

“The Great Omission-Living Like Jesus in the Everyday”

Series: Follow the Star

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We just spent the last 4 weeks in a state of great anticipation for the birth of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. There's this huge build-up to this “one day” out of the whole year. In the blink of an eye; it's over. Growing up I remember looking around the family room on Christmas night; presents strewn everywhere, trash cans full of wrapping paper, the lingering scents of Christmas dinner, and my family lying on couches or on the floor just feeling worn out. What next? The celebration of the new year quickly approaching perhaps? Then we have random holidays throughout the year to “hold us over” until Easter. After Easter we look forward to the summer, then the fall, and before we know it, it's time to start thinking about Christmas, again. We live in a society that functions around time, events, and schedules. We are always looking towards the “next best thing,” often not focusing on the daily routines that make up the majority of our lives. Even within those times of schedules and day-to-day activities, many of us find it boring. Why am I in this place in life right now, God? I feel like I was created for something greater! However, even God came down and lived this life of day-to-day for 30 years without leaving a mark.

After today, I want us to leave here believing that God's moving in our lives even when it's not obvious. God's not just in the big moments. Jesus gave us that example. The majority of Jesus' existence wasn't even documented in the Bible! There's a giant “omission” of His life. Scripture only contains a few stories from birth to 30. There are specific ways for us to live in our daily lives that Jesus demonstrated! Before we dive into “The Great Omission,” let's first look at what IS there.

We have 2 Gospels that document the birth and early life of Jesus: Matthew and Luke. In Luke, Chapter 2, we learn that Jesus was born in a cave, which was part of the house where animals would be kept for the night to protect them from robbers, predators, or harsh weather. They were not in the house because it was the census, so the “guest room” was already full.

Jesus was born surrounded by Mary, Joseph, and animals.

Also in **Luke 2**, we find that Jesus is presented at the Temple. According to Jewish Law, He's to be circumcised 8 days after birth. It's during this ceremony that Simeon, moved by the Holy Spirit, blesses, praises, and thanks God for Jesus. He's a prophet who God told would see the Messiah, the promised King before he died. So Simeon lives his life justly, devoutly, and waits patiently for the Lord's will to be done. It's also in this passage that Anna, a prophetess praises and thanks God for Jesus. They celebrate the birth of the Savior and continue to worship God, for His promises had been fulfilled to them (vv. 21-40)!

Fast forward to about 2 years later Jesus is a toddler. We find our next documented event in **Matthew 2**. The Lord visits many people in their dreams at this time including the wise men and Joseph. In his dream Joseph is told to protect his family by traveling to Egypt. He is to wait for Herod to die because he wants to kill Jesus (*Matthew 2:13-15*.) After Herod dies, Joseph is revisited by the angel and told that it's safe to return back to Nazareth.

We fast-forward again about 10 years later. Jesus is 12 years old. Every year, it is the custom to travel to Jerusalem for Passover. There's celebrating for a few days and then the trip back home with the caravan. **Luke 2** tells us that it takes Mary and Joseph a while to realize Jesus wasn't anywhere to be found! They return to Jerusalem to find Jesus sitting in the Temple; learning and asking questions of the doctors and rabbis. When Mary and Joseph question Jesus about why He didn't "ask permission of them first" Jesus replies with, "didn't you know I had to be in my Father's House! (v.49)" They return to Nazareth and this story ends with verse 52, "And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man."

And suddenly, the Bible jumps 18 years to when John the Baptist is in the wilderness and Jesus is called to ministry. In the blink of an eye, Jesus is 30 and is stepping out of the "ordinary" life that He's been living.

In fact, this "great omission" of no record for most of Jesus' 30 years really bothered people. They were so curious about what Jesus may have been doing that they even made up stories about His life to fill in some of that gap. They imagined what it would be like for an ordinary child to have all of the power that God does and here are some of the results. "One day young Jesus was playing with some of the other boys in the neighborhood creating animal figures out of clay. Trying to outdo each other by making the best figures. Jesus, decided to make his figures come alive and whatever He instructed them to do, they did! The boys went home to their parents and told them what Jesus did. They called Him a sorcerer and the boys weren't allowed to play with Him again! Another time, James, Jesus' brother was bitten by a poisonous viper. Jesus simply went over to James and blew over the bite mark and James was healed! [The Lost Books of the Bible]"

What did Jesus actually do? Apparently nothing worth recording in the Bible. He lives to spend time with His Father, obey God, works as a carpenter/construction worker and has siblings. After Joseph dies (which is some point after being left at the Temple,) Jesus is responsible for all of the "head of the house" duties now that He's the oldest male.

For the majority of our lives we have these habitual routines too. Wake up, family duties, work/household chores, eat throughout the day, social activities/events, sleep, repeat. It can start to feel meaningless. Have you ever gone to bed dreading the next day because you knew EXACTLY how it would go down? I've been there, it's not fun. However, God never intended for us to dread or even hate how we're living our lives. There's a meaning, a purpose for everyday of our lives that we live. This is the first thing we learn from Jesus' "Great Omission," is to understand the importance of living the everyday life without depending on the big events for satisfaction!

In the first 30 years of Jesus' life, He **simply** lived. He learned to appreciate the gift of living the ordinary day-to-day by working and living in community. He focused on those who were all around Him and built relationships with them. God gave Him the freedom to live; experience the highs and lows, the pain and suffering along with unspeakable joy. This is why Jesus understands us. Jesus experienced the same emotions and trials that we face today. And He lived the day-to-day.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 does a wonderful job of explaining why we're to live the day-to-day life. Many of you might even recognize it from the very first line. "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens (1)." Verses 2-8 then go into detail of what "there is time for," which describes both the need for positive and negative things in our lives. There are times to plant and times to uproot, times to weep and times to laugh, times to tear and times to mend. [verses 2, 4, 7]. These are all a natural part of life. Then in verses 9-13 it describes more specifically about how humans should react to this life.

“9 What do workers gain from their toil? **10** I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. **11** He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. **12** I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. **13** That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God.”

Everyone goes through these lulls because we're meant to. If God didn't feel that normal life was important, then He wouldn't have had Jesus live almost 30 full years of normalcy. God's telling us and Jesus is showing us that the ordinary life can be extraordinary. All it takes is a simple shift within our mindset. God moves in our day-to-day. He is not just present in the big events. Jesus' life shouldn't just be celebrated on Christmas and Easter. There are 363 other days where celebrating Him is just as important! Those "God highs/God moments" that are experienced on mission trips or after you participate serving at an event are not just meant for those times. While we're living our simple lives filled with daily routines, there are many opportunities to experience those moments too!

This is what the majority of our life looks like. We grow up and learn how to function; we learn how to walk, eat, talk, learn, play. We go to school through our adolescent years and then many of us continue our schooling or begin working. We're learning how to balance work, social lives, and families which is constantly a learning curve. We're not created to just long for "the next best thing." We're encouraged to live every day like it is a gift, joyfully serving the Lord and receiving whatever He has for us.

I'm 30 and for as long as I can remember I've dreamed of being married and starting a family. However, it's not time for that yet and that's okay. By being single I've been able to serve this church and community in ways I might not be able to if I were in a different stage. I'm available for the Senior High-ers whenever they need to talk. I'm able to have meetings at all hours of the day or night because I don't have kids to pick up or drop off. I'm available when I get calls in the middle of the afternoon for an emergency babysitting gig. I can jump in and assist other ministries without having to coordinate my schedule with someone else's! I'm able to serve in so many ways because of where God has me in life right now!

Here's a challenge, next time that you're struggling or frustrated with the stage of life you're in: maybe working a job you don't enjoy, feeling like you're never going to graduate, or simply waiting for God to reveal your purpose, think about what you're experiencing in that moment. What are you able to do while God has you where you are? Find that extraordinary in your ordinary!

The second thing we learn from Jesus is to live our lives quietly and peacefully in prayer. Jesus was great at doing this! It sounds to me like Jesus flew under the radar for most of His first 30 years. He didn't seek attention or stand out among the crowd. He didn't look any different from the next guy. He just spent time with His Father in prayer and allowed God to lead Him to live the "normal" life of a Jewish man. Jesus instructed us to accept living a quiet and peaceful life. You don't always have to busy yourself or live life super actively. We are called to be an example to the world without attracting attention and recognition for it.

God wants us to set aside time just for Him. In **Matthew 6:6 NIV** Jesus instructs us, "...when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Our Father loves us and desires a relationship with us so much that sometimes He simply wants to spend time with JUST US. He sees us, knows us, and loves us because we are His. Not for the things that we do.

Getting quiet does not always mean silence, just free from distractions! Here's another challenge for you. If you find you have 5 free minutes, put your phone on "Do Not Disturb" and pray a quick prayer of gratitude. Or play a worship song to center you back to focusing on Jesus in an attitude of worship! These small moments of time throughout the day are little invitations from God that say "just be with Me!" And in those moments, is when we find where God is leading us during these great omissions in our lives. If God wants us to do something, He tells us. He nudges the Holy Spirit to get us moving in the right direction with prompts and directions. We can only hear or recognize these prompts when we are spending time with God in prayer. All we have to do is wait for those nudges that come with time spent with God and then obey!

The final lesson we learn from Jesus is to completely submit to God's Will. He was obedient to His Father. **Philippians 2:5-8 NIV** explains; "5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!"

Wherever God led, Jesus followed. He accepted His Father's plans and will for His life. That's how God calls us to live too. Jesus, could have very well created His own agenda for His time on earth, but He didn't. He was in awe of His Father and actively pursued Him. Jesus said "yes," and stepped out in bold faith. He changed the course of the world by simply following God's plan. In those quiet moments of prayer, Jesus found clarity and committed to following God's will. We see this happen in the Garden of Gethsemane. He prayed to God asking that the cup of crucifixion would pass from Him, but concluded this silent time with, "yet not My will, but Yours be done (Luke 22:42)." Even though He knew how His life would end, Jesus still faithfully followed.

Think of how God could FULLY USE US if we let Him. Last challenge: maybe God has been calling you for a while to start a Growth Group, but you've allowed excuses to rack up. Now could be the time to boldly say yes and allow the Holy Spirit to organize it for you! Perhaps a particular mission trip or organization has been on your mind a lot lately. It just pops in there

out of nowhere. That's the Holy Spirit trying to speak to you to do something. It could mean that you're to "go" or support it prayerfully or financially. Or the Holy Spirit is nudging you to step away from something and in its place, spend time with God. God has SO many things planned for us, we just need to trust Him! Instead of selfishly holding onto dreams, plans, ideas for ourselves, and wanting to be in control, what if we move aside and ask God to come in and work His will? We're programmed to be in control. We like or even crave control so this is by no means an easy feat; however, we can ask the Holy Spirit to release our grip on whatever we're holding onto! God gives us that authority to tap into the Holy Spirit's power because we cannot do it on our own!

We have "The Great Omission," almost 30 years of an example of how to live our lives for God! If you're in a season of inbetween, look for God. As followers of Jesus we're called to faithfulness in our everyday life. Establish a regular rhythm of meeting God in prayer. Of learning how to identify the nudges of the Holy Spirit and submitting to God's will in all things.

Phyllis Williams is an example of how God can move in the ordinary to make it extraordinary. Phyllis and her husband Edward felt moved by the Lord to do something in 1980 for the 'boat people,' who were fleeing Cambodia and other countries. These refugees were being dumped anywhere. She had just retired as a teacher so she wasn't looking to make another big move; however, when a sponsor for a Hmong family of six fell through, Phyllis and Edward stepped in. After the Hmong family moved on, for the next seven years people from Ethiopia, Cambodia, and a girl from Laos lived with them until they were settled. "What we did wasn't that remarkable. We just learned to move over," said Phyllis. She admitted she didn't grow up wanting to be a missionary, but she wouldn't trade her 'home missions' experience for anything. "We were just giving some strangers a start in a strange land." By being devout, listening to the Lord, and just "moving over" so people could have a home, Phyllis was able to impact so many lives just by living. Thank You Jesus for letting Your ENTIRE life be a model and encouragement for us to live by! Let us pray!