



SUCCESS

AND THE **SHAPE**

OF LIFE

The Allure of Influence

Philippians 2:1-11



SUCCESS AND THE SHAPE OF LIFE

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

Philippians 2:1-11

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³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. ⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Philippians 2:1-11

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⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:1-11

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⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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INFLUENCE



Annie (Jules) LeBlanc



“Be careful! More isn’t always a sign of growth. You can grow in influence, have lots more people, more money, more buildings, you name it—but if you haven’t grown in the presence of Jesus among you and in his love for the vulnerable, then what you’re talking about isn’t healthy growth at all. It’s just swelling. And swelling is what happens when something is infected or broken.”

(mentor of Pete Portal)

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The question isn't whether we have influence—it's what kind of influence we're becoming.

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UNION
WITH CHRIST

“Have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”



Jesus was, and is, God "in very nature."

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“Jesus had every right to be ‘on high,’ but he came ‘down low’; emptied himself of any felt entitlement to greatness; became a servant; was obedient to whatever the Father said; accepted the limitations of being restricted to a human body; subverted Satan’s power games not through coercion or taking up power but through sacrifice and surrender.”

(Pete Portal)

Jesus was, and is, God “in very nature.”

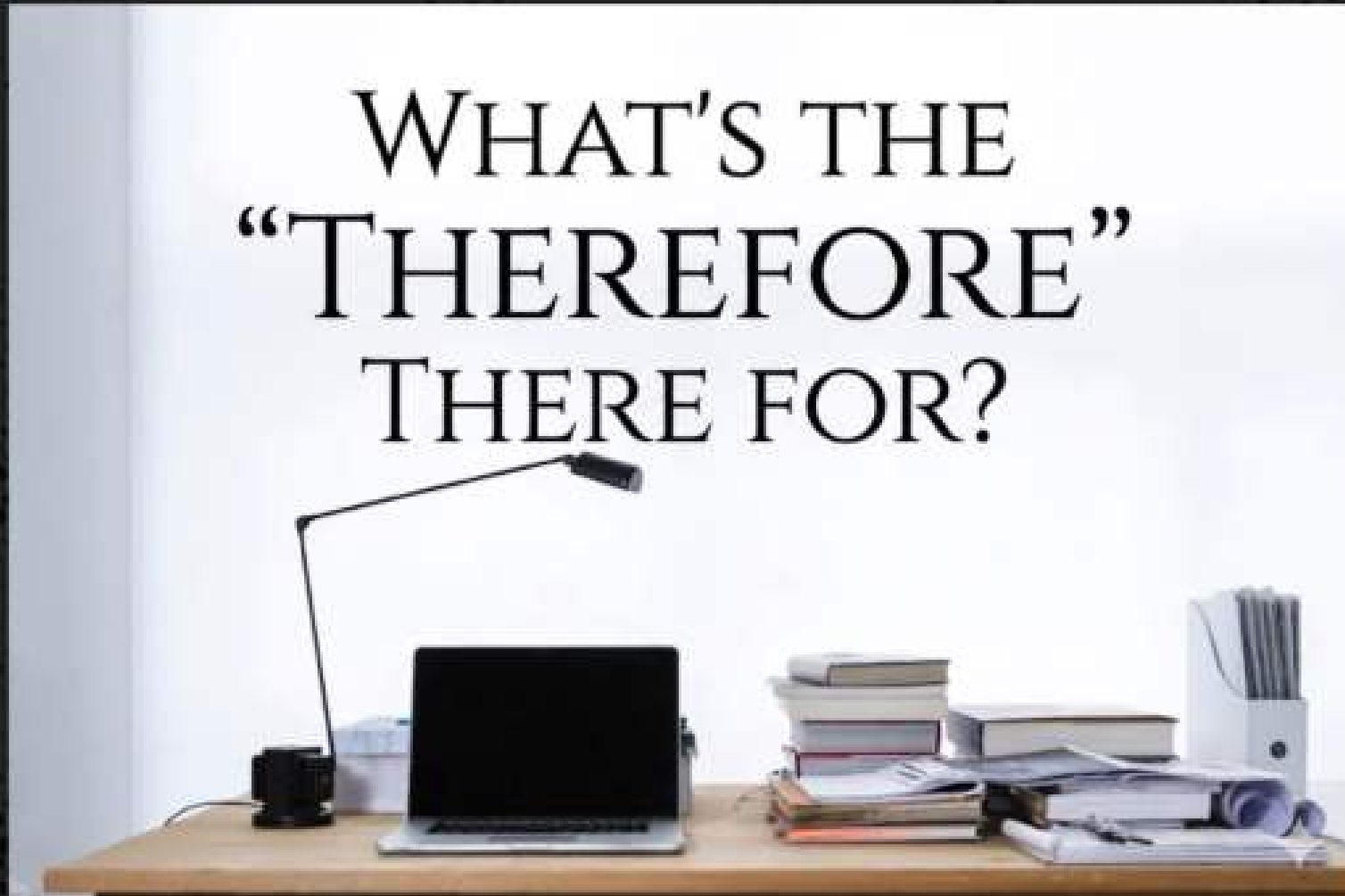
Jesus did not leverage his divine identity for influence or success.

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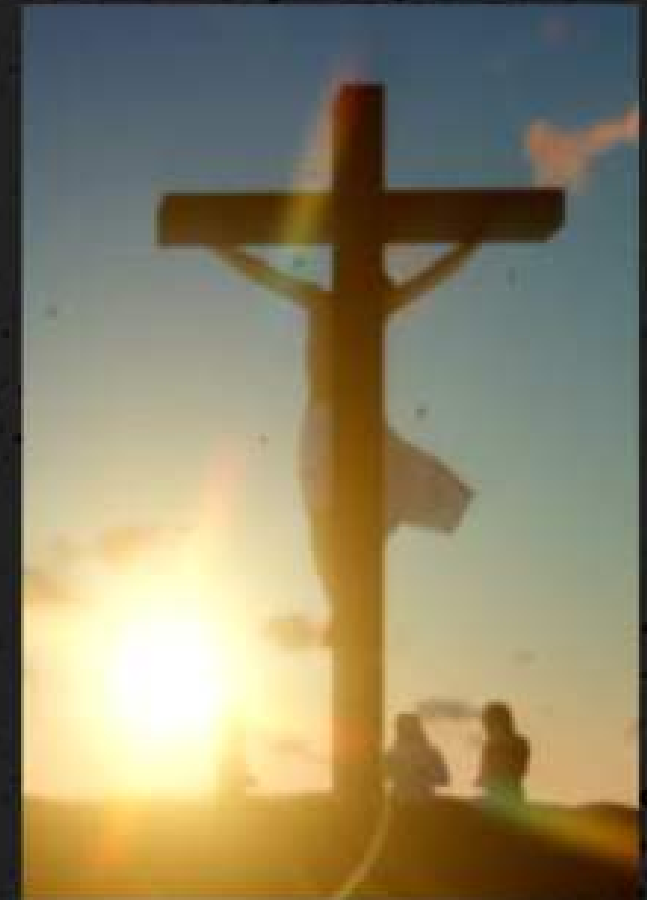
Instead, Jesus “made himself nothing.”

WHAT'S THE
“THEREFORE”
THERE FOR?



"God exalted him to the highest place... and gave him the name that is above every name... that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord... to the glory of God the Father."

The cross was not a tragic interruption of Jesus' mission! It was the mission!



“This downward aspiration as a Kingdom value for followers of Jesus is encouraged in 1 Peter 5:6: ‘Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.’ If God wants to raise your profile in the eyes of humanity, great. But the directive is for us to pursue the humility of surrender, not the noise of self-promotion.”

(Pete Portal)

The World Aims Wider, the Kingdom Aims Deeper



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Jesus could have easily had an earthly ministry that revolved around large amphitheaters. Instead, he chose to gather people around dinner tables.

The World Aims Wider, the Kingdom Aims Deeper

The World Says to Be Interesting, the Kingdom Says to Be Interested

"It seems to me that a great many people... are at this moment paying rather too much attention to the spice of life, and rather too little attention to life. Do not misunderstand me. I am very fond of spiced beef and all the spices; I always dread that the Puritan reformers will suddenly forbid mustard and pepper as they did malt and hops; on the absurd ground that salt and mustard are as unnecessary as music.

But while I resist the suggestion that we must eat beef without mustard, I do recognize that there is now a much deeper and more subtle danger—that men may want to eat mustard without beef. I mean that they may lose their appetite; their appetite for beef and bread and cheese and the broad daylight of life; and depend entirely on spices and condiments.”

(G.K. Chesterton)

“We focus our pursuit on the things that are meant to enhance life but that on their own carry little value. And if we focus our energy on life’s mustard rather than the beef, we’ll end up feeling empty and disillusioned.”

(Pete Portal)

“What we are risking is the possibility that information, not truth, will become the primary content of our culture... and that we will become a people on the verge of amusing ourselves to death.”

(Neil Postman)

The World Aims Wider, the Kingdom Aims Deeper

The World Says to Be Interesting, the Kingdom Says to Be Interested

The World Says Knowledge, the Kingdom Says Kindness

“The word of doctrine penetrates not the mind of one that is in need, if the hand of compassion commends it not to his heart.”

(Gregory the Great - 590)

"As Romans 2:4 tells us, it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance. Not God's threat of punishment or public shaming for our sin. God's kindness. You will never influence the world for the Kingdom if you cannot learn to be kind.

If you receive recognition in the eyes of people for how much you know but have not learned to exhibit the kindness of God, then public acclaim will most likely be a curse, not a blessing. Without kindness, you can destroy with your character what you've built with your gifting."

(Pete Portal)

Kindness does not require abandoning or ignoring the truth. Jesus is thoughtfully truthful and generously kind.

Closing Reflections



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What are the biggest day-to-day influences in your life? In what ways are you influencing those around you?

Closing Reflections



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Ask God to grow within you the mindset of Jesus—choosing the ways of humility, service, obedience, and surrender.

Closing Reflections



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Do you spend more time and energy focusing on the "spice of life," or on life itself?

Closing Reflections



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Invite the Spirit to make you aware this week of an opportunity to offer the influence of kindness to someone who needs it.



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