

Is Your Approach to Life Wrong?

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John: The Jesus I Never Knew Series

John 7

Have you ever seen The Worst Case Survival Handbook? They even have a show out now on how to survive various disastrous situations. But this Handbook is a practical guide that step by step instructs you regarding how to survive the typical problems you might encounter in your typical life here in Columbus.

For example, what do you do if you fall into quicksand? Let's say you are walking around the Easton Town Center. You are maybe going to a movie. And as you step back from the popcorn line you fall into some quicksand. Well, if you had this Worst Case Scenario Handbook, and you were also carrying around a 15-foot hollow pole, you could be saved.

Or to cite another every day common occurrence from life in Central Ohio, you are walking downtown and you have to defend yourself in a sword fight. Are you confident that you can do it? Well, if you had this book, you would learn that you should always keep your sword in the "ready" position in front of you, holding it with both hands perpendicular to the ground. I wonder how many of us carry our swords in a constant state of readiness?

Or let's say you are riding on your motorcycle on I-270 around the city and you decide to leap from your motorcycle into a moving car. Do you really know how to do that? One tip I picked up from this book is before trying to leap into a moving car, you need to make sure that the windows are open. You know, in a lot of recently manufactured cars the back window doesn't go all the way down. So it could be terrible for you if you are attempting to jump from your motorcycle into a moving car and the windows are closed. Or you are trying to jump through the back window and it's only half open.

Seriously, one of the things I did pick up from this book was how often the approach that you might initially think is the way to survive is exactly wrong. For example, if you encounter a bear in the woods, the worst thing for you to do is to run away, or to try to climb a tree. Bears are really fast and they also climb trees more quickly than people do. They will come after you! The counsel of the authors is to lie still and be quiet. Bears generally stop attacking if they don't feel threatened.

Likewise, let's say you are hiking in California and you encounter a mountain lion. The wrong approach to escape is to run. The authors said that mountain lions would have already smelled you and running would simply cause them to pay more attention to you. They caution you, unlike with a bear, not to crouch down. Instead, stand up; make yourself look as large as you possibly can by spreading out your coat and shouting.

Rather than trying to be as inconspicuous as possible, be as conspicuous as possible and you will frighten the mountain lion into submission. It is totally counter-intuitive.

Well, I've been doing a series from the gospel of John titled "The Jesus I Never Knew." I borrowed that title from a wonderful book of the same title by Philip Yancey. What we've discovered as we've gone through this gospel is that Jesus is more disconcerting, more radical, more unsettling, than the domesticated church-form of Jesus that we normally encounter.

Today, as we continue in the series from the gospel of John, we are going to talk about wrong approaches that we take to life. Just as there are wrong approaches to survival, according to The Worst Case Scenario Handbook, there are wrong approaches to life that we read about here in the gospel. We're going to discover that some of the approaches that Jesus takes to life are really counter-intuitive. They go against our initial thoughts regarding life. I've called today's talk, "Is Your Approach to Life Wrong?" John 7. Let's pray.

John 7:1-5 – After this, Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life. But when the Jewish Feast of the Tabernacles was near, Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

I told you last week that from chapter 5 to 10 the apostle John organizes his gospel around the Jewish holidays. The foundation for chapter 5 is the Sabbath. In chapter 6 Jesus is celebrating Passover. We saw that last week. In chapters 7-8, the celebration revolves around the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. And in chapter 10, the Jews are celebrating Hanukkah.

Now, a little later in the message, I'll discuss the way that Jesus used the symbolism of the Feast of Tabernacles to communicate his message. But John is trying to show us over and over again that Jesus is the fulfillment of all that the Old Testament pointed to including all the Old Testament holidays. All of these things in the Old Testament, all these rituals, holidays and laws, they were all designed to point us to the truth, the deeper meaning and fulfillment in Christ.

These holidays were God's road markers. We weren't supposed to stop and simply camp there. These things were given to the Jewish people to point Jews to Jesus the Jewish Messiah.

Well, suffice it to say that Tabernacles was a pilgrimage festival. And what that means is that just as many Muslims make a pilgrimage to Mecca, Jews from all over the Roman Empire traveled to Jerusalem, if possible, to celebrate one of the three pilgrim festivals, either Passover, or Pentecost, or the Feast of Tabernacles. So Jerusalem would have been crowded with pilgrims during the events of John 7.

This is the world's approach to success. Grab the spotlight, get as much publicity as you possibly can, draw as much attention toward yourself as you can, have everyone talk about you, be the subject of newspaper articles and radio talk shows and you'll be a success. Just look at contemporary news coverage. So much of it is simply the result of some public relations firm or marketing or political campaign doing some sort of publicity stunt. "Look at me! Hey, pay attention to me."

So Oscar Meyer drives around the country in a big vehicle that is shaped like a hot dog. Goodyear has an enormous blimp. Everywhere people's attention is caught. That's the way to be successful.

Michael Jackson's record company, Sony, marketed one of Jackson's CD's titled "His Story" by placing a 30' statue of Michael Jackson on top of Tower Records in Hollywood and getting a huge sign in Times Square in NYC. And then they pulled out all of the stops and got a 30' statue of him and put it on a barge and pulled this gigantic statue down the River Thames, near London, England. They spent \$40 million dollars hyping this album.

Grab attention. Make a statue of yourself like King Nebuchadnezzar. We see the hype around TV shows that are going to play the first "same sex" kiss during daytime TV

Look at the way PETA engages the public regarding animal rights. You are familiar with PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals? They know how to move things onto the evening news. Just get a naked girl to stand in an animal cage on a main city street downtown and you will appear on the local news. And so this organization protests McDonald's, or the Ringling Brothers' Circus. If McDonald's was really smart, it would not engage in rational debate about how its chickens are treated before they're turned into McNuggets. No one cares about rational debate or great philosophical issues.

If McDonald's was really smart, what they would do whenever PETA came to town, would be to hire six college students to sit around a table at the State House, or Parliament Building, on the lawn totally naked eating Big Macs. And then they could have Ronald McDonald, and the other McDonald's' characters like Mayor McCheese, handing out free Happy Meals to the crowd.

Just give the people more of what they want. More of a circus. More excitement. More hype.

Jesus' approach to success is so different than the showboating hype, spotlight grabbing, political and marketing machines of contemporary America.

Verses 6-11, Therefore Jesus told them, "The right time for me has not yet come; for you any time is right. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil. You go to the Feast. I am not yet going up to this Feast, because

for me the right time has not yet come.” Having said this, he stayed in Galilee. However, after his brothers had left for the Feast, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. Now at the Feast the Jews were watching for him and asking, “Where is that man?”

Jesus goes in secret. One of the great problems of faith is what we might call the “hiddenness of God,” the secret way that God works in this world. People constantly ask why, if God exists, does he hide so much? Why doesn’t he just write in the sky that he exists and that his Son is named Jesus? That way everyone in the world would know that atheism was false, and that various other religious approaches were false, and that Christianity was true. Why doesn’t God go more public?

Well, certainly in the immediate context of John 7 Jesus recognized that the opposition to him was growing from the government and from the religious powers. He knew that his destiny was a cross. Jesus knew that he would die in Jerusalem. That’s where his whole life was headed, toward a cross, toward dying for the sin of the world, toward fulfilling his mission of saving humanity from the wrath of God. But Jesus had to follow the Father’s timetable, if he was to accomplish the salvation of the world. He couldn’t simply instigate some confrontation that would result in his death before the Father’s time.

And Tabernacles was not the Father’s time. Passover was. Jesus was not to die in the fall, but Jesus was directed by the Father to die the following spring at the moment that the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple. So now Christ had to bide his time and not precipitously provoke the authorities.

But in a larger sense, hiddenness, secrecy is God’s way of success. Think with me for a moment about the key spiritual issues of giving and prayer. How are we to tithe our money? How are we to pray? What does God consider to be successful giving? Does it involve one of those huge checks, something that is 5’x3’ with your name on it as you shake the hand of the president of OSU or the mayor or the CEO of a hospital?

Jesus tells us how to give in Matthew 6. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets to be honored by men. I tell you the truth; they’ve received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left-hand know what your right-hand is doing so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

We are to give quietly, without much fanfare, so that our reward doesn’t come from people, but from God the Father.

How are we to pray? Jesus says, When you pray do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth; they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into

your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

See, the successful life is a life in which an individual builds a secret history with God, where you and your character are being forged in secret. Do you have a secret history with God? Is almost everything that could be said about you public?

Let me press this out a bit further. How does the Kingdom of God spread? With big advertising campaigns? I remember back in the 70's there was this huge advertising campaign titled, "I found it." Christians were supposed to wear huge buttons with "I Found It, You Can Find It Too." And they had billboards all over America with "I Found It." People were supposed to walk up to you and ask, "What did you find?" Your answer was supposed to be, "New life in Christ. You can find it too."

Like most other huge advertising campaigns for Christ, this one too went down in flames. The Kingdom of God spreads secretly as one friend offers to pray for another friend in the workplace. As one Christian gives a blanket or a meal to a homeless person. As one follower of Jesus talks over a quiet lunch about Jesus with someone who is going through a divorce.

So many of Jesus' parables about the Kingdom focus upon the Kingdom's hiddenness, about its secrecy. The Kingdom is described as a treasure hidden in a field. It is not obvious. It doesn't come with trumpets and naked people standing downtown and huge statues pulled on barges down the River Thames.

Years ago the Pope wrote a wonderful book called "Crossing the Threshold of Hope." In this book the Pope answered a series of questions about the Christian faith. One of the questions that the Pope answered was, "If God exists, why is he hiding? Why has he not gone more public? Why does God not make things more unmistakable so that we might believe?"

The Pope answered very wisely. He said, "God has gone public. But in a way that many people might miss him. God has gone public by entering this world in the form of a man. By becoming incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth." Could God have gone further in stooping down to us, in drawing near to us? The truth, the Pope says is that God has gone as far as it is possible to go. He could not go any further.

In fact, we might say that God has gone too far. Doesn't Paul say that Christ has become a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles? The truth is that people cannot tolerate any more closeness, any more openness, than God demonstrated in Jesus Christ. The various religions of the world do not want God to draw near. They want God to stay away, to be utterly transcendent. The various religions of the world do not want God to step into this world in the form of a man, to suffer and die a bloody death, even death on the cross.

You know what God's publicity is? It is Jesus Christ hanging naked on a cross. That's God's way of success.

Let me ask you some personal questions. How do you measure success? Do you measure success by all the other things people notice or talk about? Your house? Your car? Your kids? Your clothes? Your achievements? Do you at all measure success by the things that only God can see, the fact that you are trying to build a secret history with God, your development of intimacy with God and your capacity to hear from God. Do you measure success by your giving in secret, or the fact that you choose to handle an offense quietly, instead of informing the world about it? Does the way of the cross figure into your standard of success? Suffering for the sake of other people? Laying down your rights so that others might succeed?

And then we see the wrong approach that we take to faith. Verses 14-20, Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If any one chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?" "You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered, "Who is trying to kill you?"

You know, a lot of people believe that the way that faith is always gained is that you get overwhelmed by the evidence for the truthfulness of the Bible, or you get overwhelmed by the evidence of Christ's resurrection, and then as a result of rationally assessing the evidence, you believe. There is an enormous amount of evidence regarding the truthfulness of this book. Some of the recent archeological discoveries are among the most exciting in the history of biblical archeology.

In the December issue of the Biblical Archeology Review there is a report about a discovery that confirmed the existence of James, the brother of Jesus. I just want to read to you from the Biblical Archeology Review. They write, "After 2000 years historical evidence for the existence of Jesus has come to light literally written in stone. An inscription has been found on an ancient bone box called an 'ossuary' that reads, 'James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus.'"

Now there is an enormous amount of literary and historical evidence for Jesus. He's mentioned in lots of documents, not only within the New Testament, but outside the New Testament. But this ossuary, this box that Jews use for burying their dead, provides the only New Testament era mention of Jesus.

There's a wonderful book written about this archeological discovery by two top-shelf scholars, Herschel Shanks, who is the editor of the Biblical Archeology Review, and

Ben Wetherington. But this discovery just came to light six months ago. We have the box that once held the bones of James, the brother of Jesus.

But you know the evidentiary approach to faith works only with someone who is openhearted and who is really passionate about discovering the truth. Unfortunately, this chapter tells us that most people are biased against the truth. We human beings come into this world with a bias against Jesus. Look at verse 7, Jesus says, The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil. Or verse 12, Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He's a good man." Others replied, "No, he deceives the people." And verse 20, the people are speaking to Jesus and they yell, "You are demon-possessed".

See, this chapter tells us that many people who doubt the truthfulness of Jesus, not because there is not enough evidence to believe, but because their doubt shields them from the accusations of conscience. People doubt because they do not want to give up the selfish way they are living. People doubt because they want to continue to do things that Jesus declares wrong or immoral. So we see people defending their skepticism, folks select their reading only along certain lines only to strengthen their doubts. Is there another approach to growing in faith other than the evidentiary approach? Is there some way to move from doubt to faith other than by piling up proofs, reading all the archeological findings, the manuscript evidence for the Bible, and the fulfilled prophecies and all of that?

Well, Jesus offers us a very different approach for moving from doubt to faith. Verse 17, Jesus says, 'If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.' Now this is one of the most important verses in the whole Bible regarding how faith grows in a person. I think it's worth underlining. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

If any of you are doubting or wondering, "Is Jesus really who he claimed to be?" how do you know if Christianity is really true? How can you be confident that Jesus really did die for your sins and rose from the dead on Easter morning, that all the stuff is true?

Let me explain the approach that Jesus takes to faith. It is not one that is immediately evident. It's a little bit counter-intuitive. But first of all, he is saying read the New Testament. Read the New Testament. Read the gospels.

You say, "But that's the problem. It's the Bible that I struggle with. I don't want to reject the New Testament. But I've got a lot of doubts about it. I don't entirely believe it. I wonder if it's true."

Well, here's a response: that's all right. Just read it so that you can find in it what Jesus called "God's Will." He says, If anyone chooses to do God's will... See, as you read the gospel, you will find some teaching that you just can't accept at this time. Fine. Put those teachings aside for a later time and look for the truth that resonates inside of you

as self-evidently true. Things that when you read them they just jump off the page at you and you have the reaction of the Temple guards who were sent to arrest Jesus and said in verse 46, 'No one ever spoke the way this man does'. They weren't just speaking of the manner in which Jesus was speaking, but the content.

This, by the way, is another great verse to underline. John 7:46: 'No one ever spoke like this man does'.

If you really want to grow in faith, then read the gospels in the New Testament and just underline those statements of Jesus, which make you say, "Yes, this is true. Not just for me, but this is true for everyone, everywhere. This is true in Asia. This is true in South America. This is true at OSU in the year 2003. This was true in Israel back in 30 AD." And then set aside those things that you have problems with.

For example, perhaps you would say, like many people have, that Jesus' statement in Matthew 7:12, Do unto others as you would have others do unto you, the Golden Rule, is one of those self-evident truths. You read that statement and say, "Yes. That resonates inside of me. I should treat others the way I would want to be treated. The world would be a much better place if we just did that."

Well, here is the way to faith, according to Jesus. Jesus says in John 7:17, If anyone chooses *to do* God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. Find something from the words of Jesus that you can say, "This is God's will." And then having found that, don't just debate it or try to believe it or just discuss it. Try to do it.

And you know, if you try to do something that you discover from Jesus is absolutely true, there's a number of things that will happen. I'm indebted to an old Norwegian writer, O. Hallesby, for some of the following thoughts. You are going to find out first of all that if you tried to do to others what you would have them do unto you, you are going to discover that you don't do that. You don't treat others for a day the way you would want them to treat you. You don't treat other people for a half day or for an hour the way you want other people to treat you. You're going to discover, first of all, that you don't do that truth.

And the second thing you are going to discover is that you cannot do that truth. That you are unable to treat others the way you want them to treat you.

And the third thing you are going to discover is that the reason why you don't do it is because you don't want to do it. It's too painful. It's too difficult. You have other interests, and other desires, and other motives that get in the way of you treating others the way you want them to treat you.

And the fourth thing you are going to discover is the truth of Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount, you are evil. You will discover as you try to put the words of Jesus into practice that there is such a huge reservoir of selfishness in you that in your

most holy moments, you desire internally to avoid the effort and sacrifice and the pain that's required to do the right thing. That you and I run from tough decisions and tough choices.

And then fifth, you will discover that even though you know yourself to be selfish, you advertise yourself to the world as being otherwise. In fact, you are glad when you deceive people into thinking that you are kinder and nobler than you know yourself to be.

And once you are personally certain about this profound selfish side of you, how you always want life to tilt your way, then you are in the moral and spiritual position to discover that Jesus is utterly unlike you. Once you find out what your own heart is like, you are then in the moral and spiritual position of discovering how entirely unique Jesus is. Because as you read more about Jesus, you will discover that he was entirely selfless, entirely self-giving, other-centered, not just for a half an hour, an hour, a day or week, but his entire life. Every choice was designed for the good of others and the glory of God.

And once you see that in Jesus, you will see him towering above you, so much better than you that there must be something miraculous at work in his life, and you will want to come to him to put into your life what you entirely lack. This is a very different approach to faith. Just try to do those few things from Jesus' words that you know to be true and you will discover your profound sinfulness and Jesus' utter uniqueness.

Let me ask you a few questions: Are you completely convinced that you are a sinner? That you bend life repeatedly toward yourself? And are you entirely convinced about how absolutely unique and glorious Jesus is, that he towers above you, that he towers above every person who ever lived, that he totally lived a miraculous life.

Well, we take a wrong approach to our reputations. Throughout this chapter Jesus is maligned. His brothers did not believe in him. The world hates him. In verse 12 he is called a deceiver. He deceives the people. In verse 20 he's called demon-possessed. "You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered. The Temple guards are sent to arrest him. We read in verses 45-52, Finally, the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him in?"

"No one ever spoke the way this man does," the guards declared.

"You mean he has deceived you also?" the Pharisees retorted. "Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them."

Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, "Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?"

They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee."

For us, the maintaining of our reputation is a lifelong pursuit. As much as possible, we desire that every other human being on earth think well of us and generally like us and affirm us all the time.

But Jesus lived with the stain of a bad reputation before other people his whole life. His bad reputation began with his birth. Jesus' mother, Mary, was pregnant before she was married. Joseph was not the father. Joseph wanted to hide the scandal by not disgracing her. The Bible says that Joseph planned to send her away secretly. But God's agenda was not to hide this disgrace. God's agenda for Jesus was for him to live with the stain of being an illegitimate child. If you were born out of wedlock, or had a child out of wedlock, you endured the stares of others. That's what Jesus lived with his whole life. In a culture that had no grace for the child born out of wedlock.

In the very next chapter, Jesus' supposed illegitimacy is thrown into his face in chapter 8:41, "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." They were calling Jesus a bastard.

"You have a demon"

"You are a drunkard"

"You are a deceiver."

"You do not keep the Sabbath."

"You are trying to destroy our temple."

"Come down from the cross."

Jesus lived with slander and a bad reputation his whole life.

Let me ask you a question: Who did Jesus live to please? In whose eyes was Jesus' self-identity formed? In whose eyes did Jesus reflect his own identity out of? Was it the world's? Well, the world says this about me, therefore it must be true? I've been rejected by this or that person, therefore, I must not be worth very much.

Or did Jesus draw his identity from the Father. Do you remember the words that God the Father spoke over Jesus at his baptism? God the Father said regarding Jesus, "This is my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased." Friend, I tell you, you can endure anything regarding how someone else treats you or speaks about you, if you know that you are a beloved son or daughter of the Father and that he is well pleased with you.

Finally, we take the wrong approach to life satisfaction, ch. 7:37, on the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who

believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

I told you at the outset that the setting for this dialogue is the Feast of Tabernacles. Now the Feast of Tabernacles took place in autumn. And the autumn in Israel is a time of drought. Strong rains are generally not found in Israel after the spring. The hillsides would be brown and parched. During the Feast of Tabernacles people would pray for rain to replenish the country agriculturally. But there was an interesting ritual that took place at the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. On each of the seven days a priest would draw water from the Pool of Shilom and carry it to the Temple in this great procession with trumpets. The water would be carried up from the Pool of Siloam to the altar of the Temple and then the water would be poured from the top of the altar down through a tube down to the base of the altar. The priests would quote the words from the book of Isaiah; 'With joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation'. There was this daily ceremony of the pouring out of water.

Perhaps it was at the very moment that the water was pouring out of the temple that Jesus, the New Temple, the New Dwelling Place of God, cries out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture says, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit.

You know, we've seen Jesus in a lot of different roles in the book of John. He is the barrier breaker. He is the grace giver. He is the truth bringer. And here he is the great satisfier. Jesus is not just a Savior. He is a Satisfier. Much of the pain we have in life is caused by stifled needs. We all have basic needs – the need for love, for affection, for self-esteem, for sexual fulfillment, for the approval of others, for recognition, for relationship, for a sense of usefulness. We have a need for financial security. But what happens when life, it's circumstances, block the fulfillment of one of the things that we consider that we need?

We experience heartbreak. We start getting desperate. We think if only that particular need would be met, then I would be satisfied.

Here's the problem. The wrong approach that we take to life is rooted in our continual attempt to find deep satisfaction by meeting our own needs rather than by turning to Jesus, the giver of living water. The fact is that we are never really satisfied until Jesus quenches our thirst. You know when we discover a profound unmet need, we have a choice. We can pursue that need with all of our being. We can turn that need into an idol. We can say regarding that particular need, "God would not want me to be without this thing. Therefore, I'm going to go after it with or without God's blessing because after all, God would not want me to be unhappy." Or as needy people, we can confess our need to God. We can welcome him into the place in our heart that is breaking.

Friend, the wrong approach to satisfaction is to believe that something in this world can really satisfy us. The reality is that no human being can satisfy our deepest human need. No financial security or recognition or position can fill our emptiness. No amount

of food or sex or stuff will ever quench our lust and desire. The prophet Isaiah says, 'Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy?' Our answer would often have to be because we have come to Jesus as our Savior, but we have not come to Jesus as our Satisfier. We do not say along with the psalmist, As a deer longs for water, my soul longs for you, Lord. My soul is thirsty for the living God.

Jesus can conquer our ambition and our lust. He can quench our desires. He can give us the encouragement and understanding that we seek from other people. He can give us companionship. He fills our loneliness. He can swallow up our fear of death with his resurrected life.

Here's an utterly counter-intuitive approach to life. Your ultimate needs will not be met by anything in this world, but only by Jesus the Satisfier. Let's pray.

Is Your Approach to Life Wrong?

Rich Nathan

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John: The Jesus I Never Knew Series

John 7

I. The Wrong Approach to Success (Jn. 7:1-10)

Publicity vs. Hiddenness

II. The Wrong Approach to Faith (Jn. 7:11-20)

Piling Up Evidence vs. Doing God's Will

III. The Wrong Approach to Reputation (Jn. 7:12, 20, 45-52)

Being Accepted vs. Being Rejected

IV. The Wrong Approach to Satisfaction (Jn. 7:37-39)

The World vs. Jesus