



MAKE JESUS THE CENTER

MAKING JESUS THE CENTER BY LISTENING TO HIM & DOING WHAT HE SAYS IN EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIVES

What does it mean to MAKE JESUS THE CENTER?

We want to experience a relationship with Jesus. It's more than just knowing about Him. It begins with believing He died for our sins, but it doesn't stop with just believing. It's about following Jesus in a way that influences all aspects of our life. It's a relationship and a journey. We are all at different points and we want to respect the process of exploring Jesus. Jesus loves us no matter who we are or what we've done, but He has a bigger & better life for us. It's experiencing the life that only He can offer in such a way that it changes our hearts, thoughts & actions. It's not just trying to fit Him into our lives but making Him the center and the circumference of all aspects of our lives because His ways make sense out of life.

We want to be willing to do whatever God wants, no matter what. It's about making Him King of our lives and following His purposes & plans for our lives. It's not about following some religious activities. It's all about a relationship with Jesus and making Him the center so we can experience our best life.

Read the following Bible passages and reflect on how it speaks about Making Jesus the Center and how you can take steps in this area:

Matthew 22:34-39, Galatians 2:20, Proverbs 3:5-6, Philipians 3-4, Proverbs 8:32-35, Galatians 5:16-6:10, Jeremiah 29:11-13, Psalms 1

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." **Deuteronomy 6:5**

STEPS & RESOURCES

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BAPTISM

Baptism is an outward expression of an inner change. If you have recently begun a relationship with Jesus, this is a great next step. For all the details about baptism, check out the baptism brochure online or at the Next Steps Center.

THE BIBLE

Reading the Bible can help us know more about God, His ways, and how they can bring purpose & meaning to our lives. God has given us His Words in the Bible so that we can know Him better and take steps in our relationship with Him. It's not like reading a textbook for school or a novel for fun. It's about connecting with God. Read it to know more about Him and how to follow His ways to experience your best life.

We have a variety of resources online & at the Next Steps Center to help you connect with God. Pick up a Journey Bible, a Starting Line Pack or check out the weekly Give Me More for some great places to start. You can also find reading plans & an online Bible or mobile app through Youversion.com

READ/RELATIONSHIP

When you are reading the Bible, ask questions like, "What does it say about God?" and "What does it mean for me?" Then you can follow up with thanks for who He is and for what He's done (what it says about God...) and ask Him to help you take steps (what it means for me...). It's reading to know God & to take steps in your relationship with Him, not just reading to gain knowledge.

PRAYER

Part of being in a relationship with God is that we can actually talk to Him by praying. God is big enough and powerful enough to listen and hear all of our prayers to Him. He really cares & wants to hear from us. We can pray anytime whether it's in the car, as we walk, at work or somewhere quiet at home. God is always ready to listen. In any real relationship, there needs to be communication. So when you pray, do it for the relationship. Don't just list requests. Pray to connect with God by thanking Him for who he is and what He's done. Ask Him to be part of your life & to guide you. There are not special words you need to say. Be yourself. Talk to God. It might be weird at first, but keep praying. Here's a guideline to give you some ideas for what to say when you pray:

A.C.T.S.

Admire/Praise – Tell God what you admire about Him & praise Him (i.e. Savior, Father).

Confess – Confess your sin to God, ask for forgiveness, turn away from wrong paths.

Thank – Thank God for specific things He has done and for His blessing in life.

Share – Share your requests. God cares about all aspects of our life, ask Him for help.

STEPS & RESOURCES

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CREATE NEW PATTERNS

Have you ever felt like you just weren't going anywhere? That you were stuck? If you want God to do something new in your life, you can't keep doing the same old things. We can experience our best life when we create time and new patterns in our life that can bring a focus on God and His ways (Romans 12:1-2). Those new patterns might mean a realignment of how we spend our time or money. It might mean making some changes to what we say and do, what we listen to or watch, or how we react as we go through life.

God's ways make sense out of life and when we make Jesus the center, we find a life that is centered, full and focused. So what new patterns do you need to develop in your life? To help you get started, you might want to check out our Next Steps section online for some ideas.

OPPORTUNITIES AT THE JOURNEY

We believe that we take big steps with Jesus when we live out His ways and look beyond ourselves. Our relationship with Jesus is uniquely connected to our relationship with others. We have a variety of ways that can help you put your relationship with Jesus into action. God wants to do big things in and through you.

Your regional Network Teams are a great place to start. You can connect with others while you share God's love by serving, or at connection points where you can discuss our Sunday series.

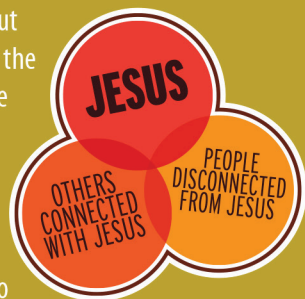
Running Partners are designed to help each other along the journey. It's a few people consistently & intentionally running through life together to develop their relationship with Jesus.

Volunteering is a way to help others explore & experience God at The Journey.

3 KEY RELATIONSHIPS

A relationship with Jesus is uniquely connected to how we live out relationships with others. The Bible shares many thoughts along the lines of what is found in 1 John 4 - We can't say we love God if we don't love others. At The Journey, we talk about all relationships but focus on 3 Key Relationships: with Jesus, with others connected to Jesus and with people disconnected to Jesus.

We need a group or a friend who can encourage us to take steps with Jesus so we can help each other through life. We should also have a few people we are investing in to help them experience their best life in relationships, not religion. If we living relationally like this, we can experience Jesus working in us and through us.



QUESTIONS & REFLECTIONS

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What is influencing your life?

How do you decide what to do?

Read John 3:30. How could you become less so Jesus can be more of an influence?

What patterns in your life are pulling you away or what new patterns do you need to create to follow Jesus and do what He says?

What are some of the aspects in your life where you need to listen to God & follow Him more?

As you look through the steps & resources, what ways seem helpful to you to make Jesus the center?

There might be many things or a few things you need to do, but what's your next step?

HERE ARE SOME BOOKS THAT CAN HELP YOU MAKE JESUS THE CENTER:

- I Became A Christian And All I Got Was This Lousy T-shirt* by Vince Antonucci
- The Circle Maker* by Mark Batterson
- Christian Atheist* by Craig Groeschel

