

Compartmentalizing Jesus

I am focusing right now on being intentional, both in actively seeking/doing good and shunning evil. By nature, I'm a happy-go-lucky and DISTRACTIBLE person, so being diligent and disciplined has been a lifelong labor - haha. Throughout my life, I've struggled with wasting opportunities for good or slipping into sin because I'm simply not being sober-minded enough. I just forget - intentionally or unintentionally - that my first and only real purpose on Earth is to glorify and grow in God (not work, school, my passions, or even my people). As you can imagine, this has become even more of a focus for me as I've been seriously considering how to order my life going into my twenties.

What passages or people in the Bible do you go to for guidance on how to be intentional day-in and day-out? How can I be more focused and at the ready for good works and avoiding temptation?

I'm trying to "hear" what they're saying and understand what they're looking for as I read the email. I love this question, and it's a great excuse to preach what's been on my mind lately. Many brethren likely share this request, regardless of their age. *Staying focused. Prioritizing. Being intentional. Honoring God.* What passages come to mind? Who do I go to? In particular, I genuinely think about Jesus (shocker, I know), because His ability in this area, in particular, amazes me. I've said many times over the years that if I were an atheist, I would challenge Jesus' claim with a backdoor approach. Miracles and resurrections are low-hanging fruit. It's His character that's unbelievable. He truly always reacted and behaved exactly right. Who does that? I've never seen it before in my life. Everyone in your life should have disappointed you by now, and if they haven't, you're not looking closely enough or you're not old enough. It's why Jesus didn't entrust Himself to man because He knew what was in humanity (John 2:24-25). He's so incredible, and let me tell you, He had a lot on His shoulders.

Consider Isaiah 9:1-7. Yes, our Wonderful Counselor. He had a lot on His shoulders. He couldn't afford any distractions. It's a weight placed on His shoulders because we couldn't bear it. Israel's leaders didn't take it away; instead, they added to it. How did He do it? I think about His interaction with the woman in John 4. We begin with a wearied Jesus in the heat of the day. He was thirsty from all the walking. Yet, He could see that the woman before Him was more wearied and thirsty than He was, and that became His focus. She became His focus. How??? After the woman left, Jesus' disciples returned with food, but Jesus claimed to have food they were unaware of. His food? To do the will of Him who sent Jesus and accomplish His work. Jesus didn't compartmentalize His role from everyday events. Every day events are how He changed the world.

"But how did He stay focused?" It was more important to Him than it is to you.

I know that's going to sting. It's true for me as well. The reality is that we don't appreciate or understand the world or its Maker like Jesus does. Part of that is due to His strength as the Son of God, but it's also because of our own weakness. For example, who could say like Jesus, "And now, Father, glorify Me in Your own presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed."

(John 17:5) Jesus came from somewhere You did not. That's an advantage. Yet, as the Hebrew writer states, "For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15).

Some things bother Jesus that don't bother you.

Some things bother you that don't bother Jesus.

Some things excite Jesus that don't excite you.

Some things excite you that don't excite Jesus.

If you know something I don't, then I'm sincerely all ears. My answer may be disappointing here this morning. First of all, some of you who share the sentiment of the question need to hear this: stop being hyper-critical, but don't lose your drive. We're simply not going to do this perfectly, and if you know that, try not to be hyper-focused about the moments you wish could have been better. "This week I could have studied more, served more, made more calls, shared the gospel more, etc." Yeah, couldn't we all. That doesn't make us unfaithful. **Keep growing. Keep going. Enjoy the walk.**

To the rest, my answer is this: **Beware of compartmentalizing Jesus.** He didn't compartmentalize you. You were always in His head and on His heart. Why? How? Because He loves you. He cares more about you than you do Him. (This is true of us all, whether we're faithful or not). You are Christ's, and you must start thinking that way. Compartmentalizing has its time and place. It can be helpful in science, completing tasks, avoiding emotional turmoil, and performing various roles. But it also has its downfall. In science, the obvious cons are tunnel vision. You're not thinking outside your own box. Ever have doctors prescribe conflicting medications because one focuses on the heart and the other on the liver? Have you ever run from family conflict or emotional hurdles because you don't want to face reality? You've heard of cognitive dissonance. Yes, it can have its cons. My greatest worry for the body (and myself) is that we compartmentalize Jesus. You can do that as a boss. Your role as a manager doesn't resemble managing your home. The role of a father looks different from the role of a husband. The role of a wife differs from her role in relation to governing authorities. But you can't do that with Jesus. Look at Titus 2 or Ephesians 5-6, which we recently studied, and see that no matter the role, they're all centered around Jesus. When you eat, take Jesus with you (yes, gluttony is a thing, and Paul wouldn't offend anyone by what he ate or drank). Whether you're single or married, kiddos or not, CEO or janitor, out at dinner or at home around the dinner table, going to the movies or turning the TV on, how much time you spend on your phone and what you're watching, the conversations you have and the plans you make: Jesus is supposed to guide our every step. The reason why He doesn't abide in our minds at all times is due to our lack of depth and wisdom. Where do I begin? It may be good to have a committed mentor who will walk that road with you. You need to be around others with the same goal. You need to put God's word into practice and see the fruit when you are connected to the vine. We need to be thinking big picture and pour more time and attention into the Kingdom. May God bless us all as we keep our eyes on Him!