

## The Story of Jesus

### Part 36: Finding Your Life's Focus

Mark 12:35-44 - [watch online](#)

**Summary:** Shifting our focus can give us clarity and purpose even in the middle of life's distractions.

#### [00:00] Main Ideas:

[01:16] Our focus determines our direction.

[02:02] The Kingdom of God was the central focus of Jesus' life.

[04:55] If we want to experience the life Jesus offers we have to change our focus.

[05:33] Life becomes blurry when our focus is on ourselves.

[06:31] Constant self-focus leads to oblivious self-deception.

[08:34] Focusing on the KoG brings clarity to our lives.

[09:26] When we fully focus on God's kingdom, we learn to fully trust him.

[11:31] What we do with our money reveals and directs our focus.

[14:28] A clear focus reveals our place in the world.

#### Invitation:

Ask: What kingdom am I focusing on?

Change your focus through deliberate practice.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think are some common "distractions" that keep people from being able to focus on what truly matters?
2. Jon said, "Our focus determines our direction." Can you think of any examples from your life where you've seen this play out?
3. Read Matthew 6:33. What does it mean to you to "Seek the Kingdom of God?"
4. What practices could you deliberately implement to shift your focus more fully to the Kingdom of God?
5. How can your group pray with you?

---

#### Transcript:

**ME:** I often have a hard time focusing on what's important....

- Whether it's deciding which relationship needs my attention... wife, kids, friends, my own self.
- Or figuring out which task/chore/job to tackle first
- What worry needs to be worried the most right now?
- Constant challenge

**WE:** Sound familiar?

- We are all juggling so many responsibilities and trying to find the perfect balance.
- We want to find a way to effectively prioritize and focus on what matters?

This is incredibly important b/c.. **Our focus determines our direction.**

If our focus gets out of balance our whole life seems out of balance.

You know this...

If we focus on our worries... our lives will be overrun w/ fear

Always focus on how we've been hurt/wronged... end up bitter and angry

Focus solely on our career? Lose relationships

W/o a proper and clear focus we'll look around someday and wonder how we got so far from where we were wanting our lives to go.

Thankfully we aren't left to blindly wander about on our own...

Jesus had this figured out...

- Whether debating religious leaders, healing people, or teaching God's truths.
- He navigated life with a clear sense of focus... **The Kingdom of God was the central focus of Jesus' life.**
- And b/c of it he changed the lives around him and the world forever.

He said we can do the same... and if we do

- Not only will it change our lives and relationships it can let us be part of changing the world with him.
- We'll have a clear focus to help us direct our attention/life where it needs to be.

So let's look at one of his last teachings recorded in Mark... to see what his focus was and how we can have the same.

**GOD:** So far... Jesus' focus has led him to Jerusalem.

- On the way we heard him called "The Son of David" by a blind beggar
- As he rode into the city people shouted, "Blessings on the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!"

See... God promised King David that one of his descendants would be king forever...

By Jesus' time, the term "Son of David", was used to refer to this promised king who would be the Messiah, savior, chosen one God had promised.

And many people, including the nationalistic religious leaders, were looking for this Son of David to come, form an army, defeat Rome, and reestablish the monarchy, continuing the dynasty of David.

But Jesus wasn't trying to build an army or become a political leader...

- His focus was on something bigger/better

**Mark 12:35-37**

The people were so focused on looking for a Messiah just like David, who would restore their country.

- Who would give them the life they wanted
- Who would destroy their enemies

They were so focused on getting rid of Rome that they were missing what God was doing right in front of them.

Jesus: If you really understood God's plan for the Messiah you wouldn't be looking for some military figure... you'd be looking for something so much better.

Even King David called this future savior 'Lord'

- This savior wouldn't be just another king like David... he would be greater than David

He's going to bring God's true Kingdom but not as David's son, as his Lord.

- God himself, come to rescue, not just Israel, but the entire world.
- Bringing a kingdom bigger and better than anyone could imagine
- A kingdom that would bring true life now and forever

And, Jesus says, If you want to join this kingdom you're going to have to change your focus... If we want to experience the life Jesus offers we have to change our focus.

He then illustrates this with two examples

- Self-focused religious leaders
- And a KoG focused widow.

**V. 38-40** Life becomes blurry when our focus is on ourselves. (A nearsighted life)

B/c these leaders' focus was on establishing a kingdom like every other kingdom that had come before them... they valued what every other kingdom values...

- Prestige, power, wealth.

In fact their true focus was on themselves... really on their own personal kingdoms.

- One commentator called it self-intoxication.
- What they could get, who they could impress,
- Not caring who they hurt as long as they got what they wanted
- All the while claiming to be the example of what God wants his people to be like.

Throughout their scriptures widows were seen as some of the most vulnerable people, and God expected his people to care for them.

- But for these leaders it was fine to take advantage of these vulnerable people b/c they had all the show of pious religion.

When we are so focused on ourselves, wants, needs, image... we can't see the truth about our lives.

Constant self-focus leads to oblivious self-deception

Couldn't see just how far they had fallen from the true heart of God.

Couldn't focus on the true King and his Kingdom when it was staring them in the face.

Even though this self-deception seems impossible to cure/can't even see your need for it... there is a solution.

And Jesus uses a poor widow to show us how a change of focus can change the direction of our lives.

**V. 41-44** In part of the Temple there were chests set up for voluntary offerings to help pay for the work of the temple.

The rich would come and give gold and silver, showing off their wealth and presumably their devotion to God.

But Jesus points out a poor widow who gives only two small copper coins... the smallest currency...

He says she has given the most b/c she has given all she has...

- Quite possibly leaving herself without funds for her next meal.

Which just doesn't seem logical does it?

- Feed yourself first, obviously God will understand... it's not like he's going to miss those two little coins compared to the gold and silver of the rich people.
- Or if you feel compelled to give, give one of your coins and live off the other

But she gives BOTH coins... all she has. And Jesus commends her for it... WHY?

B/c her focus is not on herself or her kingdom... her focus is on the KoG.

And this is the key... this is the focus that changes everything... the focus Jesus had... the focus he said we can have...

**The KoG**- God being king of his people's hearts and lives on earth as it is in heaven.

**Focusing on the KoG brings clarity to our lives.**

She is so focused on the KoG that she doesn't care what it costs her personally, what it might do to her personal kingdom.

- She trusted that God would take care of her
- So she gave all she had to help others and to support the temple.
- She shows what it means to love your neighbor as yourself...

Jesus praises her to show that in the KoG, it's not how much you give that matters, but how dedicated you are.

Probably not the 1st time she's done this... and she's experienced God doing what he always does..... providing for her needs.

- There's no way Jesus commends her for giving everything she has knowing she will now starve to death.

She has learned a key principle of the universe... **When we fully focus on God's kingdom, we learn to fully trust him.**

She trusts that her gift will do good and that she will survive w/o it.

And when we have to fully rely on God we get to see him show up over and over again.

- I've seen it happen over and over again in my life, friends lives, and in the life of this church.

Focusing on the KoG brings clarity to our lives.

This shift isn't just a vague religious concept... it's something we can actively practice in our lives...

So how can we start making this shift in focus today?

**YOU:** If you want clarity in your life...

**Ask: What kingdom am I focusing on?**

- Am I focusing on my own kingdom... wants, worries, fears,
- When I want to get a project/assignment done/go home early but someone needs my help/attention what kingdom will I choose to focus on?
- Which choice comes from the KoG and what comes from trying to serve my own kingdom or impress someone else?
- Am I focused on becoming greater in my, someone else's eyes... or am I focused on making someone else greater/showing the great love of God?

Then... **Change your focus through deliberate practice.**

We have to choose to be different if we want to see a difference.

There are many ways to practice this change of focus...

- Last week: praying for the good of others
- Regularly and consistently being in a community of people who focus on KoG
- Regularly giving your time to serve others

But the best way to deliberately practice is purposely using our money for the KoG...

The point of the story of the widow isn't just about money... but at the same time it's not not about money either.

**What we do with our money reveals and directs our focus...**

- As Jesus said... Where your treasure is there your heart will be also.

And we, and by we I mean me... are so quick to say maybe for them but not for me.

So I'll challenge you to look at this 1 1st...

B/c this really is the biggest indicator of what your focus really is... are you using your money for the KoG?

B/c when we give with a focus on the KoG it's not giving a little bit and feeling good about ourselves...

- It's giving to the point where we are forced to rely on God.

- Giving to the point that we feel it and actually have to sacrifice things we want for the good of the KoG... for the good of others.

Now just so you don't think I'm being self-serving here... If you're willing to actually do this feel free to give to any non-profit you think needs it and can do the most good with it.

- CCC can definitely use it but I care more that you are practicing focusing on KoG than if we are able to meet the budget this month.

From personal experience giving like this can hurt in the moment but I've never regretted it... and I've never been asked for a refund.

And as you practice (whatever is best for you) you'll begin to have more and more clarity in your life.

- You'll begin seeing what's truly needing your focus right now and what isn't
- You begin to see that most of what we worry about isn't important and what is important we don't have to worry about... b/c in the KoG we can trust the King knows what he is doing.

This is the clarity we are looking for in our lives.

**WE:** Our focus determines our direction...

What we focus on will decide what our life looks like.

If we don't choose what will be our primary focus...

- Life will constantly throw new things to distract us...
- And we'll end up somewhere and even someone we don't recognize or even like.

We can either focus on just whatever happens to us, focus on our worries, focus on what we think we want right now...

Or we can purposely practice focusing on the KoG.

Focusing on the one thing that brings clarity to every other part of life.

That's what Jesus is offering... a life where you know your goal. A life that has purpose, meaning, direction.

A life where those around you know you are focused on what is best for them,

- Were you're not sucked into needless worry,
- Or arguing b/c you know what kingdom you are living for.

It's the life we are looking for

The life we're made for... it's the life that can change other lives.

A clear focus reveals our place in the world.