

26-0204wc Transcript

26-0204wc - Engagement Project, Tour 10.2, Scott Reynolds

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Class Resources: [EP-Tour links](#), Our website: wschurchofchrist.org/education.php Del's site: deltackett.com

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26-0204-Tour 10-Final Thoughts, Part 2

Transcript (0:04 - 8:17) - Teacher: Scott Reynolds

(0:04) We are in the second half of the final thoughts Q&A from the engagement project with Dr. Del Tackett. (0:12) In this closing discussion, Del and the participants reflect deeply (0:16) on what it truly means to live out neighborly love in everyday life. (0:22) Part one touched on the meaning of our Jerusalem from the engagement project vision statement.

(0:30) It's a modern application of Acts chapter 1 verses 7 and 8 where disciples begin witnessing (0:36) the Jerusalem, then Judea, and then the ends of the earth. Our Jerusalem is our immediate (0:43) sphere of influence, our own neighborhood and workplace, not the literal Jerusalem in Israel. (0:51) Then the participants share two insights.

First, the realization that the full triune God, (1:00) Father, Son, Holy Spirit dwells within believers. And second, in addressing self-centeredness, (1:07) releasing our personal scripts, our preconceived expectations brings freedom. (1:14) Our focus shifts to others and our belief in God's indwelling presence radically alters (1:19) our behavior.

Another highlighted the inseparable balance between truth and love. (1:27) Neither is sufficient alone. Feely love avoids hard truth and tends towards malevolence.

(1:35) Truth without love is noise like a clanging cymbal. (1:40) Clarification of the one another commands, love, forgive, (1:44) bear with, et cetera, are primarily meant for believers. The family of God, (1:49) Del asserts.

The first part closed in a discussion on fruitfulness. (1:56) Scripture outlines three areas of fruitfulness, physical, godly offspring and marriage, (2:02) vocational, productive work that bears good fruit and avoids harmful roles, (2:08) ministerial, advancing the kingdom via the royal law of love. (2:14) Discussing singleness prompts Del's perspective.

He sees a cultural reversal where singleness has (2:21) become the default norm and marriage is considered a column. Scripture presents marriage as normative. (2:28) The standard of normal behavior is not good for man to be alone.

Genesis chapter two tells us, (2:35) forced singleness or child-freed marriages deviate from and strain God's design. (2:43) Addressing barriers like infertility or widowhood, Del notes fallen world limitations. (2:50) Biblical barrenness is always guide closing the womb, inviting submission.

Pursuing medical (2:57) options has limits and crossing into forcing one's script against God is perilous, referencing (3:04) prior embryo discussions. Widows may have borne physical fruit already. Their roles include (3:12) teaching younger women, Titus chapter two.

Singles benefit from committed life groups. (3:18) Fruitfulness extends lifelong, nurturing children, grandchildren and spiritual offspring. (3:25) Physical birth is just the first step.

True fruitfulness involves sustained discipleship, (3:32) ongoing with family and faith community. In part two, discussions range from bearing (3:39) spiritual fruit in seasons of barrenness to embracing authentic and often messy hospitality, (3:47) to understanding the vital partnership between personal engagement and the local church. (3:53) These final exchanges offer encouragement, freedom and a clear biblical vision for how (3:59) ordinary believers can carry the gospel into their neighborhoods without writing their own (4:05) scripts or carrying unnecessary burdens.

And now our video. (4:33) Flourish them and want them to flourish. (4:37) Yeah, because that's a great point, Esther, because let's talk about a couple (4:43) in whom God has closed the way.

How in the world can they be fruitful? (4:50) Well, let me tell you, our culture is in dire need of couples who love each other (4:58) to seek those around you, that love for each other, you know, that unconditional love. We (5:05) didn't get a chance to talk about this, but I'll do it now. And that is, think about what we talked (5:11) about in terms of what true agape love means.

And recognize now that you, Joel, you, what does the (5:23) scripture charge you in terms of Esther? To love my wife like Christ loves the church. (5:29) Yes. That means that you are to look at Esther with a steadfast, sacrificial zeal that seeks (5:37) her shalom.

That's how you love her. Now you can, you know, you can give her a box of chocolates, (5:45) you know, and so forth. Jewelry, flowers.

(5:49) You know, that's fine. But if you want to truly love your wife, (6:00) it means you look at her and you are zealously seeking how can I help my wife (6:14) flourish? Because that's your job. Your job is to seek her shalom.

(6:23) That's what it means to love your wife. Now, when you do that, you are bearing fruit. (6:33) And when she respects you and she also loves you too, the scripture calls her to love you too.

(6:38) But when she respects you, the world looks at that and go, (6:43) I want that because I don't see that. And it also helps young people who have now been (6:51) sold the notion that marriage, you know, why? Because they see a lot of the enemy playing (6:57) around in marriage and divorces and so forth. And now they look and we, you know, this is not (7:04) me.

It's primarily Melissa, my wife. People have looked at our marriage and they've said those (7:09) things. And I'm grateful for that.

Why? Because God has allowed our marriage to help encourage (7:19) other people. And so that's being fruitful. And it's being fruitful for even couples who (7:29) have the womb closed.

They can still, there's a lot of fruit to be born there and they're (7:35) bearing it in according way with God has them there at that point. Okay, good, great. (7:45) I wish every husband would begin to

recognize what it means when the scripture says you are (7:56) to love your wife as Christ loved the church and did what? Gave himself up.

That's true agape love. (8:07) That is chesed love, sacrificial love, seeking her shalom. That would make a difference in our (8:16) marriages, wouldn't it? I don't think I have a question.

I have a comment because you're asking (8:21) me to reflect on all these tours and I'm, I'm finding myself fighting the urge to want to (8:30) perform. Maybe this isn't a script getting in the way. And so I'm thinking, okay, how do I (8:36) implement this? And let's go and put a plan together and let's go.

And as I kind of process (8:42) through that, I find myself thinking, well, then there's this obstacle. And well, if I do this, (8:47) then I've got that to deal with. And, and I think when you were mentioning, I think it may (8:52) have been Catherine and may have asked a question and you said, it all begins with prayer.

I quickly (8:58) realized that this is, that's a scheme. I'm falling into the trap that to carry this out is a scheme (9:07) because I want to do this in my flesh rather than allowing the Lord to kind of lead us through this (9:13) entire process. No, that's, that's an excellent, excellent observation, Hector, because (9:21) you know, we're back to, again, we're back to writing our own script.

And now we think, (9:26) well, what a piece of script. I'm going to write a script on loving my neighbor, (9:29) and this is how it's going to work. Or maybe, you know, let, let me change that.

Let me change this. (9:34) And then we get invested in how we think it ought to go. I guarantee you guys, you know, (9:39) that's not how it's going to go.

That's not how it's going to go. And so that, yeah, that's my (9:44) advice. Okay.

We start here. And, um, and I've already told you, I am absolutely convinced you (9:50) start here and, and, uh, Katie, bar the door and sit back and watch now. Now, when we ask God (10:04) for something that we know is his will, then we immediately know what his will is.

(10:12) And we immediately know that we are to do his will. So we don't then pray and then go sit on (10:19) the couch and eat potato chips. There is also an action here.

And so, uh, you know, we pray (10:29) and then make ourselves available to, um, cause just like Christian, remember what a great story (10:36) she's convicted and she doesn't really know what to do. And I think God will do this in you as (10:42) well. I want you to be confident in this, you know, the thing with the turquoise table, (10:50) I mean, that's, but that was Christians.

So God, now there'll be a lot of people say, (10:56) oh, I'm going to make a turquoise table. And that's, don't do that yet. You know, (11:00) because God may, God may have you put a, uh, an orange stool.

Oh no, it was making it up. (11:08) He is going to lead you. He will lead you, you know, yes, we can make plans, (11:17) but we need to be very quick to say not my will, but your will be done that.

Yeah. So thanks, (11:25) I mean, that's, that's awesome. See, you should not feel any burden by this.

(11:34) If you, here, I'll put it to you. If you feel a burden, then we're missing something. (11:42) If

this sounds burdensome to you, then we got to go back through this.

(11:47) Talk about this is commands are not burdensome. In fact, I would say in reality, this should be (11:57) exciting. That's something.

So I guess I'm feeling a lot more freedom after this because (12:08) having three young kiddos, you know, three, three, four and under is a lot in our house. (12:15) I mean, before children that, you know, he looked wonderful. Um, and now it looks very lived in, (12:21) which is also wonderful.

And, and my, my script says, I want to present and do the (12:28) hospitality to the T and have everything just so, so that's a lot of work. And I need like an army (12:34) to help me do that. And then don't make it sit still, which doesn't happen in order to be able (12:39) to have people over and look how my script says I want it to look, but that's not authentic (12:45) neighbor relationship.

And if I am going to let people just come in my house, (12:50) lived in, and that's what I appreciate that when somebody lets me into their house, (12:56) when they haven't cleaned up. Um, and so to me, you can't, you can't do the presentation (13:02) to the fullest and be authentic at the same time and be open at any time for them to come over. (13:08) Um, you know, it's like, oh, well, come on in oil.

Well, actually don't, (13:12) you know? And so to me, I'm feeling a whole lot more freedom to just go, (13:16) hey, this is a season of life for him. And I love this and welcome in. And if you're okay with it, (13:21) come and let's sit down and talk a little bit.

And the kids can be a part in running around (13:25) because that's what it looks like as a young mom. And so I'm feeling a lot more freedom to just (13:34) be in the season that I'm in. The Lord knows that.

And that's okay. So it doesn't have to (13:42) be the social media pictures of what it looks like to, you know, Melissa, I need for you to (13:50) somehow go around and tell that story to everybody because a lot of people are going to (13:58) have that same concern that my house has to be neat. And I don't know if this is true.

I'll say (14:07) it and then we can talk about where you think it or not. If I walk into a home, somebody's invited (14:12) me to their home in a neighborly way and you walk in and it is just clinically clean, (14:24) then I don't feel like I'm a neighbor coming over. I feel like there's almost like an agenda here.

(14:31) But if I walk into your home and you know, the kid has just spilled Cheerios over there (14:39) and life is going on here and I feel like I am now a friend. I don't feel like I'm a friend if (14:50) I come in and it's all spick and span. Do you know what I'm talking about? Because friends, (14:56) you know, we don't clean up for friends.

And so if I clean up, I think you tell me what I think. (15:06) It's not a friend. You're not a friend yet.

When you start coming over and, you know, (15:13) I've got stain down my shirt because I've been feeding Alexander. Now you're a friend. (15:19) Yeah.

I mean, like this is maybe silly and I don't know if this is cross-cultural and even (15:25) within the subcultures of our nation, but growing up in the South, it's an expectation for a lot of (15:31) people

to wear makeup all the time. And I have a good friend who said the closer I am to somebody, (15:36) the less makeup I wear around them. And it's like, let's just be like that, you know, like, (15:41) let's just be normal.

And hey, come on and be in my life. And I think about Jesus and he (15:47) welcomes the children. He didn't say, oh, hey, go be quiet or hey, sit still and like, don't talk (15:54) because he knew how he created them.

But to me, that gives even more freedom and even more (15:59) engagement to let my kiddos be in the midst of it because that's real. And sometimes that's (16:06) the biggest icebreaker there is, you know, like have my son smile at people, you know, (16:11) and then they smile and then it just breaks the ice and it's not so stiff. (16:18) And what it also does is it puts a, (16:24) it puts a window on when you can be a neighbor.

Right. I can't, oh, I can't be a neighbor now. (16:34) Probably at the time you need to be a neighbor to someone.

So yeah, that's, that's really awesome. (16:42) And that's when we're not caring about what we look like. (16:45) And that's, that's the true meaning of dying to selves.

We're not on the radar. I mean, we're. (16:52) Where does the church fit into all this? Because we know that Christ loves the church (17:00) and as believers, we're called to not forsake the assembly.

(17:05) But I could see potentially somebody thinking I'm so busy doing a great job, loving my neighbor, (17:14) carrying this out that I don't need to go to church or maybe. So how does this fit with the (17:21) church? Yeah. Well, first of all, let's, let's be careful how we use the word church because it's (17:30) easy for us to say church and think of the institution in the building over, over there on (17:41) the corner of whatever, um, as opposed to thinking of the ecclesia, the, the, the body of (17:51) Christ.

Both those words are used in both different, in those two ways in the scripture. So (18:00) we need to acknowledge those as a journal, the body of Christ, and then that local institution (18:06) where we have leaders that are appointed and ordained to some extent. (18:15) I'm going to give you my response to that.

And then let's, let's talk about it. (18:21) We mentioned Ephesians chapter four. I think we did.

Maybe we didn't. (18:28) The design for the church and that God had appointed (18:37) the leaders of the church. And this is speaking now institutionally.

Okay. Because now we're (18:44) talking about, uh, leaders in the, in the church that he appointed the leaders in the church (18:51) and their job was to equip the saints for the work of ministry. (19:02) I read that.

And I think the saints have been entrusted with the primary work of the kingdom (19:13) and the leaders in the institutional church job is to equip them in that work. My observation (19:23) is that that's upside down today, which is exactly what happens in a fallen world. It (19:31) all flows that way for not careful.

It's kind of like, what are those little dolls, you know, (19:35) have the weight and the bottom, you

know, that the world keeps trying to tip it upside down. (19:42) And so now in most cases, the saints once again think that their job is to equip (19:55) the staff and then the staff does the work of ministry and that's backwards. (20:01) So to answer your question, what I dream, what would it be like if a pastor (20:13) had this vision and let's say I'm the pastor and this is the congregation.

(20:25) We're gathering together on the Lord's day. Why? Because the scripture calls us to do so. And why? (20:30) Because we want to do that.

Why? Because there's joy in the assembly of the saints in corporate (20:35) worship. And we have the privilege to do the Lord's supper together and to baptize our children. (20:45) And so we long to gather together and to worship.

But here I'm now as your pastor (20:58) and we're gathering together and I share the vision that you have now. (21:06) And when we come together, I say, how's it going out there? (21:12) How's the work of ministry going out there? And Doug says, (21:20) I live across the street from somebody (21:26) who just hates God because her husband died a horrible death of cancer, painful, painful death. (21:35) And she prayed to God and he still died and now she hates God.

(21:43) And I said, okay, let's talk about that. How do we deal with people who are suffering from what (21:53) we call academically the problem of evil, right, Nancy? This is apologetic thing, the problem of (21:58) evil. And the first thing we do is we weep with her.

And we're geared now towards ministering to (22:11) her in that state. And so do you understand now what we're doing is we're gathering together to (22:22) be equipped for the ministry. And I'm now, I want to learn about what is going on out there (22:32) through your ministry so that I can better equip you as opposed to, and I don't know how we can do (22:43) this without being critical, as opposed to saying, here is what I want to teach today.

(22:58) And again, I don't want that to be demeaning at all. But in light of the design that we see in (23:06) the scripture, I would think as a pastor, my responsibility is to equip you. And if I don't (23:14) know what's happening in the ministry out there, how am I going to know how to best equip you? (23:23) Well, we don't have time because we're going to all your programs.

(23:29) So I, as your pastor, I'm involved in your life and I want to know what Esther and Joel are doing. (23:40) I want to know about your family. I want to know now, not to meddle.

I'm not talking about that, (23:45) but I want to know those things. I want to know what Molly is facing, you know, (23:50) in her apartment complex or whatever that is. I want to know what Nancy's facing, (23:56) you know, with people around her who have a different religion and culture.

I want to (24:02) know that. Why? So that I can do what God has called me to do. My job is to equip you in that.

(24:09) And if I don't know what equipping you need, then I'm not really fulfilling the role I want. (24:16) So Joel, my answer to you is that the church doesn't go away here. And if it goes away, (24:27) then we have misunderstood God's design.

And we probably are following our own script (24:36) to say, you know, I don't need the church. You do. We do need the gathering of the saints.

Why? (24:41) Because the scripture calls us to do so. And there's joy in that. But the church (24:51) and the leaders in the church need to operate according to that biblical design.

And the people (25:01) need to operate according to that design. Does that or do we want to talk more about this? (25:11) There was a girl that lived across the street from us when we lived on White Sound. (25:18) I hadn't thought about this in a long time.

I remember standing in the front yard with her (25:22) saying, I'm so busy being a Christian. I don't have time for God. I think there's a tendency (25:29) for us that have been Christians for a long time to be so ingrained in the Sunday school answers (25:37) that we forget where we've been.

We are the people who hate God, even now, when things run up in our (25:45) face. And as somebody said, if you haven't had a crisis in your life yet, saddle up because it's (25:52) coming. There are times, I mean, not this very second, fortunately, but you know some of them (26:03) where, I mean, I hated what God was allowing.

I am Mrs. Smith across the street. I have been (26:11) and I will be when I have to wrestle with where in the world is God and what's going on right now. (26:19) That is an ongoing thing that we're going to all face.

And one of the things that, (26:26) if I were to kind of put it in a nutshell, what I've learned from the Truth Project (26:31) and what I think you're offering the average Christian that wants to be involved and doesn't (26:39) know what to do, is the Truth Project took a lot of very important truth that I could be blinded by (26:48) the facts and it kind of moved them out of the way and said, where you always start is the nature (26:57) of God. If you know the nature of God and you can get all the details out of the way for a minute (27:05) and get back to that, then it starts to open up and you can see again. And that's what the Truth (27:13) Project did for me, is it got a lot of details out of the way that I was trying to get my (27:20) significance from.

You know, I can argue you in the ground because I know the scripture, (27:28) but that's not the point. The point is, who is this God? You've said it over and over and over. (27:36) So now we come from that general pattern of there's a path through all of this chaos (27:43) where God is consistently there every single time.

And then we get to the engagement (27:50) and you say, love your neighbor. Well, now I know what that means. And what the truth is, (27:59) is it's natural.

We were made for a relationship that gets hidden because of fears and wounds and (28:06) all kinds of stuff. But that's what we're all after. And we do it, you know, we go play golf, (28:11) we go play tennis, we go fishing, we go hunting, we go camping.

You know, we're gathering all these (28:17) people around. But when it comes to loving them in the Lord, somehow that's over here. (28:26) You do that separately, but you don't.

Hector, you wanted to respond and then we'll bring this (28:33) to a close. Yeah, I just want to go back to Joel's question because I just had, I guess, (28:37) you just clarified something. I had an epiphany.

So if I hear this correctly, (28:45) oftentimes pastors see small groups programs as competing with the church. (28:53) But if I'm understanding you right, and I think I am, this really can be

complementary to pastors (29:01) because we, I've been in healthcare for 30 years, so forgive the analogy, but (29:06) so you're saying we can become like the nerve endings to our communities, right? We will have (29:12) a finger on the pulse by knowing exactly where ministry ought to be in the community. If I'm (29:21) understanding this correctly, and I understand how the body works, you're basically saying we (29:25) can relay this back up to the church and the pastor becomes a part of the process in ministering to a (29:32) local community through us.

Is that what I'm hearing? Yeah, I think that's right. In fact, (29:40) let me say this. If I were a pastor and pastoring the way I think we normally do today, (29:49) I'm carrying the whole spiritual load here and you guys are writing a check and I'm really at the (29:56) pointy point of the spear of ministry, and now I turn that around, (30:03) I just have a lot of bricks just taken off my back.

My responsibility now is to you, (30:12) and you're doing the work of the ministry. And yes, as I hear what's going on out there, (30:19) I am better equipped myself then to be able to equip my flock, because my charge is to equip (30:28) my flock so that you can do the work of the ministry. You are the ones who are going to (30:34) turn the world upside down, not me.

That was the video of Tour 10. As Tour 10 draws to a close, (30:47) the heart of the engagement project becomes unmistakably clear. (30:52) Loving our neighbors isn't a program to perfect or a performance to stage.

It is the natural (30:59) overflow of knowing God's unchanging character, dying to self, and making ourselves available (31:07) to his leading. Whether your home is spotless or cheerfully chaotic, whether you have children (31:14) or long for them, whether you're leading from the front or serving quietly in the background, (31:20) God invites you right where you are to seek the shalom of those around you. (31:27) The work belongs to him.

The joy belongs to us. Step out, pray boldly, stay flexible, (31:36) and watch what the Lord will do through ordinary lives surrendered to extraordinary love. (31:44) Thank you for journeying with us.

Now go love your neighbor.