



Season 1, Episode 9: “Hindsight is 2020”

Hi friends and c'mon in!

I'm sure I don't have to tell you that we are right smack dab at the threshold of a brand-new year and a brand-new decade, 2020. Can you believe it? We used to talk about that when we were kids and now we're here and we're not kids. Anyway, the teens are behind us and the twenties are eagerly welcoming us in.

Now for some of us this realization comes with either a lot of hopeful anticipation or high anxiety as we step into the unknown days ahead. We either wonder with hope or we're worried with anxiety. We're either ready to go and conquer 2020 with a “Bring it on!” or we absolutely dread the new beginning because we have so many loose ends still hanging in 2019 that we can't see straight. So, which scenario best describes you? Think about that for a minute.

Okay, first things first. Let's look at God's word. This is Matthew 6:25 - 33 and Jesus is speaking. “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

Okay, y'all. I love this passage for so many reasons and here's the biggest thing: There is no philosophy in this world, no educational institution, no get-rich quick scheme, no self-help book or product that can make the promises that Jesus Christ can make in Matthew 6 - that if you sell out to him that everything else you need and everything else that your heart desires will be added to you and added to your life in the right way and in the right time.

So let's see how this all works together and how we can walk this out and bring a 20/20 vision to our life in the new year and make the most of the decade ahead with God leading us.

One of the most profound things John and I learned when we went through our premarital counseling about 18 years ago was from this wedding week exercise our pastor assigned us. It was really life changing and we had to think and talk through where we would see our marriage in 10 years, 20 years, 30 years, etc. It really made us think and dream intentionally about where we envisioned ourselves, but even more so where we wanted to be in our life and our marriage decade after decade. It gave us a real purpose to plan for and to aim for and over the years much the success of that plan has come from taking a thoughtful look behind us at what worked and what didn't work. Things we were sorry about and glad about things we loved, things we lost, time we wasted and time we invested. Looking back gave us a clearer perspective and vision going forward because as they say, hindsight is 20/20.

Well, if hindsight is 20/20, then it makes perfect sense to look *backward* before we do a forward dive into the new year and the new decade. So don't be in such a rush to end this year and blow into the new one y'all. We've got to slow down, way down. Even stop for a bit and take some time to reflect, to look in the rear view mirror and think through the last year, the last decade behind us.



I've used a theme in my life for about 10 years, "**Making The Most of Now.**" It comes from Ephesians 5:17 where Paul says, "Look carefully then how you live or walk. Not as unwise, but as wise making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil."

I want to make the most of my *now* moments, my opportunities. Make the most of the *now* I'm in as well as the *now season*, the *now year* and the *now decade* I'm in. I want to help you make the most of your *now*, too. So here's how we all can make the most of 2020 and beyond.

First of all, we've got to **recollect** and **reflect**. Look back on 2019 and y'all, we've got to embrace it all. Reflect on your ups and your downs, the successes and the failures (and we have all had them). Acknowledge your best choices and your poorest choices. Where did you overcommit and where did you under-deliver? Where did you neglect yourself or others? Where did you achieve a personal goal? Treating yourself and others with kindness and compassion? What were some of the highlights and the happenings that brought joy and fulfillment to you? What were the missteps? The mistakes and the messes, the heartbreaks or the hurts? Take time to really think through and pray them through with the Lord and then learn from all of them.

Remember, God wastes nothing. As you recollect and reflect, ask God to point out things that you may have overlooked. Things that were actually blessings that may have come wrapped in ugly paper or as I like to say, the best-worst things you encountered. Write down what he shows you, what you discover, and then thank God for all of it. Ask him to help you use the best and the worst of it to propel you into the new year with greater impact. The past is indeed a great teacher if we pay attention and learn from it. Hopefully your reflective vision is clearer now, so let the light in your rear view mirror point you toward tomorrow in wisdom.

All right, so that first thing, recollect and reflect and then number two: begin with the end in mind. In order to begin with the end in mind, you have to determine where you're going and how are you going to get there. More than big goals and resolutions that really pretty much are a nonissue after February 14th (if we're being honest). I'm talking about *growth* and *development* kinds of things. Where do you want to be next year at this time in December of 2020? How do you want to have grown and developed as a person in these different areas of your life, spiritually, mentally, physically, relationally, and emotionally? What are you going to shoot for? What are you going to aim for? What's your plan to grow in these areas? What do you need to do in order to get there? Does your plan involve God in every area of your life?

Use the next few weeks before the end of the year and the new year begins to do some thinking and a lot of praying and planning. We say hindsight is 20/20, but is it possible to have 20/20 foresight in this new year and in this new decade? I think so. Here's a thought for you. Wisdom takes a good look back at life, embraces it, thanks God for all of it, and moves forward with understanding - knowing that the one who was with us in the past has gone ahead of us into the future and is also with us in the present. New beginnings are a gift of grace from the Lord. Every day, every month, every season, every year. It's a chance to begin again.

So as we look at the new year, what position are you in when it comes to heading into 2020? Maybe that makes you excited because you've got some plans for great things to do, places to travel, events coming up, goals you've set that you've wanted to accomplish, or maybe it makes you anxious because you can't think that far ahead and you pretty much just have to take life a day at a time.

Whatever position you're in right now, I have something that I think will benefit you tremendously in making the most of 2020 and the next 10 years. So before you make one more plan, set one more goal or shrink back from any plans or goals, stop and recalibrate. Recalibrate. That word calibrate part of the definition means to adjust precisely for a particular function. So, we're going to have to take periodic stops and recalibrate and adjust as we move into the new year and beyond, and it's perfectly fine.

We're not going to get this perfect every single day, but we can always go back and begin with the end in mind. For the life of faith to function properly, we've got to calibrate or recalibrate according to God's standard, with God at the center of our life.

Remember in the wholehearted messages that we talked about, the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. That command was what God gave the Israelites through Moses and it was to keep God at the center of everything. Loving God first, most in best was to be their lifestyle, permeating every area and every way they would live their lives. Loving God first, most and best gave the Israelites both a central structure from which to live and a framework or boundary around their life.

It was from that center that loving God first, that every matter and aspect of their life would be lived spiritually, relationally, emotionally, mentally, and physically. In essence, loving the Lord, your God, with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength was to be the mission statement of their life and ours.

I bet some of you have actually written out a mission statement for your life, but have you ever used the great commandment as the overarching mission statement of your life, allowing it to metabolize into every area of your life? How different would your life look if you put Christ at the center and also as the framework for how to live your life? Your home life? How differently would you treat your family, your children, how you speak to them, how you love them and help them? How about your married life? How would you love and respect your spouse, your work life? What would you change about the way you do business and treat the people you work with or your emotional life? What would you be able to let go of or forgive? And then health and fitness. How would you take care of yourself as God's temple? What about your thought life? Would your attitudes need to change? Would you need to eliminate some things that you've been putting into your mind? How about relationships, recreation, financial things? Material stewardship, and your witness in your calling.

You may be asking, why should we even care about all this? Well, let me ask you a question. Do you believe that God knows best about how to live your life and that he has the best plan for your life? And do you also believe that the starting point for that plan is Matthew 22:37 - 40? To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself. Well, how are you progressing on that plan?

How is the plan being implemented in your life? Has there been growth or development and change or are you doing the same old things the same old way and expecting life to be different, but it's just not? You know, I always say, if I'm not growing, then I'm dying. I'm withering. If I'm not going forward, I'm going backward.

So how do we live our lives with God in the center with Jesus on the throne of our heart? Well, Ephesians 4:24 says, "We put on Christ." That's the new self that we have in him. And then we grow and develop in our life to become more like him. So what would our life look like if we actually did see the way that Jesus sees? How would Jesus see the people in my life? All the people I come into contact with, or if we actually did love the way that he loves, how would Jesus love the people in my life? All the people I come in contact with, or if we actually did speak the way that he speaks, how would Jesus speak to the people in my life?

All the people that I come in contact with. So how would Jesus look at the people you come in contact with? What would he think about them? How would he treat them?

Well, here's the question. How do I know what Jesus would do? The answer is read the Bible and learn. Watch what Jesus did and then do likewise. Jesus is the one who gives purpose, meaning and impact to our lives. So it just makes sense to give first place in every area of our life to the one who knows best how life is to be lived and who must help you live it and make the most of it, because here's the deal. The Christian life is not difficult. *It's impossible.*

Okay, let me explain. Assuming that Jesus Christ is in my life, how do I live my life and become the person he wants me to be? Well, Romans 8:29 tells us that the goal of the Christian life is to become like Christ. Paul writes this, and we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good. For those who are called according to his purpose, for those whom he foreknew, he also to be conformed to the image of his son.

So it's critical to know and to understand how that happens. Here's how - this is a definition of the Christian life that my husband has used forever - I think it's really brilliant and really simple: The Christian life is the life of Christ reproduced in the believer (that's you and me), by the power of the Holy Spirit, in an obedient response to the word of God invading every area of our human existence (that's all areas of my life, inward and outward).

So what's your plan to become more like Christ in the new year and in the new decade? What's your plan to let Jesus have his way in your life and his impact through your life? You've probably heard the quote that says, "If we fail to plan, we will plan to fail." Now, this isn't to slap legalism on anybody. There is grace abounding in all of this. But we have to have some sort of a structure and a framework if we really do want to grow and we really do want to develop in our faith and in every area of our life that I've previously mentioned.

Something that John and I've actually done for many years is to let the great commandment and the great commission, which is to go and make disciples be the thing that guides us into planning for the new year. From that we get four biblical priorities that we use as a framework to structure our life by live our life by and really brings a lot of purpose and a lot of focus to our life.

We set goals and we make plans and they don't always work out perfectly, but using these four biblical priorities really does help keep us focused in the right direction and keep Christ at the center of everything. So we're going to make that plan - it's called the [2020 4P's Planner](#) and we'll make it available to you on the blog post.

Every situation in every aspect of your life will flourish or fail based on who or what you put on the throne of your life, who or what you deem is of supreme importance to you. You might be a terrific success in business, but if your work is in the number one position in your life, then ultimately other areas of your life will fail in some way.

This will always be the tension that we live in as followers of Jesus in this broken world. We will have to work at it to be intentional, to keep the throne in our heart free of anything and everything but God. So that every position, every situation, every location and relationship of our life is ruled by the only wise King who loves you and looks out for all of your life.

There's a quote on the wall in my office that says, *"I am positioned by God to influence. I live today with tomorrow in mind. I am poised for the challenges, knowing my decisions will matter and I will make an impact."* I don't think that anything can help us to achieve all of that, to be positioned for influence, to live with tomorrow in mind and to be poised for challenges and to have an impact. Nothing will do that like keeping God first at in our life and in our heart and on the throne of our heart.

So I want to pray with you before we close out this podcast. As you start to reflect on the past year and start to think forward with these biblical priorities ahead of you and just how you want to live your life and the difference you want to make and where you want to be one year from now.

God is so good and he's so faithful to guide us and direct us and y'all, he's the one that knows the plans for our life. He knows the plans. He says that in Jeremiah 29:11, so let's ask him. Let's ask the one who has already made the plans to help us plan and to live those plans out for his glory.

Lord, we just love you so much and we want to love you more. God, we want to love you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We want to let you work in every area of our life in the coming year and in the coming decade. We ask you to just come in and open our eyes, to look behind us and see what's happened and to see you there. And to also see you right now where we are and then to take hold of your hand and let you lead us into the new year. We want everything that you have for us our God. So help us to open up our arms, our eyes, and to open up our hearts to let you come in and be who you want to be to us and live the best life and to make the most of our now and the most of our 2020. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Okay guys. Well, that is a wrap on this first season of the Life on Life podcast and we are so thrilled that you joined us. Michelle and I have had an absolute blast and we hope that this has been a huge benefit and blessing to you. So on behalf of Michelle and myself, we just want to wish you the happiest and most blessed Christmas season ever, and a wonderful, happy, healthy 2020 new year.

We're going to take a couple of weeks off for the podcast and we hope you enjoy time with your friends and family. We'll be back in January 2020 with Season 2 of the Life on Life podcast.

OK, that's that for that. And don't forget that you are greatly and dearly loved by The King!

xo -P