

250 Learning from People with a Different Faith than Yours

00:00:01 - James Early

Hey there, and welcome again to the Bible speaks to you podcast. I'm so grateful you're here today. I'm doing something a little different for this episode. I've never done this before, and I hope you'll really enjoy it. My guest today is Joshua Tapp, and instead of me asking him questions, he's going to start off asking me some questions. We're just going to kind of have a conversation, so hope you'll enjoy it. Josh, welcome to the Bible speaks to you.

00:00:28 - Joshua Tapp

Thanks, man. I am excited about this because I will say, and for those of you listening to this, first off, you have an amazing host. He's an awesome guy. We have broken bread, literally. I guess it was tacos. We broke tacos together in Orlando. Is that where we were at? Was it Orlando?

00:00:43 - James Early

Yeah, it was Orlando.

00:00:45 - Joshua Tapp

Such a fun experience. And I will say your take on life, religion, the Bible business, everything is actually really intriguing to me. James, first and foremost, and I feel like those listening to this show really could have a great deeper connection with you. And if they get a deeper connection with you, they're ultimately going to have a deeper connection with God because you're somebody who's trying to connect them to God. So I love that you offered me this opportunity to be able to come in and actually interview you, because I typically like my podcast is all about marketing, and we've been doing it for over a decade now. We've done really well on that show, and I get to bring up my religion. I bring it up pretty much every conversation, but we don't go deep a lot of times. So I'm actually very intrigued to learn about a, your faith and where that stems from, but also, like, your take on the Bible and where you sit there so that people can really get a firm understanding of you and who you are as a person instead of just listening and saying, well, who are your guests? Right. We didn't know who the host is, so let's flip the script today. Yeah, great.

00:01:52 - James Early

Yeah, let's do. That's great. I really appreciate you being here. I want to tell everyone a little bit about you. Josh. As you said, we met in Orlando this past January. We were at a podcast conference called Capshovians Live, and then I also went to PodFest. I liked Josh from the very first minute I met him. He was actually one of the speakers at this conference, and he was so helpful in getting me to think about myself, well and to think beyond the self-imposed limitations I put on myself and my podcast and how to share it with a larger audience, and he was really good about taking those walls down on the little box I had myself in. I'm still working on that. Anyway, Josh. Josh lives with his wife, and he has two children, in Idaho, and he helps entrepreneurs with ways to grow their business, as he said. What's the name of your podcast?

00:02:49 - Joshua Tapp

It's called the Lucky Titan.

00:02:51 - James Early

The Lucky Titan. I'll have that link in the show notes.

00:02:54 - Joshua Tapp

I appreciate that.

00:02:56 - James Early

Yeah. But the reason Josh is here today, we're not going to talk business, for business sake. Maybe we'll get into it from a spiritual perspective. But he's a man of deep faith, and that's where we overlap. We have a lot in common there, and I'm really grateful for that. So we were talking one day about some of the questions he had about the Bible, and that's actually where the idea came to have him come onto the show and ask me the questions. And so I have no idea what he's going to start off with, but we're just going to have a conversation, see where it goes, and hopefully you'll enjoy our back and forth here. So, Josh, I'm going to turn things over to you.

00:03:31 - Joshua Tapp

Yeah.

00:03:32 - James Early

As we say in a Zoom call, I'm going to make you the host now for a little bit.

00:03:36 - Joshua Tapp

Yeah, yeah. I actually want to start this off, James, like, getting, like, clear back to your story and understanding what motivates you and what drives you, because we've had a lot of good conversations, you and I, and I'm like, man, your world needs to know this about you. If you haven't told them this, they need to know. So, and I'm going to caveat this for the audience. First and foremost, I'm going to basically make a disclaimer here. We are not here to push a religion or any specific sect on today's conversation, but our big ask today is that you have an open heart and open mind to the fact that all of us are followers of Christ, and we want to become better people at the end of the day. And so we're not here to try and manipulate or influence into any one thing. In fact, James and I are both very different religions. I am from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, commonly known as the Mormons. And, James, you are a Christian Scientist. Yes?

00:04:35 - James Early

Right.

00:04:36 - Joshua Tapp

And truthfully, I've been around the block quite a few times. I was a missionary for my church, met pretty much every religion. I had never heard of your religion before, so I was like, okay, now I'm just intrigued I've got it. I've got to know that. But I want to go back before religion. I want to talk actually belief structure, because, James, you were raised in a Christian family, right?

00:04:56 - James Early

Right.

00:04:57 - Joshua Tapp

So tell us a little bit about. Give us some...

00:04:59 - James Early

Well, I grew up in a protestant church, and we went to church every Sunday. We read the Bible at home, kind of before a meal. And so the Bible is always really part of my life. And I can remember in third grade, I got my first Bible, and I'd love to read it. When I was going to bed, my folks read me the Bible stories. So I kind of had that familiarity with the fact that God was present in my life and that Jesus came to teach us the way we should live our lives, that sort of thing. But it was really when I was in high school, when I got really serious about my faith and started asking questions and didn't just accept what everybody told me. I really had to make it my own, basically. I had to put these ideas into practice. And I can remember not too long after that, I, well, to back up just a little bit, I have a younger brother, and we used to fight quite a bit. It was usually me because I was always picking on him for some reason.

00:05:55 - Joshua Tapp

It's always the older brother's fault. Let's be real here.

00:05:57 - James Early

Yeah, it was totally, totally my fault. Totally my fault.

00:06:02 - Joshua Tapp

I'm a middle brother, so I get both of them. I'm picked on, and I was the picker, right.

00:06:08 - James Early

He could look at me and make me mad, or I would choose to be mad by the way we say things today. But I didn't know how to control my anger. And so not too long after, I had made this commitment to really follow Christ the best way I could, I came across that Bible verse that says, you know, if you say you love God but hate your brother, you're a liar. Because how can you love the one you can't see when you don't even love the person that you can see? Kind of a paraphrase. I thought, oh, my gosh, I say I love God, but I do not love my little brother. And that was the first time I actually took a Bible verse and dissected it and saw how I could implement it in my own life instead of just, you know, listening to what somebody else says or believing what somebody else says. I really took the that and applied that Bible verse to my life, and I thought, okay, I have to love my little brother. I have to find ways to love my little brother. And I actually did that, that afternoon, over that week, that period of a week or so. And after that time, I think I only yelled at him once, and that was like, a year or two later.

00:07:24 - Joshua Tapp

Wow.

00:07:25 - James Early

We're good friends now. We're supportive of each other. And as I said, that's the first time I actually practiced my faith on purpose, intentionally, without somebody telling me I ought to. It

sort of self-imposed, and that was a real turning point for me. So since then, it's like, I want to know. I want to, I want to understand why Jesus said, love your neighbor as yourself. What did he mean by that? That's a pretty heavy duty thing. It sounds so simple, but it's pretty deep when you get into it. So that really has put me on a trajectory of trying to follow Jesus for myself, but then help other people discover that they can do the same thing. And so, fast forward many years, I've got a prison ministry. I started a podcast, and that's what I'm trying to do now, is help people be more like Jesus.

00:08:18 - Joshua Tapp

Right? Which is so cool. And thank you for sharing that story. First off, because it's funny how sometimes it's the simple. It's the simple things, because, I mean, let's be real. I mean, so I'm one of. There's eight kids in my family, but I'm one of six boys, and I'm sandwiched between boys. And so we, my older brother and I never fought. The one who's just above me. He's, like, been my best friend forever, but my brother, just older than him. I mean, we couldn't stand each other. It was because I was an annoying little brother. Let's be real. And so it's funny, though, because I had a very different experience with that, where it took till I was an adult before I kind of made peace with that brother because I don't want to go too far in the story because this is about you today. But. But we had that brother, and I fought so hard. There were, like, holes in the wall because we were so angry at each other all the time. And when we became adults, he kind of went the career path of go to school, get a good job, work your way up, become, like, an executive. And I went the route of entrepreneur, and for both of us, we kind of looked at each other like we were idiots, right? I'm like, why would you do that? Like, to me, I'm like, you're squandering your talents. Like, if you can do that well in another company, what could you do on your own. And he's looking at me going, why would you start your own thing where you can just work your way up? Why take the risk? And we had a conversation. This is about five years ago. This is after I was married. And he's married. He doesn't have any kids. I do, but we had to have that. We call it the come to Jesus moment, right? Where we sat down and said, okay, why are we this way with each other? Right? Like, why do we judge each other? Why don't we just love each other for who we are and stop trying to force the other one to be the other way? And honestly, it's like it's open up and blossomed into a pretty solid friendship. And I'm sad it took us this long to become friends, truthfully.

00:10:02 - James Early

Hey, but it, but it happened. Sometimes, people don't do that ever.

00:10:07 - Joshua Tapp

Right.

00:10:07 - James Early

And I think that's cool. It is. I mean, that's kind of a social phrase, a come to Jesus moment, but it really is. We need to come, we need to leave our own opinions on the sidelines sometimes and come to Christ and, you know, follow his instructions. Let's put it that way.

00:10:23 - Joshua Tapp

Yeah, see, and I, I don't know how to put this. Like, I deal with stress and anxiety and awkwardness by being funny. That's, that's just always been my, my personality. I try to, to be

the comic, and it's like, come to Jesus is a funny phrase. But what's funny to me, this is my belief on, on this. This is what I visualize whenever I say that I think about. That is, let's use the case of you and your brother, right? You had to actually come to Jesus and sit at his feet with your brother and say, okay, let's air out the problems here. Let's come up with a better solution to this problem, and then let's move forward. And it's the same way with my brother. And I feel like what I always visualize is he's sitting around a table. If you look at the pictures of him breaking bread, sacrament wise, with the apostles, the famous painting, was it da Vinci that painted that one?

00:11:15 - James Early
Right.

00:11:16 - Joshua Tapp
Da Vinci's painting, yeah, it's like the world famous painting. But I imagine coming to him breaking bread, and he's like, okay, air it out. Let it out, tell me what your problems are. And so I call them come to Jesus moments. But that's what I always see when I'm visualizing that. Like, wow. And it just makes it feel more personal. Because I can be like, I feel like I'm writing it out and going, here you go. Take it from me and give me a better solution here. You know? And so I love the quote unquote come to Jesus moments for that reason. But, James, I want to take you a little bit back in your story again, because you talked about when you were. You were trained as a Christian, right? I was the same way. We were raised Christian, so we were taught. If there's a problem. Pray about it. If there's a problem. Go to the Bible. When you're feeling sad, angry, whatever it is, go to the Bible. At any point in your life, did you feel like religion was being, like your specific religion was being forced on you?

00:12:15 - James Early
That's a really good question. Not really. I mean, I ended up going to church with my dad to the protestant church for a while, and we just went. Because he went, we just went. I never felt forced. Oh, maybe as a kid, you know, I felt more forced, like, whether I had to wear a tie or not. That was back in the day, you know?

00:12:34 - Joshua Tapp
Exactly. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:12:37 - James Early
But. But it was... It was my church. I went. I loved church. That's one thing I got from my dad, is I love to go to church. I enjoyed the ideas there. It was always a choice for me.

00:12:49 - Joshua Tapp
Yeah.

00:12:50 - James Early
And so I think, you know, I know that's not the case for a lot of people, but I think it's important if, you know, someone's listening now and you're feeling like, yeah, well, I feel like I was forced, maybe by a parent or a spouse or who knows? Or maybe just feel like society says, well, you should do this. I think there has to be some free moral agency of being quiet and asking what's

best for me. Finding a place where you fit in, a place where you feel a sense of community. To me, that's what church, part of what church is all about.

00:13:23 - Joshua Tapp

Yeah, I agree completely. I mean, if you go back to the two great commandments, right. Love God, love your neighbor, right?

00:13:30 - James Early

Yeah.

00:13:31 - Joshua Tapp

And we actually. We were literally just talking about this on church on Sunday about this concept, and I think what a lot of people miss. So I had my. My brother's just older than me, who's been my best friend forever. An amazing guy. His wife left our religion with. with a huff. I mean, very. Just anti everything, God, anything. No religion. Right. And he came to me crying, just like, dude, how do I deal with this? And then he ended up leaving with her. And I thought that was such a weird move because it's like allowing him to be dragged down with her and their kids down with them. It's kind of like a hard thing for our family, truthfully. Because to me, I'm like, I genuinely am. Like, even if you don't want to go to our religion, like, don't give up on God entirely. Come on, He's there for you. But what was interesting is that he and I were having this conversation. He's like, that's what I miss most, is actually the community element of the church, because he's been gone for about two years now, or year and a half. Year and a half now. But he. I think what you're talking about is, like, that community element is like, if you fall in love with that, you actually begin to see Christ, right? Because you see it in the community around you. I mean, it's. At least that's my perspective on it.

00:14:42 - James Early

You know, I agree with that. The word in Greek that we translate church is ecclesia, and it actually means the body of believers. There's a sense of community there. It's not a church building. It's not a church set of policies or doctrines. It is the community of saints, some people call it. Paul uses that metaphor when he talks about us being members of the body of Christ, and we all had different place and different function, different purpose in the church as a whole. The whole Christian church, whatever denomination you're in, you know, to me, that whole sense of the Christian body of believers, it's a wonderful sense of connection with each other and each one doing his or her own part, to be part of that and to be supportive and everything. But I will say when somebody feels it's imposed on them, that's tough. You know, I would not want someone to be a member of my church if they felt like we're making you believe this. I had, I've shared this story on the podcast before, but I had a woman in my, one of my Bible study classes at the federal prison several years ago, and she had been brought up in a church where she wasn't allowed to ask questions. And so she had great questions. But they said, you just believe what we tell you, you do what we tell you, and you'll be fine. Just have faith. If you have questions, if you have doubts, that means your faith is faltering, and that's not good. But they were legitimate, honest questions. And so when she'd come to the Bible study, she'd ask all these questions like, we were in seminary class almost. I mean, some really deep questions about theological points, things in the Bible, and we talked about them freely. I didn't know all the answers. Well, I didn't pretend to, but we helped her, the whole class helped her see how to find the answers that she

could herself for the Bible. We talked about that kind of thing. So my point is, she had been turned away from church because of that. But then once she got a sense of finding a place where she could have a sense of community, church was a whole new thing to her. And so I think when she got out, she. She found a church home. And so, yeah, you might not be the right fit in a particular church. So find someplace else. Some people start their own churches. Yeah, that could be a good thing. Maybe not. Depends on. But, you know, I would say, first and foremost, to join a church. What's the community like? Are the people loving? Are they really following Jesus? And what are the people telling you about God? Is He's this mean, wrathful, vindictive, being gonna throw thunderbolts at you every time you make a little mistake? Or is He a loving, forgiving, gracious mercy, merciful God? Those are the things you need to think about and. And find a place where you feel like you can be part of.

00:17:36 - Joshua Tapp
Yeah. So powerful.

00:17:39 - James Early
Josh, I'd just be curious, has there been anything in the Bible that's been helpful for you when, you know, say, your brother and sister-in-law have followed a different path? What have you found comforting in your own relationship with God on that?

00:17:54 - Joshua Tapp
Yeah, that's a good question. It's been interesting for me is I've been in a weird funk recently, and it hasn't actually been. And this has been over, like, two years. I was raised Mormon, as a lot of people say. Right. It's like, we go to church every week. We read the Bible. We also read another book of scripture we call the Book of Mormon, which is where the name comes from.

00:18:15 - Joshua Tapp
And I love Scripture. I love listening to and learning about God. But what I really appreciate is being around people who actually apply and not just, like, talk about it all day, if that makes sense. And over the past couple years, I think because my brother left our church and left God entirely, a lot of people, just a lot of people around me have. And my generation, I'm 30 years old, and a lot of my generation is leaving in droves away from God entirely and into atheism. And it was interesting because I haven't really challenged my church. I asked the question. I'm like, I love my church.

00:18:54 - Joshua Tapp
I love my community. My friends are there. I feel God when I'm there, and I would never leave. What's been interesting, I've been in this weird funk because I've been really trying to figure out where God and I, where our relationship is, right. And because in my religion, we're taught to read the Bible every day. We're supposed to read Scriptures every single day. And we're supposed to pray morning, noon and night. Right? Like every day we should be praying. We're supposed to go to church. Supposed to. Supposed to. Supposed to. Because it connects us with God. Right? The whole goal is to connect us with God.

00:19:32 - Joshua Tapp

And where I've struggled a lot recently has been even doing those things. I've gotten into a funk where I'm like, wow, I'm not really learning new things. And so it's been kind of a fun journey for me because I was reading about Paul, actually, right? I think everybody's had a Paul moment, right? I was reading about Paul and he goes, it's chapters and chapters and chapters of this man's journey, right? And he's out just applying his faith constantly.

00:20:03 - Joshua Tapp

And this is about two years ago. I'm like, I hadn't really talked about my faith publicly. I'd mention it periodically and I'd move on instead of just saying, like, I believe this is God, right? And I lead pretty large communities myself. And being able to look at Peter and Paul and all these guys who were persecuted very heavily, and I went, you know what? I'm just going to be courageous and just tell the world what I believe.

00:20:29 - Joshua Tapp

And instead of going, because a lot of times I'll tell people it's God, source, whatever you believe in. And I've just stopped saying that. I'm like, it's God. I believe in God. And you can label it whatever you want, but I don't have to tell you that, but I'm going to declare that it is God and not be scared of that along with my political views and other things as well.

00:20:47 - Joshua Tapp

And being able to do that has actually dramatically, I feel like I think God was waiting on me to start declaring my faith and my testimony again. And so I do feel like I've connected a lot more, but I've been in that funk ultimately because I was like, I'm not applying, right. And I genuinely feel like I'm on this earth to do very, very big things. And I, we can go into those at a later date if you want to, but a lot of them are business related, so it's nothing to do with this podcast, but for me, ultimately, I felt like God was like, don't be ashamed of me. Right, right? Talk about Me openly, constantly, and declare that I am God and not just a source or whatever, but declare I'm God.

00:21:32 - Joshua Tapp

And that's weird enough, like, that alone has been enough to really, I think, get me back to where I was when I was. I felt like I was at my spiritual high point. And it's only literally been the last two months that I feel like I've really. It's become almost every conversation. I'm, like, actively declaring, you know, that it's God, that he's God. Right. And that's. That's been a. That's been a really cool experience for me.

00:21:55 - James Early

You know, don't you think that it's really about your relationship with God?

00:22:00 - Joshua Tapp

Yeah.

00:22:01 - James Early

You don't go to church to get your relationship to God. Of course that can help. But I think we... The reason we go to church should be because we have a relationship with God. Sometimes we put the cart before the horse. And I think the primary thing should be our communication with

God. The other thing I want to say about something you said, Josh, was that all too often we define Christianity by doctrinal beliefs, and different churches disagree on what the correct doctrinal beliefs are. But Jesus never said, you're going to know my disciples by the correct doctrine. He said, you're going to know my disciples by how much love they have for each other.

00:22:46 - Joshua Tapp
Right.

00:22:47 - James Early
You know, he said, you judge a tree by the fruits. And so, I mean, I think it's important to know what you believe and why. But, you know, doctrinal wise, we could all be partially wrong. But the word you said that sparked all this is, you know, putting things into practice. If you're practicing brotherly love, if you're practicing your love for God, that's going to show up in your daily life. Jesus said, love your enemies. Okay? And I've gotten to the point where I been able to do that many times, and it changes me as a person. It makes me a much better person. And I would rather have somebody I disagree with theologically practicing those same principles that Jesus taught us. That's more important to me. That's where I feel we can find unity within the body of Christ. Because, you know, at the end of the day, Jesus said, it's not everybody that calls me Lord that experiences heaven. It's when you do the will of God, my Father in heaven, that you become aware of heaven's presence. I'll say. Even Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It's right here. We just don't see it because we're focused on other things.

00:24:09 - Joshua Tapp
Yeah.

00:24:10 - James Early
I love what you said about practicing your faith. And going back to what I've said earlier is I don't think I realized until this conversation how pivotal that moment of me reading that Scripture about I need to love my brother and taking it to heart, what a different life I would have had if I hadn't had that moment. Maybe it would have happened later, but it happened then, and it set me on a trajectory that hasn't changed. So I think that putting your faith into practice is, like, crucial.

00:24:43 - Joshua Tapp
Oh, yeah. Well, and I feel like you've, like, what's so cool about your story with this is that it was probably the first moment in your life where you, like, truly had to forgive somebody, right?

00:24:54 - James Early
Oh, yeah, totally.

00:24:56 - Joshua Tapp
Because coming back to my brother, right. So my sister-in-law, who he's married to, we were actually very close. And then. But this same brother was my business partner, and he had decided to leave a few years ago. It was right before they left the church. He decided to leave and strike out on his own. And I don't think he communicated it well with her because apparently she had some very serious animosity.

00:25:17 - Joshua Tapp

Because right before she left our church, she sent me a message that deeply hurt. I mean, deeply hurt. Just saying I was a liar and a cheat and hitting every button where I'm like, those are the points I pride myself in, being honest, being integral, being all these different things and being fair. And she hit every major point and just made me feel like dirt and then blocked me so I couldn't even, like, say, Hey, I'm sorry.

00:25:45 - Joshua Tapp

And it was like, it was so, so, so hard. But actually, she didn't block my wife for some reason. So I texted her on my wife's, my wife's phone, and I was just like, Hey, first and foremost, like, we're family, and I am so sorry, you know? And it was like, two weeks to get up the courage to do it, truthfully. But I sent it to her, and she never responded. So I was like, okay, well, she hates me. And I just.

00:26:08 - Joshua Tapp

I'm going after, like, I've done my part, right. I've sought forgiveness. I've asked to share my side. I'm like, if she wants to hear my side, I'm open to it. But it was literally seven months later. My brother was, like, in the depths of despair in his life. I mean, just very depressed. And I hadn't talked to him about a month, which is really bizarre for us because we talk almost every day, but we hadn't talked in a month. And she, my sister-in-law actually texted me again and was like, first off, she apologized, and she said, I didn't realize, like, what cutting you out of your brother's life would do, basically. And she invited me to come over to their house. They live a few hours away. But it was a really interesting moment because I was like, wow, what a crazy moment of forgiveness. Because I had never really had to challenge it that hard before, right where I was like, man. Because she said all the right things.

00:26:59 - Joshua Tapp

I'll just tell you, she knew how to just dig the needle into me, you know, my wife was so mad on my behalf and was like, she's like, how are you forgiving her? And I'm like, it is not easy. I know it might look like it's easy on the outside, but I'm like, I am in turmoil over this because I'm also a very red personality, so I like being right. And so it's extremely hard for me to humble myself and be like, you know what? Like, she, maybe she's right. Maybe in this instance, like, that's where it was. So I'm going to humble myself and say, okay, here's like, I'm gonna give it to God ultimately, right? And, like, put it at His feet and. But it's been cool. Like, I will. I will say that my sister-in-law, we haven't repaired the relationship to where it was before yet, but I actually see it going in that direction, which is cool.

00:27:42 - Joshua Tapp

It was really a genuinely a cool experience for me. And my wife is actually now starting in the forgiveness process with her and everything, too, which is really fun. But I wanted to ask you, too, on this, James, because I had this conversation with, he's one of the guys that works for me. He's a born-again Christian. And then we have an evangelical Christian who also works for us. We were having this discussion because their big beef with me and my religion is that they were like, well, you feel like you have to earn your way into heaven.

00:28:17 - Joshua Tapp

I thought that was so interesting. I never considered it that way, because we do believe that there are commandments that we need to follow and everything else, and that we, as we follow those and repent of those things, we do actually get a place in heaven. Like, where do you sit on that between, like, earning and grace? Because I think that's actually a really interesting balance.

00:28:35 - James Early

Well, people have been debating this for hundreds of years, so I don't know that we're going to come up with the perfect answer.

00:28:44 - Joshua Tapp

We're not going to get a solid answer. I just want to know what your take on it is.

00:28:48 - James Early

I think that's a really, really important question. And the word that comes to me right now is balance. You can swing one way and you can take one Scripture by itself, and it says you're saved by grace and not by works. And if you just focus on that Scripture or Scriptures that agree with it, you're going to lean more toward that direction. But as I said, Jesus said, not everybody that calls me Lord, not everybody that recognizes Jesus as Lord, he's saying, that's not your ticket to heaven. And other places, though. It says, I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God. And so they're suddenly a Christian and they're going to heaven. I mean, so there are all these different perspectives from looking at things from different angles in the Bible. And I think it's important to take all of them into context when you're trying to figure out what's going on here.

00:29:43 - Joshua Tapp

Yeah.

00:29:44 - James Early

Jesus also says in Matthew, chapter 25, he's talking about when he's sitting on his throne of glory and he's separating between the sheep and the goats. And the only difference is they all believed in Jesus, but some of them were ministering to the poor, visiting the people in prison, taking food and clothing, helping the people that needed help. The other people said, oh, we never saw you doing that. Well, he said, if you didn't do it to anybody, you were not doing it to me either.

00:30:12 - Joshua Tapp

Right.

00:30:12 - James Early

I kind of paraphrased that pretty seriously. But the point is, he was saying that heaven is for those who are unselfishly practicing these principles that I've taught you. Now, he also talks about heaven being at hand. We still think heaven is way off after we die somewhere.

00:30:33 - Joshua Tapp

Right.

00:30:34 - James Early

I think we all need to get back to the sense of, okay, heaven is here. Every time you do something nice for someone, every time you forgive someone, like you did with your sister-in-law and everything, I think we get a little taste of the fact that heaven is at hand, right now. The book of James says, show me your faith without your works, and I'll show you my faith because of my works. He said, faith without works is dead. I mean, who wants the dead faith? That's what we were talking about earlier. If you just have faith. Oh, well, I believe in God. But you're not practicing it. You end up in a funk like you were talking about. So I think all these things go together. Jesus told us, if you love me, you will keep my commandments. And so the question is, who do we love? Do we love ourselves more than we love Jesus, or do we love Jesus more than we love anybody else? Are we really trying to follow God's directions in our lives? That sort of thing? There's so much more to this whole topic. I think it's just a balance. We are saved by grace, but then we have to put that grace into practice. We can't just leave it up on the shelf. It can't be a philosophical, intellectual, theological thing in our heads. And I hear too many theologians, they're just arguing theological. They're having theological debates in their heads with each other.

00:32:01 - Joshua Tapp
It's very nuanced.

00:32:02 - James Early
Yeah. I think they're missing the point of, like, in the Old Testament, I think it's Isaiah, chapter 58. It talks about God is saying, you're fasting. You know, you're going through this procedure of not eating food, and you're, you're beating yourself and putting on ashes and all that stuff. He said, that's not the fast that I want. I want you to go out and help the people that need help. Share your food with the poor. It's not about not eating. It's about taking care of people that need help.

00:32:28 - Joshua Tapp
Right.

00:32:28 - James Early
He said, that's the fast that's pleasing to Me. So that's what God is telling us way back in the Old Testament, how we should be living our lives. Jesus jumped on the, on the Pharisees because they were preaching things, but they weren't practicing them.

00:32:44 - Joshua Tapp
Yeah.

00:32:45 - James Early
And too many times the people who quote a Scripture and say, oh, well, it's only by faith, you know, they're, they're leaving other things out. And the other thing I will say is, you can't earn, I don't believe you can earn your salvation. I think it's a gift from God, but it is a gift, but it is very available. We need our eyes open to that. We need, you know, if somebody gives you a gift, you have to accept it. And if somebody gives you a gift, maybe they gave you a new tool if you're a guy. They gave you a tool for your garage, your workbench. Well, if you just leave it in the box or leave it on the tool bench, what good is it? The idea is you're supposed to use that gift, and

when God gives us the grace of salvation, we're supposed to use it. We're supposed to go out and practice and share it with others.

00:33:33 - Joshua Tapp

Yeah. I think you and I agree very much so on this. I'd love to hear the counterargument to this at some point, because I do know, because my buddy will be like, nope, it's by grace. But then he lives his life, like, perfectly. I mean, he's an example of a human of following Christ. So I think it's cool because it's like, they're still taking action, right? Because, I mean, in my opinion, and I don't know if it's controversial or not, but I'm like, but if you were saved by grace, then you went and murdered somebody. Are you still saved by that grace? Right? And so, like, that's the. That's where I'm like, this is obviously a very extreme example, but I think that there are steps we need to take. But I had a religious leader once tell me this, and I thought it was brilliant because there were a couple years where I was still going to church, but I was not living by any of the standards, I'll just put it that way. And I, I got to a point where I finally decided it's time to repent and be better. I went to him and I said, Hey, I need help with multiple problems I was having. And I was like, am I lost? Right? He's like, well, first off, repentance is a really strong thing. But he told me something I thought was so interesting. He's like, Josh, some of these problems you have, they're not going to go away in this life, right?

00:34:44 - James Early

Thanks a lot.

00:34:46 - Joshua Tapp

Yeah, exactly. That depressed me as a young man. Right? But he went and he then followed it up. I don't know where this verse is. I am terrible at memorizing where verses are. I have very bad brain for memorization. But he basically shared with me that all will be made right in Christ. And he's like, Josh, when you die, when any of us die, he's like, whatever a religion believes or whatever, he's like, I just believe that Jesus is our friend. And he's like, it's all going to be okay, right? No matter how bad you've been, how horrible you feel like you've done, he's like, if you'll accept him at the end of everything and you get another opportunity, he's going to give you another opportunity. And I love that. And some people will hugely disagree with that, and they'll say, no, if you make mistakes, you're going to hell. Right? I personally don't believe that. I love the viewpoint of being able to say, okay, I'm going to do everything I can in this life to be the best person that I can. And I'm also going to focus on giving myself the grace of, like, it's all going to be made right.

00:35:44 - James Early

You know, there's always forgiveness because we do, we make mistakes, sometimes purposefully. We do something we know we shouldn't. Sometimes it, we can't help it. Sometimes circumstances, sometimes the heat of the moment. But God's forgiveness, God's grace, His mercy is always there. People talk about whether you deserve it or you earn it. No, it's a gift. We all, in one sense, not that we earn it, but we all deserve God's love and forgiveness. Again, are we going to accept it into our lives and act accordingly? So, you know, as I said earlier, Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments. He didn't say, just sit around and do whatever you want to. He said, follow me. Follow my example. If you really want to be my disciple, deny yourself. Take up your cross daily and follow me. And I think that's, that's the

heart, to me, of Christianity. I used to love a good theological debate because I thought I was right, but now it's like, let's talk about how to follow Jesus.

00:36:47 - Joshua Tapp

Yeah.

00:36:48 - James Early

Leave the debates to the people and...whatever

00:36:50 - Joshua Tapp

In the debate classes. Yeah, we don't, we don't.

00:36:54 - James Early

We don't. Yes, exactly.

00:36:55 - Joshua Tapp

Yeah.

00:36:55 - James Early

Listen, Josh, anything else you want to say quick, because we need to wrap up here in just a few minutes?

00:37:00 - Joshua Tapp

Oh, I'll just, I'll throw this, I'll throw this one note out there because I've had a really unique opportunity. So I have a series of friends in the business space. All of us are very active in our faith, but also very different faith. So we have a very devout Jew, a very devout Muslim, a very devout, I would say, like typical Christian. We have me, the Mormon, and then we have a Catholic, and there's various other people, but we've been sitting down as a group and having a very non-theological debate, but as, as an opinion debate and then understanding where the differences are between us and basically drawing throughput lines between us, and especially through the whole Palestine situation that's been going on. It's been so fun to have these conversations and have an actual person from both sides religiously discussing this. And it's, it's so unique. But it's also in the same way that, you know, a lot of people look at my religion and go, oh, I hated everything about it. Or whatever. But then they, we have a conversation, we realize, wow, there's a lot of throughput between all of these. We all have these little connections where we all believe the same things. We have varying, small, minor differences, but, and genuinely, and some people are going to hate me for saying this. Even between the Jew and the Muslim, they're very, very similar in belief. And that people don't realize that when you get down to, like, the core, especially if these are good human beings at their core, it's so unique. I mean, it's so, so unique. So I just want to say that, like, I hope people will take more opportunities, and I hope this is what you've been able to promote here, James, is like being able to foster a place where it's like, it's okay to hear other people out, it's okay to learn about other people. If anything, it's going to help you strengthen your beliefs and in Christ.

00:38:44 - James Early

So I, I totally agree. I, I learn as much from people I disagree with, that I do from people I agree with sometimes more, because you have to look at things from a different perspective. And it's about listening and finding out where someone's coming from. It doesn't mean you have to agree. We can't all agree. That's not what we're trying to do. I don't think that's... the disciples, all of Jesus's disciples didn't agree on everything either. They fussed about who was going to be more important, all that stuff. So I would say to everybody listening here, take Josh's lead here, and is there someone who you think you disagree with? And it could be in the political scheme, too. Think of what's going on in the United States right now in the politics, but think of someone that you may think you disagree with politically, religiously, whatever, and take a time to get to know them as a person. Find out what you have in common. It's okay to disagree, but hear their perspective. And if it's a debate, that's not productive, but if it's a conversation, a genuine interest on both parts, I think that can be really healthy. And it helps bring healing to the atmosphere of all this, you know, dissension and violence and division that we've got right now. So. Yeah, I love that.

00:40:02 - Joshua Tapp
Absolutely.

00:40:03 - James Early
I would love to hear more about that, that little conversation of all those different folks together. That sounds...

00:40:09 - Joshua Tapp
We've actually been, we've been recording it. We've been recording it. So we're, we're going to release it soon.

00:40:14 - James Early
I'd love to be in that. I'd like to be a fly on the wall in there. Listen, Josh, I want to honor you. I just love your heart. I really appreciate our growing friendship and all the encouragement you've given me in helping to get me to get the message of the Bible Speaks to You Podcast out there to a wider audience. And I know I'm not the only person you help in that line, but you're really great at helping people to be clear about what their purpose is in life and how to help them achieve it. And I just appreciate your deep faith and how you live it.

00:40:46 - Joshua Tapp
Thank you.

00:40:47 - James Early
Well, and I'll say how God is going to help you keep learning. Put it into practice.

00:40:52 - Joshua Tapp
Yeah, absolutely.

00:40:54 - James Early
God's not done with us yet.

00:40:56 - Joshua Tapp
Yeah.

00:40:57 - James Early
Josh, what's the best way for people to connect with you?

00:41:00 - Joshua Tapp
So I do this for most people, is if you ever have a question, I am primarily, just so you know, I'm a marketer. People come to me for business related questions, but I love when I get questions or conversations that aren't related to that. That's why I agreed to come on here. I was like, this is awesome. This is awesome. I love having conversations like this. I almost said debates. I always give my number out to everybody. This is my personal number. So it's 208-206-4652 and that is a US based number. Feel free to text me. I mean, honestly, I'm pretty open to connecting with people. I love to meet three to four new people a day. Been doing it for over a decade just to hear what people, how people are, what they're looking for, what their ambitions are in life. And James, I just want to praise you and honor you as well, for, I mean, you have an entire show representing what you believe. And I think that's so cool because, especially being somebody in the podcasting space, most people are in the entertainment sector, and it has nothing to do with what they believe. It has everything to do with how many views and clicks they're going to get. And so I love to see that you're doing this regardless of the result. You're excited every day to do this, and that makes. It's fun to see that. I love seeing your growth. So thank you for being a part of my world as well.

00:42:15 - James Early
Hey, thank you. I've got three quick final questions that I ask all my guests.

00:42:19 - Joshua Tapp
You bet.

00:42:20 - James Early
The first one is, if you could talk to any Bible character other than Jesus, who would it be and what would you ask them?

00:42:28 - Joshua Tapp
Peter, hands down.

00:42:30 - James Early
Why? What would you ask him.

00:42:34 - Joshua Tapp
So, first and foremost, I would ask him how he led nations with the background that he had, his story. And I know this is a rapid fire question, so I'll try to be succinct here, but he's. When I read his story, or you watch The Chosen or whatever, if you're into that kind of stuff, right. I look at that and I go, that's me. Like, I am. I can relate so much to him because I feel like I was called to something bigger to lead nations, and he did it. And he did it from such a lowly background. It's cool. So I just want to know how he rose to the challenge on that and how he did it.

00:43:13 - James Early

Okay, well, so that's almost the same answer you're going to give to number two is, is there any Bible character you especially identify with?

00:43:21 - Joshua Tapp

100%, Peter. 100%.

00:43:24 - James Early

Okay. So the third question is, the Bible Speaks to You Podcast is about getting back to the original Christianity of Jesus, how he thought, how he lived, how he loved, how he prayed. How would you describe Jesus original message of how he wants us to live our lives?

00:43:44 - Joshua Tapp

I'll circle back to what I said initially, and this is. I think it's just top of mind for me, but I think God is a Being and a philosophy, and a lot of people don't agree with me on this one, but I think that communities that are built on Christ move the world in the right direction. And so to me, I think what he wants and his gospel and his doctrine, his desires for us is to unite with one another and to stop fighting each other. And so I believe it's all about gathering people together and then bringing Christ into the conversation. And it's just cool. You watch when you bring his gospel into any area of your life, like how big of a blessing it is for everybody, and then how much more successful it all becomes. So.

00:44:37 - James Early

Yeah. Amen. Hey, Josh, thank you so much. This has been great. I really appreciate it. And thanks for taking a little different approach with me on the podcast this week.

00:44:47 - Joshua Tapp

You bet, man. I appreciate you having me on. It was a fun one.