

Softball Devotion #2: Living a Christ Centered Life

July 4th, 2009

This year, CGC Cornerstone is covering the theme of “Going back to the basics”. In other words we are taking a step back and looking into the foundation of Christianity. Our first devotional covered the Gospel and what it is about. Mankind sinned against God, and the punishment for sinning is death and separation from Him. Everyone is a sinner in the eyes of God, and there is no possible way for us to save ourselves. God in His mercy provided His only son Jesus Christ to die as a substitute for our sin. Through Christ’s death on the cross, we have been forgiven of our sin and declared righteous in the eyes of God.

Today we will be continuing in the gospel by covering what a Christ centered life looks like. Let us start by taking a look at 3 points: 1) A life without Christ 2) How do we put Christ First 3) A life with Christ.

Without Christ

2 Timothy 3:2-5 *“People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power.”*

- Verse is describing the sin of the world.

Think about it, doesn’t this description fit the society of today? Every day we hear of a scandals, corruption and crimes going on in our society. We are Godless, unholy, and without love. All of us here are guilty of at least one if not more of those things in the verse. Deep down we are all like that. **1 Peter 4:3** makes it clear we are corrupted with sin and it has been built into our daily lives and thoughts. Bottom line is God detests those things, it is sin. This is the life that those without Christ choose to live, and they do not see the fault in their ways. Example: Me before I became a Christian. Looking out for myself, lying tongue, all these sins that were committed. Then I found the mercy and forgiveness of Christ, committed myself to change, and the first step was to put Christ first.

How do we put Christ First?

So if this is what’s wrong with our lives, we can expect that a Christ centered life will be the exact opposite. At that point where we turn our lives to Christ, and we follow him, we are expected to no longer conform to this pattern of this world – **Romans 12:2**.

Christ says in **Matthew 16:24** "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

The first part of the verse tells us that we must deny ourselves (meaning the worldly things we value, money, car, clothes...) by submitting to the will of God – even when it means that we will be ridiculed by our friends or even losing the people, jobs, possessions that we care about. We must put God first in our lives; Jesus Christ needs to be the most important thing. We must say “no” to the world and all the temporary riches that it holds. Example: Dad. When he was a teenager, he became a Christian, his parents are Roman Catholics. Try as they might, they couldn’t “reconvert” him”. In the end, my Dad left his parents (kicked out of the family), his sisters, his friends and his home because he had put Christ first in his life.

Second part of the verse says take up your cross to follow Jesus. The cross symbolized death and sacrifice for Christ and it means the same thing for us. We are to give our lives in total dedication to Christ by following in his footsteps. Now this doesn't mean we are going to die physically (although it is quite possible) like him, but it means a daily total sacrifice of our old sinful self to do the will of Jesus (**Luke 9:23**). When your friends or family tempt you to do something sinful or non-glorifying to Christ, flee from this temptation, it shows that you put Christ first above them.

With Christ

A Christ centered life is illustrated in **Ephesians 5:1-14**. ¹“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.^[a] ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be partners with them.

⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for it is light that makes everything visible.”

What a contrast we have between **2 Timothy 3:2-5** and **Ephesians 5:1-14**. Some key contrasts are shown in... We are called to love, not ourselves, but everyone, our brothers, family, friends, and most importantly God. Tim 2:2 – the love of money, in Ephesians, our lives are suppose to be free of greed... Get rid of obscene talk...

Essentially we are called to be the opposite of the world, by living a pure and holy, sin-free life. And we do it by putting God first in our lives by imitating Him in every matter and moment that we face. We are to avoid sin, at all costs.

So let me end off by asking this question. For those who have accepted Christ in their lives, what is the center of your life? Your friends, family? Or is it Christ?

For those who don't know Christ. I urge you to talk to your governors, or myself, and we would be more than willing to talk to you about Christ and why we should all strive to be like him.