

Don't Stop Focusing on Jesus (Colossians 2:6-15)

Big Idea: Keep your focus on Jesus, because he's everything you need.

By now you've seen the meme. A couple is walking down the street holding hands, but there's a problem. The guy is looking back at another girl, and he is in trouble. He's been caught looking at someone else rather than the one he's with.



I don't know how it's become a meme, but it's everywhere. It's hard to go a week without seeing it.

That is the human problem. No matter what we have, we are tempted to look away from what we have and long for something else that may not even be as good. Rather than enjoying what we already have, our eyes drift to inferior options, and we end up losing the very good thing that we have.

That's not just a problem in life. That's also a problem in the church.

The other week we looked at one of the richest descriptions of Jesus in all of the Bible. It's found in Colossians 1:15-23. Our greatest need, I said, is to get a fresh vision of Jesus. We marveled at Jesus' supremacy, his handiwork, and his salvation.

That passage is one of the most mind-blowing passages in the Bible. If you want to see a mountain, go to the Swiss Alps. If you like gold, go to Fort Knox. If you like football, watch the Super Bowl. If you want to see Jesus, meditate on Colossians 1:15-23. When you get Jesus right, so many other things fall into place.

But here's the problem. We're like the meme, always looking away from Jesus to other things. Fill in the blank:

- to some radical new teaching
- to a charismatic personality
- to self-help and leadership techniques
- to a social cause that starts to matter more than Jesus

So let me tell you what today's passage is all about. It's so simple, and so necessary for all of us today. Two points, and here's the first one.

Keep Your Focus on Jesus

Verses 6 and 7 are simple:

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Here's what Paul is saying: you don't start with Jesus and then move on to something else. There's no graduating from Jesus to something else.

No, you start with Jesus. You start by receiving Christ Jesus the Lord. At some point, the Colossian believers heard the good news about who Jesus is and what he had done. They'd heard the message of Colossians 1:21-22: "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him..." And it changed their lives.

That's what seeing Jesus does to you. When you see the real Jesus, it changes everything. It reorients your life. You see the beauty of Jesus, and then you realize what he did for you – that although he's holy, he somehow loves sinners and has done everything necessary for you to be made right with God.

That's what happened to the Colossians. It's what has happened to many of us. I hope it's also what's happened to you as well. Our greatest need is to receive Christ Jesus the Lord. Encounter him. Trust him. If you've never done this before, we'd love to introduce you to Jesus. Talk to one of us. It changes everything.

Okay, so that's how we start. What happens next? Paul tells us: "as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him..." Charles Spurgeon puts it this way:

Persevere in the same way in which ye have begun, and, as at the first Christ Jesus was the source of your life, the principle of your action, and the joy of your spirit, so let him be the same even till life's end, the same when you walk

through the valley of the shadow of death, and enter into the joy and the rest which remain for the people of God.

Jesus should define the entire believer's life. We begin with Jesus. And then we keep walking in Jesus. The strategy for growing as believers is very simple: keep focusing on Jesus. Keep trusting him. Keep obeying him. That's it. Whenever you start to wander, go back to Jesus. The entire Christian life can be defined as this: "as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him..." It never gets more complicated than that.

The result of this constant walking in Jesus? You'll be "rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (2:7). Notice the passive voice in this verse. As you walk in Christ, God does all of this in you. Your job is to walk in Jesus; God's job is to root you and strengthen you and make you thankful.

After all, we'll spend the rest of our lives exploring who he is and what he's done for us. Just look at two truths in verses 9 to 15:

- **He is God in the flesh (2:9).** "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily..." When Jesus walked around in Israel, eating and talking and making friends, it was God himself – not a watered-down version of God, but God in his fullness. Jesus is God himself in the flesh.
- **If you are a believer, your whole life participates in him (2:10-15).** We could talk about this for weeks. When we trust Jesus, we're filled with the one who contains all fullness. When he died, we died. When he rose from the dead, we rose from the dead. When he triumphed over the evil powers, we triumphed over the evil powers.

I've heard, "Most books should be articles. Most articles should be tweets. Most tweets shouldn't be posted." In other words, a lot of what we read is fluff. There's nothing to it. Verses 9 to 15 are not like that. There's no fluff. There's enough spiritual nutrition in these verses to feed a hungry soul for years. You could camp out on verses 9 to 15 alone for a long time and not get tired or bored. And it's only the tip of the iceberg. There's so much more to learn and admire about Jesus. You never need to move on from him because there's no one and nothing better than him.

So this is the entire Christian life: Keep your focus on Jesus. Keep walking in him. Stay close to him. Keep adoring him. Make your life a relentless pursuit of him. Do this, and everything else will fall into place.

This is our job as a church. This is your job as a believer. Don't move on to something else. Don't domesticate Jesus. Don't settle for, as [Dane Ortlund](#) says, "a junior varsity Jesus, an unwittingly reduced Jesus, an unsurprising and predictable Jesus."

Ortlund gets it right:

Make your growth journey a journey into Christ himself. Explore uncharted regions of who he is. Resist the tendency we all have to whittle him down to our preconceived expectation of what he must be like. Let him surprise you. Let his fullness arrest you and buoy you along.

Determine today, before God, through the Bible and good books explaining it, that you will spend the rest of your life wading into the unsearchable riches of the real Christ.

Let him, in all his endless fullness, love you into growth.

Keep your focus on Jesus. Keep walking in him. Continue the Christian life the same way you started it. Stay close to him.

But then Paul makes a second point:

Get Specific About What Might Draw You Away From Him

Paul writes in verse 8, “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.”

In verse 8, Paul gets specific about a particular threat faced by the church in Colossae. They were tempted to lose their focus on Jesus because of a dangerous belief system that borrowed from both Judaism and Greek gnosticism. They taught that if the Colossians wanted to really experience spiritual blessings, they had to mix Jewish practices like circumcision and dietary laws with the veneration of angels and some mystical experiences, with a dash of Jesus on the side. These truths were taking them captive – kidnapping them – and drawing them away from Jesus.

It’s so strange to talk about because we don’t face that set of beliefs. Probably nobody here is going to be tempted to lose their focus on Jesus because of what the Colossians were tempted to believe.

But we face our own temptations. There are things in every age that threaten to take us captive. They’re empty deceit. They’re demonic. They’re not according to Christ.

Paul writes to them and basically says, “Look, I know these views look really attractive to you. You want to buy into this because it looks so good. But these views aren’t from Jesus. They’re from humans. Even worse, they’re demonic. They won’t lead you to freedom. They’ll actually lead you into captivity instead of freedom in Jesus.”

“Jesus is so much better. Jesus is not just how you begin the Christian life. Jesus is how you continue the Christian life and how you finish the Christian life. You don’t

move on from him. You don't need anything more than him, because there's no one and nothing better than him."

Friends, be on guard against anything that causes you to look away from Jesus.

Keep your focus on Jesus, because he's everything you need.

Let's put that picture up again. What would cause you to lose your focus on Jesus? What would cause you to think that Jesus isn't enough, that you need something other than Jesus for the full spiritual treatment?

Whatever that is presents a clear and spiritual danger to you. Anything that causes you to look away from Jesus or to add anything to Jesus is not only empty and deceitful, it's demonic.

Look to Jesus. Keep looking at Jesus. Make him and nothing else the theme of your life. Get to know him in all of his glory. Never move on to anything else. As Dane Ortlund writes:

If you look to him, everything else is footnotes. All else will fall into place. If you do not look to Jesus, no amount of techniques or strategies will finally help you; all will be for nothing. Peel back every layer of distraction and look to Christ. Simplify your heart and all its cares. Look to Christ and his overflowing heart.