

Being Christian in today's culture Episode 1:

A pathway for becoming culture-changing Christians

TRANSCRIPT

Recorded March 27, 2024 | Released April 4, 2024

NOTE: This transcript was AI-generated and has not been fully edited.

[00:00:00] **Dr. Mark Turman:** I'm Dr. Mark Turman, executive director of the Denison Forum and the Denison Forum podcast host. We're glad to have you along with us as we talk about what it means to be equipped to serve God in bright and salty ways. We are starting an adventure today and we're glad to have you along with us. Normally we're kind of having one off conversations with Dr.

Denison and with others, but today we are starting a unique series that we're calling Being a Christian in Today's culture or being Christian in today's culture, I should say if we were going to give a subtitle to this, it would be introducing to you a pathway to becoming what we like to call culture changing Christians.

We believe all of us are invited into that as a, an invitation from the Lord to use our lives, to use our gifts, our skills, our influence for him. And as he said in the sermon, Sermon on the Mount to be salty and to be bright so that the attention is drawn not to us, but to him as our Savior, our forgiver, our leader, and our God.

So, What does it mean to be Christian in today's culture? We're going to talk about seven key ideas that Dr. Denison has been praying about, thinking about, and now writing about. And we're going to do that in the context of our Denison forum podcast for the next few weeks. You'll also be able to find.

A related white paper on every one of these topics on our web page, dennisonforum.org, we will hope that these conversations will spur you to go and to download those documents, to read them, to study them, even to share them with other people in your circle of influence that we might be able to influence you and others to be equipped in every good way.

And so today is really the introduction. To this journey that we're calling, calling being a Christian in today's culture, and we're going to overview those seven, what we call pillars of biblical flourishing. And today we're obviously sitting down with Dr. Jim, Jim, welcome to the podcast. Again, looking forward to these conversations.

[00:02:10] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Thank you, Mark. I am as well excited to do this with you and grateful to those that are coming along with us as we talk about these issues that I think are absolutely so foundational, so crucial to what it is to know Christ and make Him known in days like these.

[00:02:23] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah, so we like to talk about it in different ways. We talk about inside of our organization and ministry, we talk about the seven pillars of flourishing. That's almost become nomenclature for us in the last number of months. Probably been thinking and praying about this for almost a year or more now.

We talk about how. Our goal as a ministry is to help people to think biblically, to act redemptively, to make the world a better place until Jesus comes again. But give us a little bit of the backstory as you were thinking and praying months ago, and then came to these kind of seven what you've termed pillars.

Give us a little bit of the back story of what brought you to that kind of clarity.

[00:03:05] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Well, over the years, I've been obviously, as so many of us are, fascinated by the Sermon on the Mount. I've memorized it over the years. I've preached it many times. When we take people to Israel, we always go to the Mount of Beatitudes, and I'm able to deliver that sermon in that spot there. It's an incredible privilege to be able to do that.

Well, the sermon itself has a text. The Beatitudes are the text upon which the sermon itself is written. These statements of Jesus, eight of them, eight statements that were foundational to his understanding of what it meant to follow him. What it meant to be, what we would think of as a fully devoted follower of Jesus.

Well, in so doing, Jesus was himself acting out of a psychology almost, a worldview move that goes back to Moses, goes back to Exodus, goes back to God trying to first form for himself a people and revealing to them what we think of as the ten commandments. Commandments out of that come 613 laws that Judaism has understood and tries to live by, but they're all based on these 10 pillars, these 10 foundational statements that are what it is to be the people of God in the context of Israel.

So Jesus takes that same idea forward and through these beatitudes sets out eight statements, eight declarations that are essential to what it is in the context of the Sermon on the Mount to being a follower of his. So this idea. of identifying foundational principles. What we think of as

pillars in the sense of things that hold something up in the sense of foundation stones and other things depend on understanding on is I think a biblical idea.

In Islam, you have the five pillars of Islam and Buddhism. You have the four noble truths and the eightfold noble path of Buddhism. So there's the psychology that says if we can understand the basic essential foundations, the pillars, then we can build on that. Okay. And can do that effectively. So from the time we were formed 15 years ago as a ministry to help build culture changing Christians, one of the things we've understood is that that can be a bit amorphous.

What does that mean? What does that look like? How would you measure success by that? How do we become that? And so over the years, this has kind of crystallized inside me that there are seven essential convictions. Seven lifestyle commitments, as it were, that I think, together, produce and explain what it is to follow Christ in this culture, in a way that uses your influence to make an impact on others.

So if a culture changing Christian is someone who uses their influence to impact the culture for Christ, then these are the seven foundational commitments by which we do that. So that's the idea. It's Ten Commandments. It's a Beatitudes. It's, it's this idea of foundational principles, almost mathematical axioms that everything else stands on.

And we think these are they, by which we can engage the culture most effectively in this day and time.

[00:05:49] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. And I think it's really, really helpful to kind of set this as a foundation in a way that if we could hold these seven truths or seven ideas, them with clarity and with simplicity. We talk other ministries similar to ours. Talk about building a biblical worldview. This really helps to build that kind of foundation for us and to be able to think about things in a, in a way.

And with a lens that works. across multiple issues and across all kinds of different conversations. Jim, let me come back around and ask you a really broad question. That's probably not even fair, but it is, I think. Again, helping to build a context for what we're going to talk about in this series of conversations.

We talk about the gospel of Jesus, the core message of Jesus. That word gospel means good news that is manifested in him. This is probably one of the most troubling questions I've ever had as a Christian and even more so as a minister, which is if it is such good news, why doesn't everybody believe it?

Why isn't the world more Christian than where it is now with, you know, maybe even the most generous terms that you call out in this introduction, about one third of the world being Christian,

which is great. It's fabulous. I just sometimes I'm wondering why doesn't everybody believe in grace? Why doesn't everybody?

you know, run to mercy instead of disbelieving in Jesus. We know that a lot of that is some people, some people just haven't heard. They would believe if they got to here and we need to help them with that. But there's a lot of people who have heard the story of Jesus. And have simply disbelieved it.

Give us your take on that.

[00:07:42] **Dr. Jim Denison:** It's a great question, a foundational question, absolutely inside all of this, and really two thoughts by which to respond. The first, and you've said this already, but it is the vast number of people that have never heard, literally a third of the world, that has never had fair access to the gospel. When I was in Malaysia doing mission work back in college, I came across thousands of people, Mark, who had never heard the syllables Jesus Christ.

Had literally never heard those, those sound waves. That name was as foreign to them as mumblefump or some name you could make up today. They just had literally had no exposure whatsoever to the gospel. Another percentage, maybe as much as 20 percent of the world has access in a way that would be difficult to call fair.

They might be able to hear the gospel and trust Christ in Saudi Arabia, but would they lose their job? Would they lose their family? Would they be beheaded if they made a commitment to Christ? Yeah. And so even if they have some access, they're going to be enormous barriers to their really having a fair opportunity to hear the gospel.

And so it's a different question, what happens to those folk. But I do think a lot of the world has not had fair access. I think a lot of the world has, and it's our fault, has not heard the gospel in a manner that really communicates the gospel as it is. GK TRO said, it's not that Christianity has been found trying and not, and not attempted.

It's been found difficult and not tried. It's, they have no what it really is. People don't really know what it is, what the gospel actually. Yes, I grew up in Houston, Texas, grew up in a wonderful home, but never went to church. I thought a Christian was a good person who believed in God and went to church.

Well, I couldn't see anything in church that was appealing to me. I couldn't see any reason to get up and put on a tie on a Sunday morning and go and listen to a boring sermon. And I thought that's what Christianity was. You become a Republican by voting for Republicans. You become a Democrat by joining the Democ Well, you become a Christian by joining the church and doing religious stuff.

Well, especially in recent years, clergy abuse scandals, so much denominational infighting, just a whole lot of folk just don't want a lot of interest in religion, and they think Christianity is a religion. So a lot have never heard the gospel. A lot have heard it through the context of religion that is just not interesting to them.

It's just not appealing to them. And I said two things, but I have to add a third. There are a lot of us that are not living the gospel in a way that makes it attractive enough to others. Where they see enough of a difference in my life that I want what they want, that they want what I have. They know I'm a religious person, but they don't see something in me so unique, so different, so compelling, because I'm separating Sunday and Monday, spiritual and secular, religion, the real world, like we talk about so much.

Jesus isn't Lord of my life. I haven't been filled with the spirit today. I'm not manifesting the fruit of the spirit today. So people are not seeing the gospel acted out through me. Summarize some have never heard the gospel. Some have heard it through a religious kind of a prism. That's not appealing.

And some have not seen the gospel acted out in our lives. If they see Jesus changing our lives. And understand that they can have the same experience we had. They're going to run to that. They're going to want what we have. Now there's going to be some Mark that just don't want to give up the throne. They get it. They understand. They know it's by grace through faith. They see something in you, they want in them, but they're just not willing to yield that will to power. That desire to be their own God back to Genesis three, they're going to be some, I've known some, you've known some that absolutely would crystal clarity, understand the gospel.

And they just don't want to give up control of their lives. That's a will to power that you and I, only the Holy Spirit can convict of sin. But at the end of the day, they have that choice to make. I don't think that's the majority. I think the majority have never heard, or they've heard it through religion, or they've not seen a difference in our lives.

And we can do something about that third part, especially.

[00:11:22] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. Yeah. I mean, there, there always will be some Judas like figures. I mean, Judas had a front row seat and still chose not to believe. And there is that element that we have to recognize, but that doesn't mean that that we should be discouraged from reaching out to those who've never heard or not heard accurately.

So this, this series that we're putting together. Is so focused. The whole theme of this is about biblical flourishing for everyone. And we have a lot of verses that we could look at that inspire us a sermon on the Mount. The whole purpose of the sermon on the Mount was that disciples, followers of Christ might understand what kingdom flourishing really looks like.

Jesus said later recorded by John and John 10, that he came to give life and to give it abundantly. There's a lot of ways that we mishear or misunderstand what Jesus was saying. Can you kind of unpack what we mean by biblical flourishing? Again, setting a context for this series? What Jesus means by life abundantly, what Paul.

We'll say later on in his writings, inspired by the spirit a life that is overflowing. How do we hear that correctly? How do we sometimes hear it wrongly?

[00:12:40] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Mm. Yeah. Great question. Especially in our culture today. In John 10. Jesus says that if he comes to steal and kill and destroy, I've come that you might have life and have it more abundantly or have it to the full or have it overflowing would be another way to translate the Greek that's at that's being discussed there.

What Jesus, I think is getting at here as you watch his life and as you watch the life of his followers is not. A promise that we are going to experience prosperity as the world measures prosperity. If that's the case, Jesus certainly would not be exhibiting of that woody as he lives in a borrowed and, and, and a friend's home, literally in a, in a guest house, as it were, guest room over in Capernaum and Peter's house.

And we obviously know that in the course of Jesus life, he did not experience the kind of prosperity that the world looks at as a measure of success. Nor could we say that it was followers of his disciples. 11 of the 12 did not die natural deaths. Jesus took his own life, but 10 were martyred for following Jesus.

And that's certainly not what the culture holds out as a definition of prosperity and success. So that's not what Jesus means here. If he kept his promise, if when Jesus said, you'll have life abundant, he did, if that's what he meant, then it certainly didn't work, did it? And you think today about the fact that Christians are still the most persecuted religion in the world.

And that that's accelerating. Think about the fact that 90 percent of all Christians that have died for their faith have died for their faith in the last hundred years. That there's an acceleration of anger toward the gospel and toward faith today. I'm thinking about my friends in Cuba or some of the most godly people I've ever known.

Some of the most committed believers I've ever known and are paying every day a horrific price for that faith. They're certainly not experiencing what this culture thinks of as prosperity. Now I'm not saying that the other has to be true. Joseph of Arimathea was wealthy. Nicodemus was wealthy. Peter was certainly more a person of means than people often think he was.

When you see his home there in Capernaum and understand his business background and the fact that he had servants and hired servants and he had a fleet of ships, that sort of thing. So I'm not

saying the opposite. That if you're going to follow Jesus, abundant has to mean impoverished either. That's as it may be.

My point is that that's the wrong context. The wrong context is to measure abundance in material terms, because that's different for different people at different settings and different contexts. I think we're understanding this in the sense of what the Holy Spirit can do in your life. If you follow Jesus fully, the Holy Spirit will manifest the fruit of the Spirit.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. That's abundant living. To live with those characteristics being manifested every day. The Bible makes clear that if we will follow Jesus fully, we'll have a peace that passes understanding, that will guard our heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

That's abundant living. Paul said, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. That's abundant living. Paul said he learned that the father taught him through his thorn in the flesh, that his grace is made clear in my weakness. Well, that's abundant living. So, abundant living is experiencing God's best in the context of the life of the Spirit in me.

Whatever that best means, whatever that looks like. Whether that best leads me to martyrdom on one side or leads me to a position of enormous affluence on the other side, at the end of the day, it's God's best being lived out as the Spirit lives through me. That's what Jesus offers. That's what flourishing is.

That's what the abundant life is. And we can't measure it in material terms, have to measure it in spiritual and eternal terms, because that's what matters most anyway.

[00:16:06] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. And it makes me, Jim makes me think about measuring it relationally as well. Some reading that we've done together and done with some of our teams recently. There was a Harvard study done a year, number of years ago, decades ago, that tracked graduates of Harvard relative to their happiness.

And the big conclusion of the study was, is that the quality of your life is measured directly to the quality of your relationships which obviously in a faith context has to do with your relationship with God, your vertical relationship with God, your relationship with others and your relationship with yourself, which.

Not surprisingly goes directly to what we talk a lot about, which is the great commandment to love God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus knew what he was talking about when he said, these are the most important things that you love God with all of your being.

And then you love from that place. You love the people around you. And as those qualities of his spirit that you've already articulated, love, joy, peace, patience. As those characteristics find their

Their place in us and bloom, those things help us build the most beautiful relationships with God and with others.

And that's ultimately where we get toward this idea, this very biblical idea of biblical flourishing. One other kind of contextual. topic I wanted you to comment on before we move a little bit further into looking at each one of the topics is how this is an invitation. The invitation of Christ, the invitation of the gospel.

And therefore the invitation of flourishing in this definition are, is an invitation to all we are so divided. We are so partisan. We are so tribalistic in our society today. That's one of the reasons that we wanted to have these conversations is because the biblical invitation is an invitation for everyone.

I'm, I'm thinking of how Jesus went to places where other religious people from. Other religious leaders from the, the, from the Israelites wouldn't from the Jews, they would not go into certain places and meet with certain people. I'm thinking about how Paul was inspired by the spirit to write about the breaking down of walls.

Talk for a minute just about that. Incredible inclusiveness that is the gospel and is the calling and the invitation to flourishing the way that we're talking about it.

[00:18:40] **Dr. Jim Denison:** And it is unique, truly is unique. C. S. Lewis used to tell the story about being invited to a theological dispute of some sort or other debate of some kind, got through a little late, saw this big, massive argument going on. He asked, well, what are they arguing about? And they said, well, the question on the floor is what's unique about Christianity, to which he said, well, that's simple, it's grace. That is the uniqueness of Christianity. Every other world religion is an attempt to climb up to God. Christianity is God climbing down to us. It's God coming. It's this incarnate move of God to us, of heaven to earth. It's Jesus when he dies, the curtain being torn from the top to the bottom, not from us to God, but from God to us.

Well, that's unique among all the worldviews, all the religious worldviews in human history. Is this idea of a God becoming one of us, not just coming to earth. There's a lot of that in the mythologies and such, but literally becoming one of us so that we could be one with him. As Irenaeus said, that's a uniqueness to the gospel.

And that means to answer, to move to your question, that this gospel can then be available to all of us because there's nothing we have to do to earn the ability to have access to it. There's no ladder for us. decline. In other world religions and in other religious perspectives and other world views, there's a works righteousness that's incumbent upon us to get from here to there.

In Judaism, it's 613 laws. In Buddhism, it's the Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Noble Path, like I mentioned, Five Pillars of Islam, various kind of ascetic sort of ritualistic reincarnations. In

Hinduism, there's all this works that some can do and some can't. Some are able to be monks and some are not. Some are better at the laws than others.

Some are just gonna do better on the test than others are. And if you've gotta make a hundred on every test every time in order to get there, very few of us, if any of us are going to get there. And so there's an inclusiveness to grace that doesn't exist in works is the point because there's literally nothing you can do to make God love you anymore or any less than he does.

Augustine said God loves each of us as if there were only one of us. So to me, that's the first thing to understand is the, the unique just absolute unconditional love of God for all of us means therefore all of us can be in this conversation because this love is equally for all of us. The other thing to say is what it takes to accept this invitation is something every human being can do.

Again, there's no legalistic requirement that one must do to now step into this relationship, to now receive this gift. All we have to do is open it. All we have to do is ask Jesus to be Lord of our lives, ask him to forgive our mistakes and be our Lord. And in that moment, we become the child of God. In that moment, we're born again.

In that moment, we become a new creation, as the scripture says. It's not this lifetime of ascetic discipline. It's not the legalism that we have to pass through. It's something anyone can do in this world. Moment. People over the years as I've been in apologetics and theology have been frustrated with Jesus statement that he's the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except by him. And the way I've tried to explain that is you only need one way if the way is open to everybody. You only need one key if the key opens every lock. We don't need more than one polio vaccine because the one that Jonah Salk perfected works for everybody.

[00:21:52] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Good

[00:21:53] **Dr. Jim Denison:** If you had one chemotherapy that cured all cancer, you probably wouldn't be mad that you didn't have a second choice. This one way works for all of us. The problem is, as we said earlier, people that have never heard it, people that have heard it through a religious prism that distorts it, people that don't see it happening in the lives of believers. But that's not the fault of the gospel because it works for all of us and is therefore that available to all of us.

Ground is level at the foot of the cross. All we have to do is go there.

[00:22:21] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. And such, such a great way of talking about, you know, that if it was, you know, and, and this has always happened if you use the word religion in, in one of the more negative senses. Religion always leaves it to to becoming a dividing thing that you

have to be smarter than certain other people have a knowledge that certain people don't have, or you are more disciplined than other people.

Therefore, you're more worthy or some other other criteria. That that's, that's how religion gets applied in the most negative sense of the term. And Christianity is completely the opposite of that. That's why it is so unique. And again, the, the thing that we need to try to help our world understand whether they have misheard the gospel or never heard the gospel is that Christianity is this unique kind of invitation of grace and mercy that is unrivaled in all of the world and in all of the universe.

And it is out of that foundation. That all of the other walls that divide human beings can come down so that when we see this picture of the end and in the book of revelation, we see every tribe, tongue, and nation coming. Because we're all coming on the basis of that same grace and mercy and not because there's anything in us that makes us more worthy than some other person or some other group, and that's.

That is the miracle of grace. That's the miracle of what Christ has done for us. Okay. So that, that sets us a context, I think, to talk about what these seven ideas, these seven pillars of biblical flourishing, let me just articulate them, give your voice a little bit of chance to rest. But we're, we're talking about over the coming weeks in our podcast, we'll be talking about being a Christian in today's culture by Embracing biblical truth and authority.

That'll be our next conversation. We're going to talk about the necessity of faith in Christ, why there needs to be a clear understanding of this good news and that you have put your personal faith in Jesus as your forgiver and your leader. We're going to talk about the sanctity of life from birth to natural death.

And we're going to talk about it in various other ways as well. We'll But just this fundamental commitment that life is from God and that it is sacred in every person's life. We're going to talk about biblical sexuality in a few weeks, which is obviously a very, very broad and important topic, but one very much in the minds and hearts and lives of our culture.

We're going to talk about biblical righteousness, and this is kind of a broad, broad topic. area where we're going to talk about what some people sometimes put in a narrow category of social justice. But we're going to talk about biblical equality. We're going to talk about things like immigration. We're going to talk about other topics that fit in to this category.

Big area called justice or biblical righteousness. We're going to talk about political civility obviously very important in our culture and in our country as a democracy. As we move further and further this year into another presidential election cycle, as we hear a lot of the partisan debates.

And all of those conversations, we're going to spend some time talking about how do Christians approach and engage in our political opportunities, but we do it in a different way. We do it in a way. That manifests and express the fruit of the spirit and that conveys a powerful Christian witness Whether or not the person that we might vote for wins or doesn't we're looking to a kingdom that's even further than that.

The bible says that we are citizens of heaven How do we express that and then the last thing we'll wrap up with is cultural engagement, which is how how do I as an individual? In some of these really big topics, how do I bring that home and how in my circle of influence in my relationships, in my family, my church, my community how do I engage these things in a way that really does use my influence for the kingdom of God?

So that's kind of broadly. Where we're going over the next few weeks. And we're going to have these individual conversations. As I said, Dr. Dennison has written a very substantive paper on every one of these topics. We will release those, make them available in the show notes of every podcast episode, and we'll point you to them on our website as well.

And we'll hopefully engage with you at a significant level around every one of these seven pillars. Dr. Dennis, I want to ask you is it, if I'm just kind of curious, how did we get to seven? Why do you think you stopped at seven? I'm just wondering. If, if you were going to sneak another one or two of those in there, what might they have been?

Do you have any ideas around that?

[00:27:23] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Well, I mean, the first thing that really should be foundational behind all of those is the priority of being a grandparent,

[00:27:30] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Hmm.

[00:27:30] **Dr. Jim Denison:** of having perfect grandchildren, of understanding, you know, how inherited sin can skip grandchildren. I mean, I wouldn't have thought that was possible theologically. And now I'm living in that world, Mark.

And so obviously you'd start there, would you? And then, and you'd agree with that as, as a fellow grandfather, I think. And so, yeah, when you have perfect grandkids, then, you

[00:27:49] **Dr. Mark Turman:** you know, we know that they're perfect grandchildren because they think so highly of us right now, right?

[00:27:53] **Dr. Jim Denison:** That's exactly right. Yeah. So I took my granddaughter to the zoo not long ago, and we were waiting outside to go in. And of course they have it set up in such a way that as you're waiting to go in, the gift shop is right next to you. I mean, of course it is with this big glass and all this stuff there, you know?

And so she looks at this and she says, well, when we leave, we'll go in there and then you'll get each of us, you know, something in the gift shop, she declared. And so I smiled and I said, well, what causes you to think that I'm going to buy you a gift here? And she said, because you're a granddad. It was just a statement of fact.

It was like, are you new here? You know, why am I having to explain this to you? And she was right. Of course she was now. She wanted an eight foot sloth that I didn't buy her. But other than that, you know, you do your best inside that. But having said that with that, as an aside, really the intention here was to really summarize.

Those commitments that I thought were absolutely the most crucial pillars and that actually grow on each other, that actually have a sequential sort of a kind of a causality inside them. We start with biblical authority because nothing else in the conversation works if that doesn't. If we don't agree that the Bible is the word of God, then nothing else we can talk about here is really going to be relevant because this ministry exists to speak biblical truth to cultural issues.

We're not here to do partisan truth. We're not here to offer personal opinion. We're not a pundit organization. I'm grateful for those that do that, but that's not our call. We're here to speak biblical truth. And so that's why that has to be foundational. And then second, you have to think about Jesus as Lord, because when he is Lord of your life, everything else begins to work.

Now His Holy Spirit lives in us. Now He can empower us to do these other things that it is that we're called to do. Then on that foundation, we have to understand the sanctity of life before sexuality makes sense. Sexuality makes sense in the context of sanctity. And once we understand sexuality, we can think about righteousness, cultural righteousness on that platform.

Then we can think about how to engage the issues we've discussed with civility. And then seventh, how to be proactive in bringing all of that to the larger culture. So there's a sense in which they build on each other, kind of an edifice that we're building here. And that sense pillars maybe changes metaphors to steps, perhaps, or foundation stones stacked on top of one another, because there's that kind of sequential sort of causality inside this as well.

But really, I'm not aware. of anything else as I've thought through this and prayed through this that I would add as an eighth pillar or a ninth pillar. As you said, that fifth pillar of biblical righteousness is by far the broadest of all of them. And so things that would seem to be left out, I think could, that I'm aware of anyway, could be pretty easily understood within that very kind of broad sort of general statement.

And to that degree, I think keeps those seven perhaps as, as inclusive enough. And yet not so inclusive that they're not definitional. And we want there to be something here that we can understand, that we can handle, that we can grasp and that we can use in a kind of a communicative sort of a sense.

[00:30:42] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah, maybe, maybe a couple of examples of that might be if we, some people might say, well, you should have put peace peace versus violence in this conversation. Well, that relates directly to the sanctity of life. When we start talking about things like violence that goes to core issues about how do we see other human beings and do we see the image of God in them?

Do we see them? As being sacred in their own right, not because of their utilitarian value or what they can produce or do for us, but that they are sacred and valuable in their own right, and therefore should not be the objects of violence by us or anyone else toward them. Also made me think about the idea of contentment versus consumerism.

I know in recent months, you've, you've talked a lot during your daily articles about just how saturated we are with being consumers and that that's the way we measure ourselves and that's the way we measure or pursue a sense of satisfaction when the Bible calls us to a place of contentment and beyond a place of contentment to even a place of generosity.

Well, those topics are relevant and they fit into this category of biblical righteousness. And what it means to be a person who is who has a sense of enough materially and is confident in God and content in the Holy Spirit so that you're then able to become generous toward others. Which is again, very much needed in our context.

And so we'll get to some of those things. We'll explore some of those things, but we feel like the framework of these seven pillars is really a helpful and, you know, not overwhelming kind of an approach. And really, as you said, link together these things. There is there is a sequence of some sort and there is a building of stacking of pillars and, and foundational ideas, one on top of the other.

As we work our way through that, that doesn't mean you can't come into this conversation. Anywhere along the way and find it to be helpful. We think you can. So if you miss an episode, you can certainly go back and you're not going to be quote unquote out of order. But they are connected and they are linked in very important ways.

They do work together to help us build. An appropriate lens of biblical worldview and we hope you'll stay with us for the entire journey. Jim, I wanna go back to an idea that you referenced a little bit earlier, which is just how important the need for Biblical Holiness on a personal level around these ideas, why that is so important and how.

One of the things that all of us need to commit to and recommit to on a regular basis is just to living these things out. But at the same time, recognizing that we are always in process and that we will not be perfected into holiness until we are with Jesus face to face. Either because he comes again or because we go to him through death.

Talk about that, that reality and that pull of one of the things that's damaging our witness so much in today's culture is the hypocrisy of believers. And because of the way we are able to know so many things so quickly and just the nature of the world is, is that we always hear about failure more than we hear about success.

We always hear about hypocrisy more than we hear about people being genuine to their commitments and to their values. that a little bit more about just how, you know, my pastor, who is a mutual hero of ours, he said, you know what, if your faith doesn't work at home, don't export it, you know, if it, if it, if it's not changing you, you should have little expectation that it would make the world better for anybody else.

Talk about how important it is that these things must change us first. If we ever hope to see them change anything else around us.

[00:34:55] **Dr. Jim Denison:** I think that's absolutely vital, and one of the things that we miss so easily, I think, especially in the evangelical culture, for reasons I'll get to here in just a second, but two thoughts that come to mind very quickly. First of all, Rick Warren years ago said, all healthy things grow. If an apple tree is not producing apples, there's something wrong with the tree. If a tree is healthy, it's going to produce what it was created. If I'm walking in the spirit, the fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control, that we talked about just a moment ago, are going to be natural and inevitable results. Galatians doesn't say go try harder to do that.

It doesn't say make it your goal every day to pick one of those and be better at it. It says that's what's going to happen. That's the inevitable result. So if you're not seeing Christ in my life, there's something wrong with me. in me. There's sin I haven't confessed. There's a disobedience someplace in my life.

I'm hindering the spirit at work in my life. The Holy Spirit wants to manifest Christ in me and through me. Romans 8, 29. His job is to make the character of Christ in me. The Bible says that we are the body of Christ, his hands and feet. We continue the earthly ministry of Jesus today. So if we're not manifesting Christ, there's something wrong.

And the world's going to see that they're going to see that the disconnect, they're going to see the dissonance. And again, why would they want what we have if we don't even want what we have? If we're not even living by our faith, why would they want to live by our faith? And so if I'm not living in a way that's attractive to others, first of all, I've got to figure out what's going on inside me, what's wrong inside me, because that's at the end of the day, going to be the root.

Of the problem. We had a problem with the house that we bought a year ago. The person that had built it put some trees out in the back and which were beautiful, but he put in what's called a drip line system where the irrigation system ran underground and then the roots were on top of it.

Well, over the years, the roots grew around the irrigation hose until they choked it off and the trees died.

So we had to replace the irrigation. Now we're going to have to replace the trees. We couldn't see that at the time. I couldn't see four feet down to where that line was being choked off, but eventually I could see the results. Of the choking off of the supply line because the tree didn't get the nutrient and it dies and the obvious External was the result of what I couldn't see internally if I'm not manifesting the character of Christ There's something I need to fix inside.

I need to be asking the Lord Lord. What's wrong in me? Why am I not more like Jesus? What do I need to confess? What do I need to change inside me? That's the first thing to think but the reason I think this is especially a problem for evangelicals I grew up, as I said, not going to church at all, but had a lot of Catholic friends.

One of the reasons my friends tried to stay on the straight and narrow, tried to do good things, is they knew if they didn't, there was going to be confession. They were going to have to go to church. They were going to have to talk to the priest. There was going to be penance assigned on the other side of all of that.

Well, that's a whole nother way we, a whole nother theology we could discuss, but they had a consequence to their behavior that they were aware of, that they were going to have to think about. We have angelicals come along and say, look, 1st John 1, 9, if I confess my sin, he's faithful and just to forgive my sin and cleanse me from all unrighteousness.

We know that he separates our sin from us. As far as the East is from the West. The Bible says he buries it in the depths of the deepest sea. Isaiah 43, 25 says he remembers it no more. So we can be tempted to think there are no consequences to sin once we confess it. I can sin and confess and sin and confess.

And as long as I've confessed it, God's forgotten it, and I get the best of both here. So I'm not manifesting the character of Christ. I'm not living in the fruit of the Spirit, but I'm getting to have both. I can live sinfully as long as I confess. And as long as I confess, there's no consequence. That's untrue biblically.

On the one side, even if I confess my sin, and I'm forgiven for my sin, there's the lost opportunity that I forfeited by the sin I was committing instead of the grace I could have been living out. Instead of the good work I could have been doing, and I can't get that back. Drive a nail in the wood, you can pull out the nail, but the hole's still there.

There's the consequence of lost opportunity. Second, there's the consequence of damage in other lives. My sin always affects other people beyond me, and you can't unring that bell. You can't go

back and rewrite that history. Others are going to pay the price of that sin, even if it's been confessed and forgiven.

And third, there's eternal consequence. I don't understand everything about this, I wish I did. But in 1 Corinthians 3, Paul makes it very clear that we're going to face judgment. Not relative to whether we go to heaven or hell. That's decided for us in Christ. But he speaks of gold, silver, precious stones, and wood, hay, and straw, and says each man's work is going to be revealed by fire.

The fire will test the quality of each man's work. And if what he's built survives, he receives a war, a reward. If it does not, if it's burned up, he's saved, but yet as so by fire, Paul says. There's an eternal loss of reward for sin, even confessed. Even forgiven because God can't reward sin. He can't be holy and reward unholiness.

He can't be a father and reward what harms his children. And so we evangelicals have to get out of this idea that we can sin and confess and sin and confess we're hurting ourselves, we're hurting our witness. We're hurting our eternal reward on the other side of this easy believism as Dietrich Bonhoeffer would have said it.

We've got to understand the consequence of sin better than we do. And if we did, I think, we'd be living in a way that would be more obedient, would be more submitted to God's grace. None of this earns God's favor, it positions us to receive God's grace. But then we'd be that transparent kind of life of grace that we were speaking of earlier that attracts people to Christ.

Now they see the difference he makes in a way that draws them to the same grace that has changed our lives.

[00:40:34] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. So good. Talk, talk a little bit. It makes me think about, especially the reference to Bonhoeffer. I think it was the counselor, the author, Paul David Tripp, who said that what most people hear when they come to church is God is good, you're bad, try harder, and that's what they walk away with. But that's that may be true in too many instances, but it's not the best way to see the church.

Talk about how important it is. Not, not to go down the road of you must confess your sin to some minister or cleric, but the value of having relationships. Where people can help you to see where some of your blind spots are, where maybe you're not walking with the spirit. You're not manifesting those fruits of the spirit.

There is something that's blocking it, but you can't see it. And part of, you know, part of the function of the community of the church is to give ourselves in accountability to each other to say, Hey, be a mirror to me. I know I must've picked this up in my early days as a Christian when I was you know, high school and senior came to Christ late in my teens, but this idea of, Hey, if I

walked away from Christ, would anybody come after me because they knew me well enough and they cared enough that they would come after me?

And I had given them some kind of position or permission to come after me in that way. I think accountability in our lives in any way is not something somebody takes from us, it's something we give away. In the, we do that in employment, right? We, when we choose a job, we're giving our accountability to our employer, that they get to hold us accountable to certain things like coming to work and doing the work that, that we were hired to do.

Talk about that from a spiritual standpoint and how that is important, how the church plays a role here in us growing into that holiness. Talk about that some. Yeah.

[00:42:39] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Yeah, Greg, great question, Mark. First thing to understand is how clear the Bible is around the indispensable reality of accountability. Paul's letters are for the most part past theology in which he's holding people accountable to biblical truth. Some of which he's shared with him previously, and now he's writing in a follow up context.

Some is he's responding to questions he's been asked, that sort of thing. But if you go read 1 Corinthians 5, and watch what Paul is saying to the Corinthians about the sinful relationship inside the church, and the fact the church has not held them accountable. I mean, Paul's language, is as strong, as forceful, as any language in all the word of God.

Then he turns right around in 2 Corinthians 2, and when there's been repentance, he's immediately coming along and offering the grace and the inclusiveness of the gospel for those that are willing to receive it through a repentant heart and spirit. So it's not legalism. Again, it's positioning to receive grace here.

But here's Paul holding the church absolutely accountable for not holding its members accountable. You see this all across the early New Testament, this sense, Hey, we got to do this together. We're a body with many parts. We're a vine with many branches. There are no solos in the book of Revelation. None of us can follow Jesus alone.

Hands and feet, eyes and ears. Well, the body holds the rest of the body accountable. If your foot's hurting, the rest of the body knows it. And the rest of the body is going to respond to that, aren't they? I had to have a foot surgery a few years ago. I'd had to have some reconstruction in my left foot.

And I will tell you what, for the first couple of weeks after that, my body was holding my foot accountable. My body was aware of what had happened here and it was responding in a very vociferous, very clear, very straightforward manner and holding me accountable to what needed to happen on the other side of all of that.

And being the body of Christ, that's an indispensable fact of that. It's a fact of all good relationships, employment, as you said, marriage. No strong relationship can exist without a mutual accountability to a larger purpose. So we start with that by recognizing the absolute reality of accountability and all healthy relationships, personal and, and collective as well.

Then second, and you said this well, before we step into this in the context of grace, not law. So the best way I've seen accountable relationships work is people come together. They choose to give each other permission to hold them accountable to mutually accepted and mutually embraced goals and commitments.

Back in seminary days, which was a very long time ago now, I took some courses, counseling courses, and what was known as integrity therapy. Back in the day, John Drakeford was the professor in the midst of all that. And his basic idea was this in a counseling relationship, the counselor has to come forward with enough transparency that the person who's in the counseling relationship recognizes that this person wishes the same transparency from them.

But in a sense, I share something with you. You could hold against me if you wish. Now you hold share something with me. I can hold against you. We each have something on each other. We have enough of accountability with each other that we've agreed to maintain the confidentiality of this and be for each other because we've been transparent at the point of loss.

He was suggesting that as an essential factor in a, in a a thriving kind of accountable sort of spirit of of effective counseling. The first stage in the 12 stages of alcohol, alcoholics anonymous or anything else like that is admitting I'm an alcoholic. I'm going to immediately, first of all, give you something you can use against me.

You're going to say the same thing. And so is everybody else in our circle. We're going to start with that kind of transparency. Then we're going to give each other permission to step into our lives as necessary. So if you and I are in this, Mark, I'm going to be honest enough to you to say, Hey, Mark, here are the places where I'm struggling right now.

I want to give you permission to speak into this. I want to give you permission to talk to me about this. I want you to ask me hard questions where necessary. I want you to help me and I'll do the same for you. Okay. And we want to give it now. We can lie. We can absolutely misuse this. That can be done.

But on the assumption that we're willing to step forward to some greater good here, the assumption is that we'll do this in a healthy environment. Quick example of that. I'm thinking of the very familiar pastor in the last 20 years in American Christianity. Who was a person pastoring in an area that I was pretty familiar with and shared with some friends of his, and this is how it got to me, that he struggled when he traveled with not thinking in lustful ways or watching pornography on the television set.

That was just an area in which he struggled. And so when he traveled, he always brought a picture of his wife, which he set up in the hotel room where he could see it. And he empowered a group of friends when he got back from the road to ask him, Did you watch pornography while you were gone? Yes or no?

Now he could lie about it, but they knew him well enough to know he probably wouldn't get away with it very well. And he knew. He was going to be facing that question, and when he got home, if he sinned over here, he was going to have to deal with it over there. And that kept him able, that gave him an additional layer of encouragement to do that, which was good.

And then they did the same with him. They shared with him areas of weakness where they wanted to be held accountable. And so that kind of a functioning sort of accountability is something that, again, the Catholic Church has built into its confessional system, which we could do well to learn from. Again, in the sense of being able to be beggars, helping beggars find bread in the sense of grace that the Lord wants all of us to experience.

[00:48:11] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. And I think it's a really valuable exercise to really think deeply about, you know, what my sin has consequences more than I want to consider. And it, and it has implications and ramifications that I need to ask the spirit to help me understand as a preventative. And as you've been talking, you know, it's just, no, I'm not, we're not contending that having accountable relationships will keep you from sin in every instance.

People do violate these relational covenants. People do lie to their accountability partners. You know, certainly every person that's ever been unfaithful in marriage has done that. That's an accountable relationship. But it is helpful. I remember reading years ago in a ministry magazine, how a, a Pastor sat down, a ministry leader sat down and said, you know what?

I just tried to write out all the things that the spirit would help me to see would happen if I chose to go in a sinful direction, how. If I chose this particular course, what would be all of the possible implications? And he had a pretty thorough list that the spirit just helped him to ponder. And so I think that's a part of it.

It's not a magic wand. It's not the sole solution, but it is a part of it. So it's just really helpful in a way for helping people to understand. We're never at our best as Christians when we're trying to use our influence through these kinds of topics whenever we're, if we're ever down to the point of saying, well, do as I say, not as I do that's just not going to be us being the kind of effective witnesses and representatives ambassadors for Christ.

That we could be couple of, let me go one more question down this way and ask you to take us on a short Bible study, short Bible study. I heard and was swimming around in what Jesus says in John 15 about. How this relationship of fruitfulness and abundance works when he says in John 15, I'm the vine, you're the branches.

If you remain in me and my word remains in you, you will bear much fruit. It's not a question of the vine, or it's not a question of the branches trying harder, it's not a question of if this is going to happen, it's just a question, it's a natural reality of spiritual connection. If you are staying connected to Jesus as the source, give me the quick Jim Denison answer.

How do you stay connected in this metaphor that Jesus lays out in the first few verses of John 15.

[00:50:49] **Dr. Jim Denison:** that's the foundational question to all of this, Mark. It really is. If there were one verse I could make every Christian on earth memorize and do their best to live by, it'd be Ephesians 5. 18. Be filled with the Spirit. Which, literally translated as, you know, is be constantly being submitted to the Spirit.

Jesus said that the way that we become a child of God is the Holy Spirit comes to live in us. We say we've invited Christ into our lives, but it's actually the Holy Spirit. Jesus said He's at the right hand of the Father, where He ever lives to make intercession for us, is what Scripture says about Christ.

It's actually the Holy Spirit. Now we're the temple of the Holy Spirit, as 1 Corinthians 3 says. So the Spirit is the lifeblood. The Spirit is that sap. Moving through the volume, the Holy Spirit is that means by which we're connected to our source of God, the father, by the intercession of God, the son. And so I start every day.

By submitting to the spirit again. I can't give him tomorrow because tomorrow doesn't exist. Can't give him what doesn't exist. So every single day I get off the throne. Somehow I climb up on the throne every night. Don't know how I do that, but I start the day. The default position of every person is that we're on the throne of our own lives.

We're seeking to be our own God. It's that will to power. So we start the day by literally dethroning ourselves. By saying Lord, I mean, just say words like Holy Spirit, I'm asking you to take control of me. I'm asking you to empower me and lead me and use me and literally turn your life over to him today.

Then the second thing we do is we spend enough time with him in scripture and prayer and worship that the Holy Spirit can use this to make us more like Jesus. These things are means to an end by which God uses his word and uses us in prayer and speaks. He's like a carpenter getting his hands on us and being able to sand us and mold us.

Right now we're talking about God. If we were talking to God, the Holy Spirit could be using that spiritual discipline of prayer or solitude or meditation or whatever it is to mold us, to make us more like Christ so that we could bear more fruit. That's the pruning Jesus spoke of when he said that he would prune us so that we could be even more fruitful.

There in John 15, that's the discipline of spiritual discipline. Then the third thing we do is we practice the presence of Christ through the day. It's a simple last, but every time we see an opportunity, we pray a decision. We pray a temptation. We ask God's help and strength and in resisting, if we can fall to that temptation, we immediately ask him to forgive us and cleanse us and restore us and plug us back in.

The analogy I used to use back before everybody's drills became battery powered, mine included, was the old electric drill. I've still got mine that my grandfather gave me when I got married in 1980. You had to plug it in to turn it on. You plugged it in before you used it, but then you had to leave it plugged in.

If you came along during the job and unplugged it, it very quickly wound down, didn't it? And an electric drill without a power source is not much use. You could use it for a weapon or a doorstop, I suppose, but it doesn't do what it was decided to do because it was decided to stay plugged into the power source that's necessary for it to accomplish its intended function.

Well, that's who the Holy Spirit is in our lives. So if we would plug in the start of the day. Stay submitted, stay plugged in, keep the, to extend the metaphor, keep the plug clean by confessing anything in our lives. That's the spirit to show us. What do I need to confess? What's keeping you from working on my life?

Confess whatever comes to your thoughts. Claim is forgiving grace. Stay plugged in through the day. Practice the presence of Jesus. As Brother Lawrence said, it's this contemplative life. That's a walking through the day. I'm doing in the presence of Jesus. I can watch a movie sitting next to my wife We're not talking, but we're experiencing the movie together.

You can walk through the day with Jesus It's what the Bible means when it says pray without ceasing Doesn't mean to sit with your eyes closed and your hands folded while you're driving on the tollway Please don't do that while you're driving on the tollway. It's it's imagining yourself in Jesus presence Oswald Chambers said the imagination has to be sanctified if we're truly going to experience sanctification.

Imagine yourself all through the day in the presence of Jesus. Jesus is praying for us right now, Mark. This moment, He's praying for us. There right now, those that are hearing this, when they hear it, he's praying for them. He's not bound by time. He has all of eternity. to pray for every single one. I don't understand that, but it's true to pray for every single one of us.

So he's praying for us every moment. We can be connected with him every moment. We can imagine ourselves in his presence. We can remember he's praying for us. We can walk through the day in his presence, having submitted to his spirit. And if we'll live that way, The world would never be the same. Imagine 2 billion Christians living that way.

Well, that's too many. Imagine 120 in the upper room. Maybe that's too many. Imagine 12 and the world was never the same. That's gin. That's the abundant life. That's the overflowing life. That's the sanctified life. That's living by the seven pillars. That's living a life that draws other people to the Christ in us because he's so real.

in us. That's Christianity, and that's what Jesus offers every one of us.

[00:55:50] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. And the fruit will come through that his, his character will come flowing through that in every way. Last question. As we finish out this introduction today let's talk about for a moment, the reflective. Purpose of living this way based on what Jesus said at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount when he said, you are the salt of the earth and you are the light of the world.

Like a city set on a hill, let, let your good works be done so that they may see your father in heaven. Christians sometimes wonder. Well, why has God left me here? Why has God left me here for this long? Why is the world still going on? Hasn't God made his point already? But Jesus is pointing to the purpose that we as Christians really need to latch onto and hold on to that.

There is a purpose, both earthly and temporal, but also more importantly, To our lives that our lives really do matter. Our choices really do matter our witness and our influence really matter. And as we talk about this in, in what it means to be a Christian in today's culture, we talk about living redemptively or acting redemptively.

That's that action influence. Witness side of this. So as a way of kind of rounding out the, the summary and orientation, we want people to think biblically, we want them to live holy, but we want them to choose and to act daily redemptively for this purpose of drawing attention to the greatness of our God, to add to that, build on that, take that wherever you want it to go as a way of helping people to understand.

This purpose that God has given us for this time in our lives.

[00:57:46] **Dr. Jim Denison:** That's the opportunity that's before us. Salt redeems what it touches. If salt is good salt, if it's good sodium chloride, then you can taste it. It doesn't take much, right? Light always defeats the dark. Light is always stronger than the dark. It just needs to be shown. It can't be hidden under a basket as Jesus said.

If you put it in a dark room, the darker the room, the more obvious the light. If you're going around following Jesus, if you're going around with the Holy Spirit active in your life, if you've been filled with the Spirit today, if the Spirit is manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, then every place you go, the world's different because you were there. You're living redemptively. By redemptive, I mean living in a way that turns bad into good. living in a way that takes where we are now and moves us where we need to be. The old analogy, Mark, and this is going to date me

and a lot of folk hearing this will barely understand perhaps what I mean, but there was a day when they had a thing called S& H green stamps.

They gave them to you when you checked out of a grocery store, depending on how much you bought, you got that number of stamps and you took them home and you put them in these books where you could stick them down and they were sticky and kind of gnarly and all that. And if you collected enough of them, you could take them to the place called the S& H Redemption Center.

And you trade 'em in and you got a baseball bat, or if you brought enough, you trade 'em in and got a bicycle and you had this catalog where you knew how many stamps you needed to get, what it was that you were hoping to get. Well, I love the name of that, the Redemption Center. You turned in old, sticky, gnarly books of stamps and you walked away with a new bike.

God is in the business of redemption. He's in the business of turning bad into good. I think he redeems all he allows and wants to use us to that end. So everywhere we live, we can be that redemption center that turns stamps into bikes, that turns bad into good. It's Joseph saying you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.

We can be that sultan light, that leaven everywhere we go. And when we do, the world can never be the same. William Wilberforce that was so wrestling with what he ought to do when he became serious about his relationship with God. Should I stay in the political world where I find myself or should I move into a vocational ministry?

And he was convinced to stay where he was as his ministry. And he was committed not only to the abolition of slavery, but to the reformation of manners, as he put it. And God used that one life literally to change history. God can use any life to change history. That's willing to be used. You can't measure the eternal significance of present faithfulness.

So if you'll see where you are as your acts, one, eight strategy, as your Jerusalem, as your opportunity to bloom for your planted, look for the needs you can meet. Look for the people that have a heart that you can help look for the places where your spiritual gifts and your the resources God's entrusted.

You can make a difference. Finish the sentence. My ministry is fill in the blank. My kingdom assignment is I'm here to do X. And once you know that every day, be filled with the spirit every day, submit to the Holy spirit, ask God to use you to accomplish that calling today and know that he will do that.

You'll find needs. You can meet in Jesus name. It'd be a cup of cold water in Jesus name. It'd be touching hurts so that you can touch hearts. It'll be earning the right to share the good news of

God's love through your compassion and grace. Now you're a change agent. Now you're salt and light. Now, everywhere you go, the world's different because you were there.

It's not a five part strategy. It's a lifestyle of being so filled with a spirit that the Holy Spirit continues the ministry of Jesus in you and through you. That's that 120 people in that upper room that birthed the mightiest spiritual movement in human history. God can still do that if we're willing to get in that room and be as filled with the spirit as they were.

[01:01:19] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. So good. So good. It just, yeah. Really thought provoking to think this, that idea that when you're, when you're connected to Christ, when you're filled with the spirit on a, on a daily continual basis, that everywhere you go is different because you were there as Jesus. As the salt and light representative ambassador for Christ, just that astounding everywhere you go, the grocery store, the post office, the school the sports team that everywhere that you would go would be different because you were there and you were walking with Christ.

You were filled with the spirit. And through that, God is bringing not just you, but others into a life of flourishing. Their lives are made more beautiful because. Of the way God is using your influence in this world. That's a purpose worth living for. That's a purpose worth getting up for every day.

And that's what we're going to be talking about as we move further into this series, being a Christian in today's culture. As we talk about biblical authority, as we talk about biblical sexuality and biblical righteousness and the sanctity of life. As we talk about these things, that's the whole goal that we represent Christ in the best ways that we can, and that we let him turn us into that salt and light.

That he has made possible and that he wants to see happen so that that he is able to redeem things That need to be redeemed in our world and there's so much opportunity so much need for that So we hope that you'll take this journey with us over the next few weeks As we talk about this series as we jump into these great topics We want to thank you for listening today.

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Dennison's white paper on today's. Introduction in the show notes, as well as on our our Facebook or not on Facebook, but on our webpage, Denison forum. org. And we look forward to taking this journey with you in coming weeks. God bless you. And we'll see you on the next Denison forum podcast.