

“Up Close & Personal”
February 5, 2012

Several convictions permeate my heart:

- **“Church”** is much more than a **meeting you “go to”**—it’s a **people you “go with”** to transform the world.
- We must see ourselves as a **vital part** of this move of God on the earth. **We are leaders & influencers—the “head, not the tail” (Deut. 28:13).**
- **What moves us** is much more than a **passion** to see something happen. At the heart of it all is a **Person—Jesus Christ**—One who is **amazingly personal**. One who has a **highly infectious personality**. He can be **known, experienced, enjoyed, loved, and followed**.
 - *“The infinite life of God himself took shape before us. We saw it, we heard it, and now we’re telling you so you can experience it along with us—this experience of communion with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. Our motive for writing is simply this: We want you to enjoy this, too.” (1 John 1:2-4 The Message)*

PROP- The year (and beyond) we will pursue an ever increasing—up close & personal—relationship with Jesus. [NOTE: The more we are “present to” Him—the more we will “re-present” Him]

Colossians 2:2-19

- **“That you may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (v. 3)**
- **“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ” (v. 9,10)**
- **“God made you alive with Christ...forgave us all...took (the written code that was against us) away, nailing it to the cross...disarmed the powers and authorities” (v. 13-15)**

1. WE MUST LET NOTHING DISTRACT US FROM JESUS

Paul addressed 3 seemingly “legitimate” pursuits (self-focused substitutes for fixing our eyes on Jesus):

- a. **The need to be “perfect”** (see v. 16-17) (Also Col. 2:11 The Message)
 - **“Perfectionism”** drives us to perform in order to earn ever-elusive approval (from God and/or others)
 - **Live with nagging disapproval internally**—often driving us to competition, comparison, & criticism
 - **Attempts to “justify”** personal imperfections by continually inspecting others (*i.e., At least I’m not as bad as “this publican” Luke 18:11*)
 - **In the end**—keeps us from experiencing Jesus as the “author and perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2)

b. The need to be “pitiful” (v. 18)

- “False humility”- self-focused victim mentality (deflated)
- Elicit attention and affirmation by revealing your “sacrifices” and wounds to others
- This endless quest for more “comfort” from others—keeps us from the ultimate comfort found in Him

c. The need to be “powerful” (v. 18)

- Some wanted to see the spectacular or be spectacular—apart from the One who is spectacular
- “Inflated”- a false sense of greatness
- Again, a distraction. Because “in Christ” we are made to “shine like stars in the universe” (Philippians 2:15) with signs & wonders following

2. WE MUST “HOLD FAST” TO JESUS (v. 19)

[NOTE: The custom of “holding fast to the head”; an honoring and endearing practice common in families and covenant friendships]

- Secrets revealed
- Gratitude expressed
 - Key to increased encounters with Him
 - Psalm 100:1- “Enter His gates w/ thanksgiving”
 - Opens our soul to see Him clearer
 - “Worthy!” results from increasing valuing of Him (finding worth)

In this place of honor & endearment:

- We are joined together in a quality of relationship with one another only possible in Christ [NOTE: It is only “from Him” that “the whole body” is “supported and held together”]
- We grow “as God causes us to grow”, literally “increasing with the increase of God.” [NOTE: What we do will always be dwarfed by what He does and He supplies. This doesn’t minimize our obedience—it just puts it into perspective]

RESPONSE:

Let’s take some time to “hold fast” to Him—as we express gratitude & honor to Him in a holy embrace.