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LIVING FOR JESUS IN
THE REAL WORLD

MATT CARVEL

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Introduction:

Even Superman Can't Do It


I believe in Christianity as I believe
that the sun has risen: not only
because I see it, but because by it
I see everything else.

C.S. Lewis


This great quotation is familiar to many but is particularly memorable for me because it connects belief in Christianity to the realities of day-to-day life. Does that connection seem like an obvious one to you? If we believe that Jesus is God's Son, that He died for our sins and that He rose to give us eternal life (1 Cor. 15:3–4), of course that will change how we live! But, in my experience, the extent to which this 'life-changing' truth cannot change someone's life is also remarkable.

I'm not talking just about 'someone else' here – I've experienced it personally too. I've been a Christian since I was a child but that doesn't mean my beliefs have informed the way I have lived for all that time. In fact there's been significant parts of my life where I've intentionally tried to keep 'what I believe' and 'the way I live' very separate. You can just about manage it too, for a while at least. But in the end living a 'double life' is too much for one person to sustain – even Superman struggles with it! Many of us have had to learn this the hard way.


In my late teens I had decided that I wanted to live my own life and make decisions with me, rather than God, at the centre. What became most important in my life was being cool, girls, playing rock and roll, and drinking with my friends. If I'm honest, I wanted to be a rock star (part of me still does) and live the rock star life. I thought I was doing quite well at first too. I formed a band, I was lead singer and my popularity in school shot up a fair




bit. I got a girlfriend and spent a great deal of time at parties and clubs, having fun and drinking quite a lot. But although on the surface things were going quite well, inside I was tearing myself apart. I was still attending church on a Sunday and in the back of my mind I knew Christianity was true. Though a strong part of me wanted to turn my back on it, I never fully could. Outwardly I was living the party lifestyle but internally a real conflict was raging.




I remember waking up one morning after a particularly heavy night and feeling too ill to move. My mum came in, as I was still living at home at the time, and she was clearly upset about the way I was behaving. She could tell that things weren't going well for me either, despite the impression that I wanted to give to my friends. As I lay motionless on my bed, I vividly remember her saying to me, 'He wants you all.' I knew she was right. God wasn't satisfied with part of my life. This was the real source of tension inside of me. Deep down I knew that I was made for God (Col. 1:16). I knew that what Jesus had done for me on the cross was more important than any girlfriend, popularity or wild night that I could gain for myself. God loved me to such an extent that He wanted me to give Him every part of my life (Rom. 12:1) – not just my Sunday mornings. In time God completely turned my life around. It was – and still is – a process, but that moment was a significant step on the journey.



The reality is that the temptation to believe one



thing and do another is always with us. We live in a broken world that is filled with people who don't prioritise Jesus Christ because really they don't know anything about Him. Therefore fitting in with everyone else and living like they do is the easy road that often looks very appealing. Maybe, like me, you've been tempted to keep your 'spiritual life' and 'everyday life' separate. However, as C.S. Lewis says in that quotation, the Gospel is not meant to be a single aspect of our lives; it's supposed to be the light that helps us see everything.



That is what this book is all about: letting the light of God's Word shine onto every aspect of our lives. As I have said, I have not always made the right decisions in my life and learnt many lessons the hard way. Maybe you won't agree with every conclusion I come to about what the Bible says and how we should apply that in specific situations. But if this book helps you to connect your day-to-day life with God's truth, then it has achieved its purpose.

