

# THE MISSIONAL MARRIAGE STUDY – SEASON 2

## *“Incarnational Marriage: Implications from Christ’s Ministry on Earth”*

### *Session 2.2 - Christ & His Mission*

#### CONCEPTUAL IDEAS TO CONVEY:

- ❖ Jesus Christ was very clear in why it was He came to earth. Because He knew His mission so well, He was able to make the best use of His time and make the right decisions along the way, which enabled Him to be effective towards that mission.
- ❖ In the same way Christ was sent, so He has sent His followers (John 17:18, 20:21)- to live a life of intention, based upon the mission of His Gospel.
- ❖ We must determine what our mission is AND take intentional steps towards arranging our lives around it... if we ever hope to be effective in fulfilling it
- ❖ But we must be careful, because there are many “imitations” out in the world that can confuse followers of Christ into thinking their mission is something other than what God intends it to be.

#### THE MISSION OF AMERICANS:

A person’s purpose is usually determined by what it is they believe is the chief cause of man. A person’s beliefs are often times shaped by what it is they value to be important or true. The choices one will make often stem out of those values they embrace. Here’s a quick survey on the values of our culture and the consequences that come out of the decisions that are being made by people all throughout our country...

- Each year, there are more Americans who declare bankruptcy than graduate from college (1/3 of all families)
- American parents spend an average of 6 hours shopping each week. Yet those same parents only spend an average of 40 minutes each week playing with their kids.
- America spends more money each year on shoes, jewelry, and watches than on higher education
- Only ¼ of all shoppers have a particular purchase in mind when they go to the mall
- 80% of all Americans report that they are “in debt” of some shape, or form financially
- 45% of Americans report that they are currently “in credit card debt.”
- The typical U.S. household carries an average credit card balance of \$8,000...
- 80% of all incoming college freshman have yet to choose a major, even though they have already applied, been accepted, and have begun classes at college.
- 50% of all collegians will change majors at least once
- 40% of students who enter into a 4-year degree plan, will not have graduated by the time year 6 rolls around
- The average tuition costs \$13,833 a year
- The typical college student collects an average of \$3,000 credit card debt while in college – and a total of over \$15,000 in student loans...
- After all of that, nearly 67% of all college graduates will end up working in a career field that has nothing to do with the degree they went into debt to earn.
- \$10 billion of American dollars was spent on video games just last year... that’s enough money to put a bible in the hands of every person in the world... twice!
- Each year the average American spends: \$400 on tobacco, \$500 on alcohol, \$2,600 eating out, \$1,900 on clothes, & \$2,500 on movies, video games, and other forms of entertainment
- It’s estimated that all the money spent on Black Friday last year ( day after Thanksgiving) could have ended world hunger
- It’s estimated that if you counted up all the loose change in homes all across America- it would equal \$7.7 billion dollars... enough to end world hunger and begin treating every infectious disease out there.
- Most American’s spend between 6-8 hours a day in front of a Television
- More American’s visited casinos last year than they did professional sporting events – losing an estimated \$50 billion dollars.

#### INITIAL QUESTIONS FOR DIALOGUE:

- What do those statistics tell you about what American’s are pursuing or why American’s believe they exist?
- Do you see yourself or your marriage in any of those statistics?
- What’s the typical “life plan” for most people in our country?
- What, if any, of that plan is biblical healthy? What, if any, of that plan is counter-productive to the Gospel?
- Though the culture was different, do you think people struggled with some of the same temptations and values in Jesus’ day?
- Why do you think Jesus was able to live counter-cultural while He was on earth?

## JESUS ON WHY HE WAS HERE:

He came to SAVE the lost

- **Luke 19:10** – *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost*
- **John 3:17** – *For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him*
- **John 10:10** – *I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly*

He came to SERVE others

- **Mark 10:45** – *For the Son of many did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many*

He came to PROCLAIM the truth

- **Luke 4:43** – *(Fringe) – I must preach the Kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose*
- **Luke 4:18** – *(Poor & Enslaved) – The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives*
- **John 12:46** – *(Darkened) – I have come as a Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness*

Even from a young age, Jesus knew why He was here...

- **Matthew 2:49** – (Jesus' mom asking where He had been all day...) *"Why is it you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?"*

## TWO SPECIFIC RESULTS OF JESUS KNOWING HIS MISSION:

1.) **He could be strategic with His PLANS...** The Gospel of Luke paints this picture...

- a. 4:15 – He taught in their synagogues
- b. 4:16 – It was His custom
- c. 4:31 – Repeats this at Capernaum
- d. 4:43 – Restates His purpose to preach
- e. 4:44 – He continued
- f. 6:13 – He chooses His disciples, two reasons...
  - i. To go with Him (Mark 3:13-14)\*
  - ii. To be fishers of men (Mark 3:13-14)\*
- g. 8:1 – They were with Him\*
- h. 9:1-2 – He sent them out\*
- i. 9:18-20 – He follows up on the results
- j. 10:1 – He sends out the 70 to precede His visit
- k. 10:21 – He is joyous because the plan is working
- l. Matt. 28:18-20 – He tells them to implement this same strategy!

2.) **He could be strategic with His DECISIONS...** Specifically in what to say "no" to an what to say "yes" to...

- a. No to Showing Off... **John 2:1-11** – Wedding @ Cana / h2o=wine
- b. No to Instant Gratification... **Matt. 4:1-4** – Temptation to use power to eat
- c. No to Instant Power... **Matt. 4:5-7** – Temptation to use power for power
- d. No to Instant Position... **Matt. 4:8-10** – Temptation to use power for exultation
- e. No to Quick Fixes... **Mark 8:31-35** – Peter's suggestion that He not die
- f. No to Revenge... **Matt. 27:39-43** – Those mockers who told Jesus to take Himself off the cross
- g. Yes to a Tax Collector... **Luke 19:1-10** – Zaccheus who wanted forgiveness from Jesus
- h. Yes to a Bleeding Woman & Dead Daughter... **Luke 8:40-55; Mark 5:30, 32** – People with physical needs
- i. Yes to a Hungry Crowd... **Mark 6:30-44** – A crowd who had no shepherd to take care of them

Christ was able to discern what to say yes to, and what to say no to- all because He was aware of what He'd been called to! So much so, that at the end of His life He was able to say to the Father who commissioned Him, *"I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do."* (**John 17:4**)

**Question for Thought...** Now knowing what Jesus' mission was here on earth- and the fact that He has personally challenged us to engage in the same (**Matt. 28:19 / John 17:18**)... how should that mission translate over into your marriage?

## SCREWTAPE LETTER ACTIVITY:

In his book, *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis uses the correspondence between the devil and a demon to give a glimpse of how evil conspires to work in tandem with a person's strengths and weaknesses to cause them destruction, or at least to give them a baneful existence. Using this literary device, pretending for just a moment that you were Satan, how would you attempt to de-rail your marriage from God's mission if you were him? What means would you use to distract, discredit, defile, or disqualify your marriage from fulfilling God's purpose for you on earth?

This exercise can be helpful in identifying blind spots or weaknesses in your marriage that you might be taking for granted. And in doing so, provides a perspective by which you can begin to safeguard and strengthen your marriage towards effectiveness in the Great Commission.

## HOMEWORK:

- ❖ Re-asses the "mission" of your marriage with your spouse. Answer the following questions...
  - If someone were to look at our marriage from the outside right now, who would they say our marriage glorifies most... Jesus or us? Why is that?
  - How is our current decision-making process affecting the mission God has given us? Is it supporting the mission or hindering it?
  - Based upon the mission of the Gospel, assess your ability to appropriately say "yes" or "no" in the following areas...
    - How we spend our money?
    - How we utilize our material resources?
    - Who we spend our time with?
    - What we spend our time doing?
- ❖ Go back to your mission statement and values from last year... how are y'all doing? Are you living out what you said you were about? If not, why not? And if not, what can you and your spouse be doing right now to change the direction of your marriage so that your marriage will become more firmly centered in the middle of God's will and mission for your lives?
- ❖ Spend time in prayer, asking God to protect you from the snares of this world and for courage and obedience to live out your marriage for the sake of the Gospel.