

Six of ONE – Spiritual focus requires knowing who is Lord

The word “Lord” occurs over 655 times in 650 verses within the English Standard Version of the New Testament. The Greek word (*kurios*), from which we get the word “lord” occurs 747 times in the Greek (*textus Receptus*) and is also translated variously as “Lord,” “God,” “sirs,” “owner” or “master.” This word is derived from the root of another Greek word (*kuros*) which means supremacy. By extension then the word Lord, according to Thayer, means “one to whom a person or thing belongs; one who has control.” Strong adds, “Supreme in authority, that is, controller.”

It is interesting and well worth noting that Paul, in writing the great chapter of Philippians 3 all about our spiritual focus, speaks three times about “the Lord,” surrounding those words with seven separate references to Christ. What we can and should take away from these simple facts is that one cannot ever hope to be spiritually focused without first focusing on who they have made the Lord of their life. Notice, Paul begins the chapter by saying, “Finally my brother, rejoice in the Lord.” Then, after detailing those things which may have caused him to have confidence in the flesh he says, “I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (3:8). Finally, as the chapter begins to wind up Paul speaks of the future glory of those who have become spiritually focused and says, “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself” (3:20-21).

Using these three places where Paul refers to Jesus as Lord, we can define what it means to have Jesus as Lord of your life. First, we must understand that when Christ is in control then our lives are joyous or should be joyous. Yet, this also implies that our standard of joy is also derived from being in Christ. Now, there is a big difference between the standard of Christ and the standard of the world when it comes to joy. If our life and thus joy is rooted in spiritual things then the loss of anything and everything here is of little consequences and perhaps even for our benefit. Paul suffered greatly because he was a preacher and was persecuted heavily because he was a Christian, but still found joy knowing that there were far more important goals and matters to attend to than material wealth, status, and high social standing. On the other hand, if our joy is bound up in the things of this world then we are in for a life of absolute disappointment continually because the things of this world do not last.

Second, allowing Christ to be lord of our lives means that we are willing to give him our all, but most importantly our minds and how we perceive the world. What takes priority and prominence in your life is simply a matter of perspective and the choices you make based upon how you perceive the world. If money is your ultimate value then you will arrange your life in such a way that each and every facet revolves around this idea. Paul speaks of this very thing in chapter four when he says, “I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (4:12-13). Who is the “Him” that strengthened Paul? It was Christ, but more importantly it was the Lord to whom Paul had surrendered his life.

Finally, allow Christ to be Lord of our lives mean that we are above all others in this world blessed. How are we blessed? We are blessed with the knowledge that there is something more to life than what perishes here and the concern we have for those things. In the final verses of this chapter Paul compares the men who pursue falsehood and those that adhere to the words and will of Christ. Those who fall prey to the false teacher and the fulfillment of the flesh are not citizens of his kingdom and thus will not inherit eternal life. However, those who find their joy in Him by given Him their all are citizens of eternity and will inherit a glorious body and live.

To summarize then, Paul says that part of being spiritually focused means we are focused on Christ as the center of everything in our lives. He is our everything. He is our all. It is a mindset and focus on spiritual things to the point that we can find joy when the world around us is going to pieces because we know there is a glory that far outweighs it. This, of course is teaching that many do well to consider in our day when the governments of the world and various world economies seem on the brink of collapse. What do we do when our job disappears, our degree is worthless, bank account is empty and friends have all betrayed us? Let Him have control and though the answer is not always clear you can have joy and blessedness.

ONE Assignment

Once again, using the note card that is given to you, write down the areas of your life that you struggle to give to Christ. Some you may think of immediately. Others will hide themselves in the deep recesses of your heart. It will help maybe to think about the things that...

- Interfere with your spiritual practices (worship, Bible study, prayer, etc.)
- Take up the bulk of your time and energy
- You just can't live without

Perhaps these things will help you figure out the areas of your life with which you struggle. Once you have a list, pick one of them and focus your prayers and your study this week on helping you overcome your struggles. Finally, once you have your list, let one other person know your struggle and ask them for prayers so you may have the wisdom to overcome.