

## 344: Gospel Meets Dharma with Thomas McConkie



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Jody Moore**

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy*, episode 344: Gospel Meets Dharma with Thomas McConkie.

Did you know that you can live a life that's even better than happy? My name is Jody Moore. I'm a master certified life coach and a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. And if you're willing to go with me I can show you how. Let's go.

Hello everybody, welcome to another episode. Thanks so much for listening in. I'm so delighted that you're here, after all this time you're still here. We're still learning, we're still growing. Before we get into today's episode which is an amazing episode, you're going to love this one. You're going to want to listen to it more than once and share it. I will introduce it to you in just a minute.

I just wanted to mention that I am so excited to be speaking at Time Out for Women this year. I've always kind of wanted to speak at Time Out for Women. I've always actually really wanted to speak at Time Out for Women. I first learned of Time Out for Women about eight or nine years ago when I lived in California. And one of my friends, Shelley, hey, Shelley, said to me, "Do you want to go to Time Out for Women?" And I was like, "I have no idea what that is but just based on the name, yes, I'm in." And it turned out to be a really phenomenal conference and I've been many, many times since.

So, if you're not familiar with Time Out for Women it's a conference put on by Deseret Book, with just really amazing speakers and musicians. And so, I've always wanted to be a part of it and then just so thrilled to get to finally. And so, I thought I would just mention it so that if you're thinking about coming I would so love to see you and we'll get a chance to say hello in between, before and after the event. I am not speaking at all of them of course. As of now and we think that all of this is set pretty well.

But as we've learned over the last couple of years everything is subject to change based on COVID. But it's looking like I'll be speaking in Atlanta,

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Georgia, Raleigh, North Carolina, Logan, Utah, Cincinnati, Ohio, Boston, Massachusetts, Salt Lake City, Utah. And then in 2023 also it's looking like San Antonio, Texas, Sacramento, California, Boise, Idaho and then my home town, Spokane, Washington.

So, I would love to see you if you live anywhere near any of those cities and want to come to Time Out for Women. And there are a bunch of other locations where Time Out for Women will be and I would highly recommend if you haven't been that you go check it out. You don't have to be a member of our church to go. There is always a lot of Gospel principles brought into the messages. But if you are a Christian you will love it. Or if you're just open to spirituality at all you can totally apply it to yourself.

And you can just go to [timeoutforwomen.com](http://timeoutforwomen.com), check it out, get your ticket, let's hang out, come and see me. Okay, so Thomas McConkie is someone I consider to be a dear friend. And as I was preparing to just record this intro for you I realized I've actually never met Thomas McConkie in real life. We feel like we're friends anyway. I consider him a friend. He's definitely a friend of the podcast. This will be, I think, the third time we've had him on. And it's always the most uplifting conversation listening to Thomas McConkie.

So, he has a pretty interesting story. I'm not going to go into that right now. You'll hear enough of it in my conversation with him. But he also just creates such amazing work. He's equal parts intelligent, educated and open, and there's just a softness about him that I just really appreciate. I always feel my spirits sort of softened and my heart opened up after I get the opportunity to talk to him. So, I'm very excited today to share this conversation with you that I had recently with my friend, Thomas McConkie. Here we go.

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**Thomas:** Congratulations on your book.

**Jody:** Thank you so much.

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**Thomas:** Also, I heard the interview on Faith Matters, it was really cool.

**Jody:** Yeah. Thank you.

**Thomas:** Yeah, totally.

**Jody:** And congratulations to you on being a new dad.

**Thomas:** Thank you.

**Jody:** That's very exciting. I want to start with that. Tell me, how old is your son now?

**Thomas:** He's 19 months.

**Jody:** Okay. Goes fast, huh?

**Thomas:** Totally. How many kids do you have?

**Jody:** I have four.

**Thomas:** Okay. Well, can I ask the age range? This is a lot more meaningful to me now as a parent.

**Jody:** My oldest is 15, and then I have a 14 year old, they're only 18 months apart. And then I have a big gap because of how close the first two were. So, I have an eight year old and a six year old. So boy, girl, boy, girl, very fun. What is your little guy up to these days?

**Thomas:** He's toddling around. He's saying his first words, getting into every cupboard in the house, that kind of thing.

**Jody:** Fantastic. Sounds like he's right on track.

**Thomas:** Totally, it's really cool. My wife's out of town. Actually, my wife left town this morning, the first time she's been apart from our son since he was born. And it's my first father son weekend with my son ever.

**Jody:** Okay, you've got this, dad.

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**Thomas:** So, grandma's here to cover while I'm talking to you. But other than that, it's just me and all the chaos that might ensue.

**Jody:** It's so good for both of you.

**Thomas:** It's cool, totally cool.

**Jody:** Well, congratulations, that's exciting.

**Thomas:** Thank you.

**Jody:** I'm loving your new course, Gospel Meets Dharma.

**Thomas:** Thanks for taking a look at it, yeah.

**Jody:** Yeah. And I apologize, anyway, I had some tech issues getting it back and forth. But I've been listening to it pretty intensely for the last 24 hours now but I'm really enjoying it.

**Thomas:** Well, that's good of you, thank you, appreciate that.

**Jody:** It's amazing. So, let's begin with your creation of this course. Who did you create this for?

**Thomas:** Good question. It's very much a passion project for me. I was raised Christian. And for whatever reason it wasn't clicking with from a young age. And for whatever reason, Buddhism did click with me as an adolescent. And I really dedicated myself to a Buddhist life and a Buddhist practice. And then deep, deep, deep into my Buddhist practice I was probably 13 or so years in. I realized that everything I loved about Christianity was kind of revealed through a deep exploration of Buddhism.

So, I guess the kicker for me is that I was amazed and so grateful that such a different tradition, such a foreign tradition to me and most of us in the United States, that that could actually open up new doors of faith for me in my home tradition which means so much to me. So, it was such a meaningful experience for me to come into a deeper life of faith via another

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tradition. I thought, wouldn't it be cool if other people got interested in the idea of becoming more creative. To put it in your language which you speak so beautifully, which I can barely hold a candle to.

But our thoughts in a really significant way determine our outcomes. So, if we're given a certain kind of thinking from a particular tradition then in some ways that can constrain us. But if we learn new ways of thinking, new possibilities through other traditions that can actually deepen our capacity to be creative in our own tradition. So that was my experience. And I wanted to share that joy with people. And so, I just kind of tucked away in a cave for a while and came up with Gospel Meets Dharma.

**Jody:** You know what I love about that answer? Is I hear, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I hear you saying, when I ask you, who did you create this for? It's sort of you created it because it was an expression of something really powerful within you. And of course, we hope as we express and share our experiences that it will possibly touch someone else. But the main motivator has to be that it is your own experience and it is a passion. And sharing that with others is a part of our human experience.

But I've never sensed that you have a strong agenda of where your work goes or what happens with it. I think that I love how you follow that passion, you follow what feels good and true to you. That's the only way to do it really.

**Thomas:** Well, coming from someone who knows that path deeply, that means a lot, Jody. And that's exactly right. It was kind of an overflowing of joy for me, just deep passion and to the extent that other people feel that joy, wonderful. And if they're not into Gospel, or Dharma, or anything, that's cool too. People will find their way.

**Jody:** And as I listen to you in this course, especially as you set up the idea of – I know you take a very delicate approach of not wanting to tell anyone what they should think, or do, or even to define things in a way that might be limiting. But I hear you describe, again, like you sort of just said, that

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these two traditions for you really enhanced one another. And I love that. That's been my experience of course with the Gospel and then the tools of human behavior and thought work, the same thing I thought.

**Thomas:** Yeah, exactly. No, exactly.

**Jody:** Yes. It was these two things support one another for me. That's not to say that it's for everyone. I think that probably everyone if they got still and considered it, could find things. For some people it's music that supports their faith. For some people it's the arts or it's science. I always think about President Uchtdorf always talking about being a pilot and his experience of understanding that whole world.

All of these things that we have, all of these tools I do think that when we access the truth and wisdom within them there is a lot of overlap. There is a lot of support of them. And I love the invitation that this course provides to examine that.

**Thomas:** Yeah. No, my heart sings because what you just said is really what the course is about on the surface. It's like there's this guy, he's into Christianity and he's into Buddhism. And people could say, "Well, maybe I'm into Christianity and Buddhism, maybe I'll give it a try." And that's cool, I think one could learn a lot about Christianity and Buddhism in the course. But you pointed to the much deeper value I hold on the course which is my personal path has been is what I call Gospel and Dharma. You named that for you Gospel and principles of human behavior, thought work etc.

It's the practice of really loving what we love and letting these beautiful lineages and traditions influence us in unique ways and owning that. And signing that in a full throated way to others. That's really what the process is and I can, you know, you got it from the inside out already.

**Jody:** I love it. So, I know this question I wanted to ask you, I don't mean to try to get you to oversimplify what are complex subjects. But I just want to make sure we begin with, you know, originally I was thinking, well, the first thing I need to ask him to define is what is Dharma. But I also think it will be

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important if you would speak to that briefly but then also speak to what do you mean by Gospel as well?

**Thomas:** Sure. And as you know, I talk about this at some length in the course too. I kind of start off with what do I even mean by Gospel and Dharma. Words mean different things to different people. So let me just come to this fresh and consider, I'll start with Gospel. I think of the literal meaning of Gospel when I think of Gospel which is good news. And what's the good news? In a sense I picture Jesus coming back from 40 days of fasting and he cries repentance. But we hear repentance in a modern day and think repent because I've been bad and I've got to clean up my act.

And we sometimes associate repentance with I've screwed up and there's guilt and shame involved. To me when I really feel the Gospel and Jesus' original message right out of the desert, it's repent in the sense of turn towards the good news. You do not realize how good you have it. You do not realize how willing the Father is to give you his kingdom. So, everything that falls under that, everything that flows out of the Gospel, to me it's the good news that God loves us beyond our wildest imaginings.

And if we're willing to open our hearts up to that reality we can hardly believe how divine human life can be. That's Gospel, that's something in there, something about it, yeah.

**Jody:** Yeah, I love that, yeah. I want to just – this just came to my mind, again, I think what I love about your course is the invitation to hold these complex concepts and words even. We went to church recently and there was a gentleman standing outside the church with a sign saying, 'repent now' and he was yelling a lot of things about how the Mormons are terrible and things like this. And it sort of startled my son as we walked into church. And I was trying to explain to him that this man was saying some of the same words, he was saying repentance, he was saying Jesus Christ.

The actual words weren't all that different from the doctrine we teach in our church. But I tried to point out to my eight year old, "Notice how different it



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felt though. Notice that the way the message was being delivered and the intention behind it possibly.” Wasn’t like you said, the good news of the Gospel. It wasn’t a love based approach and so there is a spirit there that is hard to put into words, hard to define. And I think that’s what you’re saying, when we talk about Gospel it’s good news even though it includes words like repentance and things.

**Thomas:** That’s a beautiful insight, I love that. And I agree, the Gospel is subtle, it requires something beyond words of us to open up to it. And I love that story, it’s powerful, yeah.

**Jody:** Okay. So, let’s talk about Dharma.

**Thomas:** Dharma, so this is probably a less familiar word to most listeners. Most people in the western world and you know what? I’ve lived in Asia for years. It’s not like it’s a familiar word to people in Asia nowadays, maybe a 1,000 years ago it was more familiar. Dharma, what do I think of? Again, the root meaning of Dharma it means something like law or structure. But it’s not pointing to the laws of man, the laws of human beings. It’s the greater law. I actually heard one commentator describe it as the ineffable cosmic law.

It’s the intelligence and the order by which all of creation hangs together. And actually, when I think about Dharma as a Latter Day Saint I think about a belief I hold really deeply, that if we learn the laws of creation, if we learn to follow the laws and principles of creation and divinity we ourselves become more divine. So, to me the Dharma is like let’s pay really close attention in a particular way to the law, the great law and laws that hold everything together. Let’s learn to be very obedient to them, obedient in the sense of it brings us joy to move in harmony with the principles of divinity.

And Buddhism, so when I say that, I’ve never thought of it like that. It’s just come out, I think you’re inspiring, or inspire your beautiful listeners.

**Jody:** I’m sure it’s me, it’s all me.

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**Thomas:** It's so harmonious with my deepest values in the Gospel. And yet the path they prescribe is unique and it's one that's been a real source of joy for me to observe my own feelings and to pay attention in a mindful way to moment to moment life. Those are kind of distinctly Buddhist qualities. But I think they bring us to somewhere – the Buddhist path brought me to a place where I could finally appreciate how radical and beautiful the Gospel is.

**Jody:** I love that, okay. So, one of the things I noticed in this course that I just wanted to sort of understand a little better is that many times you refer to both the Gospel and Buddhism in other cultures and traditions. You use the term wisdom tradition versus religion. And I'm just curious about that.

**Thomas:** Yeah. Wisdom tradition. So, I find, I've been teaching full-time the last 10 years kind of sharing the path of meditation with people, principles of human development. I find that people hear the word 'religion' and not everybody but many people nowadays have some negative associations with what religion means. They might think it means closemindedness, they might associate it with some kind of prejudice or things like that, religion at its worst.

When I say wisdom tradition I am invoking the power that the truth of what flows through human traditions. So, to me, wisdom tradition, it's a way of kind of stepping away from a word that maybe doesn't work for some people. And opening up a conversation to all human beings in my world view are born of light. We have the light of Christ. We have the capacity to discern, Joseph Smith says that truth tastes good. It's so palpable we can just taste it like a ripe peach dripping down our chin kind of thing.

So, wisdom tradition, it points to, look, we all know wisdom. When we hear truth, when we feel wisdom, we know it so let's celebrate that and not get caught up with places where religion has maybe gone wrong in the last few thousand years, something like that.

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**Jody:** That's pretty beautiful. Yeah, it feels more open to me, wisdom tradition versus an interpretation through our own experience. But the word 'religion' does tend to imply a more linear sort of, even I would say a spiritually immature way of thinking about the direction, and guidance, and principles that we're taught through our faith.

**Thomas:** Yeah. No, I have a similar experience. I think some people can feel boxed in by the word 'religion'. I personally don't. I work with and counsel a lot of people that say, "I'm spiritual, not religious." And I say, "I can't be spiritual without religion." I love religion, but I'm a Wortham McConkie, I would say that.

**Jody:** That's true. Okay, I also wanted to dive into the topic of faith for just a moment.

**Thomas:** Yeah, this was a big one in the course. I really spent time on this.

**Jody:** Yeah. Why don't you set it up first of all. Tell me why it was such an important part of the course.

**Thomas:** Well, yeah, I'm almost tempted to ask you what your experience of faith is? Or if you had any impressions from the course itself. And if you want to point right back, I'll take it.

**Jody:** Yeah, really immediately piqued my curiosity when you started talking about faith because it is an interesting and complex topic. It's one that I find that the skill and this is something I talked about in my book is that the skill of being able to believe something that isn't provable, that maybe everybody doesn't believe. I always say, "I don't have any right to believe that actually." I have no business believing it, yet I choose to believe it anyway.

And that has been a skill that I have intentionally nurtured in other areas of my life in terms of even just my business or my family. If the belief causes me to be my best self, if it connects me. So, I'm not talking about, also not be thoughtful about what I choose to believe. But if believing it gives me a

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feeling of abundance, and love, and inspiration, and excitement, I think those are good things. And so, the practice of believing whatever I choose to believe has served me really well. In your course here you talked about the definition given by Paul.

**Thomas:** Paul Tillich, yeah.

**Jody:** Of being ultimately concerned. Now, here's my question for you and I'd love you to speak to any part of this you want to. But when you first gave that definition I noticed myself pushing back on it a little bit because of the word 'concerned' which I interpreted as worried until I listened a little further and I realized, I don't think necessarily and you tell me, that he didn't mean being ultimately worried.

I think maybe he means being ultimately aware, being ultimately conscious about or even I like to think of it as considering my own influence on and the way in which I'm influenced by other things in the world. So, I don't know. How would you pull that definition apart?

**Thomas:** Well, I love the question, I love the way you asked the question, so thank you. Yes, I can't remember the exact words but I do quote Tillich who was a big Christian theologian thinker of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And he says something to the effect of, "Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned." And actually, as we kind of take on the subject of faith in this conversation, I think back to the conversation, the exchange you and I just had about Gospel, and Dharma, and religion, and wisdom tradition.

Something similar going on, I actually feel enlivened by the word 'faith'. I love the invitation to have faith. And yet I've found working across communities the last 10 years that some people don't respond to that term. It's not spacious enough for them. Tillich I look to because when he says, "Ultimate concern", I think you're right, if we were to think about I'm worried about something, that's not very inspiring perhaps. But I hear his words as faith is the state of being ultimately engaged.

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In the sense because my ultimate concern is love for my family, love for my neighbor, love of God because that's my concern I'm totally engaged. That's the deepest meaning of my life. When push comes to shove, you asked me, what's the purpose of life? It's that this is where I put my heart. When Christ says, "Help me out with the exact language." Where your heart is there your treasure shall be also. That's the quality of where you put your heart, what you care about, what you value, that's your ultimate concern. And we all have ultimate concern.

We live in a modern time where people can say, "I don't have faith. I don't have beliefs. I don't believe in all that stuff you believe in." Yeah, but you have concern just like me, those are things you care about. Those are things you would not give up in this life that are precious to you. So, let's have a conversation about what we love, what we value and what's precious to us. Let's have a conversation about where we put our hearts. And that's a little bit how I frame the conversation of faith to kind of make a big tent for the conversation.

**Jody:** I love it. It's such a fascinating – I just find that the way you present it in this course is very thought provoking which I think is the point of it all.

**Thomas:** That's a big compliment. Yeah, I hope so. I hope people take the content and then feel bigger after this, or more spacious, they feel more creative and flexible, all that stuff, yeah.

**Jody:** I was wondering if you would speak a little to – I love again the inclusivity of different ways of describing truth and different ways of helping people return to love, one of the terms you use. You talk about for example being a bidirectional missionary. I love that term.

**Thomas:** Yeah, it's good, Shinzen Young coined that term to my knowledge. And it's a great one. I mean I tell a story. There's a Jesuit priest by the name of Father William Johnstone who was born in the early 1900s. And as a part of the Jesuit Order he was sent to Japan to share the Gospel with Japan. And he wasn't there long before he was just totally struck by

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the beauty, the aesthetic of Zen Buddhism, the temples, the dress, the, how do these monks just sit still on their cushions for hours at a time? What's going on there?

He got curious about it and he took up the practice of Buddhist meditation just to start to, you know, as a gesture like, hey, I'm interested in you guys too. I don't just want to talk all about me the whole time kind of thing. Before he knew it he was being converted to certain truths that the Zen Buddhists were in a position to share with him in a deep way. And he found the more he opened up to the deepest truths, what was precious, the ultimate concerns of the Zen Buddhists in Japan, he found they were even more willing to hear about the Gospel of Christ.

So, it was going both ways and it's super inspiring to me because to me that's how friendship works. If I'm not willing to listen to what Jody cares about, you could be really polite, and I think you are in fact very polite. And you're a much better listener than most human beings. So, you could listen to me for a while. But if it's not bidirectional, if it's not flowing in both ways it's not going to bring us both more to life. So that's the bidirectional missionary that I talk about in the course.

**Jody:** It's challenging I will say too, also not to have an agenda especially when you put yourself in a certain role, whether you're a missionary, I know I've worked with salespeople in the past who have an objective of selling something. And there's nothing wrong with that but you have to keep in mind the full human experience and we don't tend to respond well to somebody else's agenda. It has to be a mutual fit. And that's all we're doing both as missionaries or in any other endeavors. We're looking for the people that want what we have to offer.

And a part of like you said, a part of that offer is a receiving of what they have to give.

**Thomas:** Totally. You know who I'm thinking of in this moment, who I think you'll be familiar with is Byron Katie who does her own kind of thought

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work. And this question she asks like, “Okay, is that true? Yes/No. Do you know it’s true?” And often when we get to that question, do I know it’s true? It’s like, well, I don’t know, know it’s true. So, when it comes to bidirectional missionary work, it’s like, okay, what I care about. I care about the wellbeing of this soul, this soul that I’m sitting across from.

Do I know what’s best for this soul? Probably not, in the scope of things. I think God knows what’s best for the preciousness of a soul. But I’m just here to try to be loving. So as a bidirectional missionary I think that question of like, I actually don’t know what’s best for this person. So, if I can just be really open and just a really good listener, good things happen.

**Jody:** Speaking of parenting, that will come up a lot. I notice with my kids that it’s tough not to think that I don’t know what’s best for them. But I heard Richard Dyer on the Faith Matters podcast recently describe it as letting go of trying to control others even our own children, and recognizing that we are simply stewards over them for a time. And then we can offer the gifts that we have found to be useful but ultimately they have to figure out what they will take, how they will use it and that can be challenging, it can be tough.

**Thomas:** For sure, yeah. No, you encapsulated it perfectly. And that’s a bit of the inquiry in the course. How can we be bidirectional when we come into relationship with other people? Yeah.

**Jody:** The other thing I wanted to ask you about and I heard you speak a little bit about this on the Faith Matters podcast, which I loved that episode you did recently. You talked a little bit about the way you think about the gathering of Israel in a slightly different way than we tend to talk about it, at least in the LDS tradition. If you would speak to that topic. I found it so fascinating.

**Thomas:** Yeah. No, I think I know what you’re talking about and you can steer me here. And I don’t know if it’s an unorthodox way I think about it, you tell me, you can be the judge of orthodoxy here. But I think what I said

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in that conversation with Tim and Aubrey is that when I feel the gathering of Israel in my heart, I feel not just one tradition on the planet swallowing up every other tradition. I picture all traditions on the planet, and all people, and the Earth herself swallowed up into something unimaginably divine.

And I think all of us no matter what church we belong to or not, what faith tradition we were brought up in, we have a tendency to think, when they see things my way we're all going to get along a lot better. And the thing is there's truth to that. I think the faith tradition you and I share does have precious and unique truths to share. So, there's truth there. But then I think the subtlety for me is we know that our beliefs are changing, they're evolving. We know that more and more truth is being revealed every day to us.

So even our own tradition is being taken up into something greater than itself. Our church is transcending itself and being brought up, gathered up into what I call in the course, it's like the meta tradition, is the tradition beyond tradition. And so that image to me, it's a spacious place that leaves room for all of us to be humble, to be openminded about the other traditions we encounter and to continue to change and to evolve. I don't know if I got it quite right.

**Jody:** Yeah. No, that's exactly, it really resonated for me as like you said, when we hear truth we recognize truth and whether it's unorthodox or not, I don't know. But it felt to me as a more, you know, there's certain times when language fails us. And so, I think in the past sometimes our desire to make things understandable, and simplify, and use our limited vocabulary to do so leaves something to be desired. And I just thought it was a much more expansive way to think about that term which is again, like I said, the invitation that I felt in this course.

So, I would encourage everyone, and we'll tell them in just a minute where to find it. I had this experience just this morning, literally an hour and a half ago. So, it's a little bit fresh in my heart but it felt sort of relevant to your course here. So, I thought maybe we'd end by dissecting this a little bit.



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Again, my eight year old and six year old who ride the school bus to school. They get a little nervous about riding the bus. They're nervous about getting on the right bus coming home and sometimes the bus is running late and that makes them nervous.

And anyway, it's kind of a tender part of their lives. And they have this bus driver who they love, Mr. Earl. He's an older man who's just kind and they're comfortable with Mr. Earl. And he's been gone since just before thanksgiving. And they've had substitute bus drivers. And so originally they told me, "Mr. Earl's on a trip, he'll be back." And then enough time went by that I said, "I don't think he's on a trip. Did he have surgery or something?" And they said, "Yeah, we think he had surgery and he's recovering, and he's coming back."

And so now it's middle of January, I take them to the bus today, still substitute bus driver. And I said, "Maybe Mr. Earl's not coming back, maybe he doesn't drive the bus anymore." And my six year old daughter, she said, "Oh no, mom, he is, he's coming back." We just found out that he didn't have surgery, his wife died. And she said, "He's just at home, he's looking at pictures of her and he's crying. But when he's done crying he's going to come back." My heart was obviously touched for Earl but I thought about my daughter too.

She wasn't emotional at all as she shared this, it was just very matter of fact to her. And I thought about how she's, you know, immature state of being able to understand the full human experience. And she's sort of annoyed that her world has been interrupted by not having her regular bus driver. But she has gotten a small taste of someone else's suffering. And the only way she can describe it is in this sweet simple way, "He's looking at pictures of his wife and he's crying. And when he's done crying he'll be back."

Again, I still don't know what to make of this experience, it's very fresh for me. But I felt sort of a parallel to my own experience with both my religion and the things that I'm learning from people like yourself about other

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traditions. I'm 47 years old, I still kind of feel like I'm at a six year old level of starting to be able to understand these concepts which I think is kind of awesome. I like the idea that there's so much, a deeper experience to be had with all of it.

**Thomas:** Yeah, that's just outrageously beautiful, Jody.

**Jody:** I really do appreciate people like yourself. It requires a certain level of courage because like you said, some people may not like the way you're pushing back on certain concepts. I don't know if you've had that experience at all. That'll be another podcast episode for another day.

**Thomas:** What do you do when people throw things at you in the street?

**Jody:** When people don't like it, they accuse you or call you certain names. But I do, I just appreciate the invitation that you provide. Before you tell people where to get this course and share any final thoughts I wanted to highlight there are still sections of your course I have yet to listen to that I'm really excited about. And I just want to throw some of the titles out there so people get an idea that you have. Actually, I did listen to this one, the Holy Spirit and Impermanence. That was a fascinating one.

Mindfulness and Repentance, The Cross and The – is it Bodhi Tree, Bodhi?

**Thomas:** Yeah, that's right, The Bodhi Tree.

**Jody:** The Bodhi Tree, The Human Dilemma, Sin and Suffering, Great Faith, Great Doubt, Great Perseverance. I'm really excited to listen to the rest of this. What final thoughts do you want to share with us today, Thomas?

**Thomas:** Truthfully the story of your daughter is just resonating in my heart, just that the tremendous trust in life I feel in that story. And the way you've taken it and to just come to your own faith and your deepest questions as a child. One of my favorite teachings in the New Testament

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from Jesus is you must become as a child to enter the kingdom. That can be taken in different ways, but in the moment it feels like that quality you shared from your own heart and your daughter's heart.

If we think we have it figured out, our minds kind of harden. And the possibilities narrow until we're just living the same day over and over again and everything's stale. But when we become as that six year old again full of wonder and we have all the learning to do in the world, the kingdom opens to us. We pass into it and that's the best news I know.

**Jody:** For me, it requires constant effort to keep myself open and softened to it, especially in today's world, it's easy to tighten up against that part of us.

**Thomas:** Right. Well, you're a blessing to so many of us to help us stay soft, and limber, and open, I'm grateful for who you are, Jody.

**Jody:** Thank you, thank you, likewise. So where can people find this course?

**Thomas:** I don't have the link memorized but we can put it up in the show notes. There's a [gospelmeetsdharma.com](http://gospelmeetsdharma.com), but people don't know how to spell Dharma.

**Jody:** It has an h in it.

**Thomas:** It has an h, guess where? No. So we'll put it up.

**Jody:** Yeah, we'll definitely put it in the show notes, Gospel. I bet you, Google will spell it right for you too if you just search it in but yeah, we'll put it in the show notes. Thank you. Thank you so much for this course. Thank you for taking the time to come on the podcast.

**Thomas:** Thanks for the conversation, Jody.

**Jody:** You bet.

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Hey there, if you enjoy this podcast or even if you just find that it sort of piques your curiosity, or it makes you think, you're going to love the book that I wrote. It's called *Better Than Happy: Connecting with Divinity Through Conscious Thinking*. And it's available now at Amazon in print or kindle version. Or if you want me to read it to you, head over to audible and grab the audio version. And why not grab a copy for your sister, your best friend, or your mom while you're there too. Just saying.