why we have been studying The Art of Following Jesus. Doing the things that he did so that we can effortlessly live like he lived.

And to follow him in his purpose of seeking and saving the lost and bringing the KoG to earth now.

Creating a rhythm in our lives that allows us to work with the HS of God in whatever we are doing and whoever we are with.

Jesus offers us extraordinary lives but too often we settle for normal, typical, routine, and boring... and we wake up one day and it's been 20 years and maybe we had some good times, but we never really experienced the life Jesus offers in the KoG... With really no impact on the world or the Kingdom of God.

You are invited to so much more... try to wrap your mind around this... If JF, Jesus himself, God in a body who died and rose again, is personally inviting you to participate in his life's mission... to restore humanity back to their place in his family.

- Not just some faceless crowd... but people you KNOW... your parents, your brother and sister, your kids, your kids' friends' parents, your grandkids, your neighbors, your co-workers, your teachers, your friends, your barista.

We have an extraordinary opportunity to live extraordinary lives for the most extraordinary purpose.

But **if we want to have *untypical* lives we have to commit to doing *untypical* things.**

It is exactly what Jesus said in his most famous teachings...

GOD: Matthew/Sermon on Mt/ Probably collection of main teachings of Jesus

In it he describes his purpose for those who follow him...

Matt 5:14

JF's together are the light of the world. Love this imagery of light... because light does so much... is so powerful.

First **light lets us see reality**... And the reality is... every single human (mom, neighbor, co-worker) is created in the image of God. Is a beloved child of their Heavenly Father. And at every moment he is pursuing us with his perfect love and acceptance.

We are not alone, forgotten. We haven't run too far, we haven't fallen so deep that he won't find us and rescue us and restore us to our intended place in his family.

And Jesus' followers have the privilege of being the people who get to shine light on that reality for the rest of the world.

Light helps us find our way. When it's so dark we don't know where to go... we turn on the light, we turn on a flashlight and we can see our path back home.

JF's are invited to be guides leading those around them back home to their Heavenly Father. To help people see the steps to take, the path to follow. To remove every obstacle that would keep someone from finding their way.

And light removes darkness.

This world can be a dark place. A scary and lonely place. But JF's can bring a light that banishes the darkness. We are made to chase the darkness from the lives of those around us and replace it with life, love, hope, joy, peace.

Now notice... Jesus didn't say, "You SHOULD be the light of the world. Try to be the light of the world and when you can't do it feel guilty. Hope to someday somehow be the light of the world."

He said you ARE the light of the world. **When we follow Jesus we can't help but become the light of the world.**

When we practice the Art of Following Jesus... when we choose to practice what Jesus practiced... It lets us work with the HS who changes us, transforms our lives... to be the light of the world.

So what does this look like?

V. 15-16 Let your light shine. Let your good deeds shine out... so people will think you're great and want to be your friend?

No... so everyone will praise your Heavenly Father.

JF's shine so that others may see Jesus.

That's why we have spent the last 8-9 weeks talking about the Art of Following Jesus... Back in the 1st part we said... Mature Jesus following isn't just for the good of the Jesus Follower. It's for the good of everyone.

We don't just follow Jesus so that we can have happy Me and Jesus Time and maybe sin a little less... We practice following Jesus so our light can point people to Jesus.

- So we can participate in God's purpose for the world

As we enjoy the life Jesus offers we are billboards advertising the life Jesus offers everyone.

We've looked at 8 (there are many more) practices that help us live as active followers of Jesus:

We practice Silence/Solitude/Prayer so we can know the HS, we can hear him and talk with him... have him start shaping our hearts/growing the light we have to shine...

When we hear him we discover his heart and his purpose... seeking and saving the lost. So we take steps to purposely practice having outwardly focused lives together... Radio Tower... to shine our light together.

We study Jesus and his life and how he has interacted with others to learn what he did and why what he said and why he said it so that acting and speaking like Jesus starts to become second nature... So we can bring the true light into whatever darkness people find themselves in.

We practice serving others on purpose... and becoming "blessing people" in order to bring Jesus' love to those around us. To bring Jesus' light and help lift the burdens life has put on all of us.

We practice generosity and frugality to train our hearts to be set on the Kingdom of God so that his purpose can be our purpose. So that we can invest in the mission of guiding others on their journeys to Jesus.

We practice hospitality, eating and drinking with people, to shine a light on the reality that Jesus accepts and identifies with all of us.

And as we practice worship we shine a light on how great and awesome and loving and powerful God really is...

And we shine a light on how generous and good he is by practicing celebration and enjoying what he has given us and inviting others to join in that celebration.

Yes, we absolutely benefit by creating these rhythms and applying these practices to our lives... but more than that... These practices allow us to work with the HS to shape us into lights that will point to Jesus and how to experience the life he offers.

How?

It's exactly what Peter wrote in 1 Peter. After explaining what it would look like to be a light in their 1st century culture he says... **1 Peter 3:15**...

When you worship Jesus with your life, when you are truly practicing the Art of Following Jesus, people notice how you live and then they start asking questions.

- What's different about you?
- Why do you seem to enjoy life so much?
- Why do you love each other/me so much?
- Why do you seem to not care about getting ahead but work so hard to help others succeed?
- Why do you seem so peaceful and confident?
- Why aren't you caught up in all this noise around us?

The goal of practicing the Art of Following Jesus is to learn how to live a "questionable life."

What does living "questionable lives" look like in our culture?

Well unfortunately as Pastor/Author Michael Frost wrote it's not... "living a fine upstanding middle-class lifestyle in the suburbs."

If we want to have a light that stands out we have to do things that stand out.

And there are as many ways to do that as there are stars in the sky... but I think at the core are the things we have talked about...

YOU: And here is my final invitation... don't let what we've talked about become just another series that we move on from and forget...

Invitation: Make practicing the Art of Following Jesus the rhythm of your life.

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In which of these 8 do you think you are the strongest/seem most natural for you? Keep it up! Keep going!

Which seems more difficult? Initiate a plan to make it a habit. Maybe use this list to help guide your prayer time? Two birds!

For me lately, I'm pretty bad at eating and drinking with people and purposely taking time to celebrate... so I'm going to purposely make a plan to help me do those.

I'm telling you... if these things become part of who we are... if we hold these few things up as what we are going to practice as JF's together...

- We would shine a light so bright... that, as our lives were inevitably transformed, Jesus would absolutely use us to change the lives of those around us.

If you've been waiting for something to move you. If you've been waiting for the right time to take a step... this is your invitation.

It's time. Don't miss another day.

Commit to the journey... commit your life to the King who lived and died to give you true life.

- If not now... when?

WE: Everyday and every breath is a gift from our HF. He wants us to enjoy the life he has given us and use it for the greatest purpose in the cosmos.

I don't want to die and at my funeral they say... "Well he was a hard worker and then he retired and kinda just did whatever to keep from being bored."

I want people to say... "When he was in the room you knew you were loved. He showed me who Jesus is, not just with his words but by how he lived his life."

I want my kids to know who Jesus is not just b/c of what I tell them but b/c of what they experience on a daily basis from their human father.

I want our community at large to be so impacted and loved by our church community that if we ever had to leave for any reason they would beg us to stay.

Our neighbors are created in the image of God. They are his beloved children and many of them don't know it.

Many have never had someone shine the light to show them the reality of who they are, to show them the way back to their Father, and to chase the darkness from their lives.

As JF's we ARE that light.

And we discover our purpose and grow more and more as we purposely apply these practices to our lives.

2 Peter 1:8

The way of Jesus spread so quickly in the 1st century that historians are still trying to figure out just how it happened...

Do you want to know how it happened?

100's of 1000's of individual JF's... Of every ethnicity/gender/nationality/economic status/age lived such questionable lives that people's curiosity was evoked and when they asked "why"... they found Jesus.

It can happen again.

When we practice the Art of Following Jesus our questionable lives will shine the light of Jesus and change the world around us.