

# Keeping Jesus as our Focus

by Alan Martin

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**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 11:2, 2 Corinthians 11:3, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 8:29, Ephesians 4:13, Revelation 2:4

**Topics:** "Spiritual Renewal", "Focus on Christ"

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## Description

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## Transcript

If you have your Bibles and you want to turn to the opening scripture we're going to begin with today. I'm going to start in 2nd Corinthians chapter 11. What do you do when you find yourself in need of an adjustment? Now if it's physical and it has to do with your muscles and bones, a lot of people go to a chiropractor to get adjusted.

If it has to do with your medicines you can see your doctor or your pharmacologist so that they adjust your medication. You remember with those of us who had to do this more often, it happens less often because the computer programs that we use now work, seemingly work a lot better. But you remember how many times we used to use a computer it would lock up and you just had to shut it down.

I mean we still do occasionally. You shut down and reboot and if the problem persisted for a long time you might have to do something that's called defragment because as computer saves files it can store them in bits and pieces here and there, believe it or not, in a disorganized fashion. And as the computer sends its electronic feelers to regather all the bits and pieces of those files and put them back together it can slow the processor down and you can do something that's called defragment which means it will clear out unnecessary, unneeded bits of information and streamline in an effective way the files that are saved so that the computer will work faster, smoother, more efficient.

How do we do that spiritually? What if we need adjustment spiritually? What if our walk in the Spirit, our relationship with Jesus Christ is not as efficient as it should be and there's some some problems coming up. We get, we find ourselves in a situation and we lock down and we we seem to lack His grace and His power and His guidance and we're kind of struggling with things that once were smoother in our life. Well this this verse in 2nd Corinthians chapter 11 kind of gives us a clue where we need to look.

I'm going to start in the first verse of chapter 11 of 2nd Corinthians. I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness but indeed you are bearing with me for I am jealous for you with the godly jealousy for I betrothed you to one husband so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ. Paul wanted the church, he wanted their heart and their whole affection to be in Christ.

Not their particular church, not their pastor. Okay, it's good. I want you to respect me and I appreciate your love for me but all of our affection needs to be purely and totally upon the Lord Jesus Christ and that's what Paul wanted for those believers that he worked with and then he went on to say in verse 3 but I fear that as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness.

It's interesting there's two words for deceived in the New Testament. One is planato which means to be led astray. It's where we get the English word planet from.

Planets are those wandering stars that don't stay in the same place all the time. A regular star stays in the same place in the sky but a planet moves so planato means to wander but that's not this word here. This word means to be led off the path.

Just as Eve led, just as a serpent led Eve off of the path, I'm afraid he says that your mind will be spoiled. I like to use the word spoiled. Spoiled from the simplicity of devotion to Christ.

Sometimes we don't even realize it but the reason we're struggling in our spiritual life is the enemy has spoiled that simplicity of devotion to Jesus and he's complicated it with a lot of other stuff that's going on in the home or going on at work or going on in the church or going on in politics. This is a real season y'all where your simplicity of devotion to Christ can get spoiled pretty quick. How can you take watching all those ads constantly about how terrible this guy is and oh this guy is more terrible.

No this guy is more terrible. It's just like they're playing that old game with the baseball bat. Who can make the other person look worse? How can you listen to that and not be affected? Beware.

Beware of being spoiled from this beautiful devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ because if we take our eyes off of the Lord Jesus and we start focusing on men we can become disturbed rather quickly. We're not going to see the same perfection. We're not going to see that fullness of God's goodness and kindness and mercy.

Oh that there would be more and more brothers and sisters among us so mature in Christ, so full of his grace, so full of the Spirit that they are just blessing after blessing after blessing to everyone they know. But at times we all fight this same enemy who tries to cloud our minds and hinder our clear vision of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so if we need a renewal, if we need an adjustment, if we need things to be realigned.

You know they used to have equipment that now and then had to be recalibrated. Especially equipment that measured decibels and and fine settings. Oftentimes it took a professional to reset the piece of equipment to its factory condition.

There are times in a believer's life we need a reset. We need an adjustment and that adjustment is going to come from a fresh and new revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. When I speak about a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, I'm not talking about seeing him on the cross.

You know why we so many of us want to see Jesus on the cross? It's because what we're looking for when we see him on the cross is our forgiveness. He forgives us. And many of us if we're not doing well, that's the only part of Jesus we're really seeing.

We come back to him and we're glad that he died on the cross and we're grateful and we ask him again to forgive us. We place our faith in him again. But if we're not careful we can keep him there, always on the cross.

I'm not talking about a revelation of him in that way. I am talking about a revelation of Jesus as the fullness of God's character revealed to man, fully equipped with every attribute of the Godhead, filled with God's wisdom, filled with God's self-control, filled with God's grace, filled with God's mercy, filled with God's goodness, filled with with God's meekness, and filled so that you and I can have all that God filled him with available to us to live with every moment of the day. You're not seeing Jesus on the cross to do that.

You must see Jesus as the life-giving spirit. You must come to see that Jesus didn't stay on the cross. He was buried.

He rose again the third day, spent 40 days speaking about the kingdom to his disciples, and then he ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven. And there he became the life-giving spirit and he sent the Comforter, the one who comes alongside, which is literally his presence filled with every single grace of God to be with us every single day so that everything that God gave us in Jesus Christ is available to us moment by moment in every situation so that we don't revert back to our own natural fallen ways of doing things. Because when we get in difficult situations, oftentimes we allow the natural man to take over.

But to see the beauty of Jesus, a fresh revelation of Jesus, you know what that will do? When you see the beauty of Jesus's goodness, your ugliness stinks. See, you can be ugly to your wife or you can be ugly to your husband if all you're seeing is what they did. You can be ugly.

But if you see the goodness of Jesus, you see a revelation of his goodness, that will make what you did and your response sickening. The revelation of his beauty makes ugliness, you see it clearly. This is why we need a fresh revelation of Jesus.

Paul talked about if you're still, if you were in 2nd Corinthians and you're still there, I'm gonna flip back in 2nd Corinthians to chapter 3. 2nd Corinthians chapter 3. I'm gonna start with verse 12. It picks up in a passage that Paul is writing about the new covenant that we're a part of. But he makes a reference back to something that is found in Exodus chapter 34.

Something that Moses used to do. If you remember, Moses used to meet with the Lord, with Yahweh. And the Lord would speak to him.

He'd spend time with him. And when Moses would leave the presence of Yahweh and come to the people, he was, it says he was unaware the first time that he was like one of those glow toys. Remember those things you could hold up by the lamp and turn out the lights and it would be glowing? It had absorbed the light.

That's what it said was going on with Moses. The light of God's glory was absorbing into his skin. And when he left the presence of God, he was glowing.

And the people saw it and it freaked them out and they backed away from him. And he actually had to call them forward. And the Lord was allowing this to kind of show this is his glory.

Moses is seeing God's glory. And it's interesting, it says he began to put a veil over his face. And this is something I did not understand.

I thought, and this just shows how something, you can think you can remember the details to a story and remember it wrong a long time. Some of, if I ever get your name wrong, I'm gonna get it wrong a long time. It's kind of like the elephant, never forget.

So please help me out there if that happens. But I remember part of this detail wrong. Because I thought that because that was the people's first response to Moses, he would go into the presence of the Lord.

And when he would leave the presence of the Lord, he would put the veil over his face so that the people wouldn't be afraid of him and they would come near him. But that's not what the scripture said. I went back and read it a little bit more carefully.

Instead it said he would be in the presence of the Lord. And he would, he would glow with God's glory. And then he would speak to the people and they would see the glory.

But when he finished speaking with the people, he would then cover his face so that they wouldn't see the glory fading away. I didn't realize that. But that detail is important if you're, if you're going to understand this passage right here.

So he, he would glow while he was speaking with the people, but knowing that that glow would fade until he reentered God's presence, he would cover his face so that people would not see it fade. Now that knowing that, let's look at verse 12, 2nd Corinthians chapter three, therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness and are not like Moses who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would look at, not look intently at the consequence of what was fading away so that they wouldn't see the glory fading away. And then it says there's 14, but their minds were hardened.

And until this day, at the reading of the old covenant, the same veil unlift remains unlifted because it's only brought to an end in Jesus Christ. That's where it's lifted away. But to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart.

But whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Okay. Just like when Moses was in the presence of God, the veil is taken away says, now the Lord is a spirit and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

And we with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. So in a way, we are to be having a revelation of God's glory. Now, if you don't know what that is, you need to speak with me or you need to find an older brother and sister in Christ and says, you mean in a way we can experience God's glory.

We can have a revelation of God's glory. Yes, you can. You need to have, because it's in seeing the beauty of God's glory that makes your old and natural ways so sickening to you.

And it brings you to this place where you, you long to be transformed into what you see. You long to be like Jesus because the glory that we see is the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the glory of God, the father, fully, fully invested in the son of man, what mankind was made to be someone so like the father that he could say to his disciples, show you the father.

What do you mean? He who has seen me has seen the father. I am the father or one. I only say what the father tells me to say.

I only do what the father shows me to do. I am the father of one. If you've seen me, you have seen the father.

And when the, when the, when the God of the universe, our heavenly father wants to show us his glory, he gives us a revelation of his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so he says, beholding as in a mirror of the glory of the Lord, we are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory. So as you're seeing the fullness of the, of God in a revelation of Jesus Christ, you are transformed into what you see.

Let me explain that. I am seeing a picture of his beautiful meekness, how restrained, how control, how gentle the Lord Jesus was. And as I see that I can see how I am with my wife and what I see is so beautiful.

I despise what I'm doing and I long to be changed. I long to be transformed into this image I'm seeing, but here it says you're transformed from glory to glory. Now, Moses was transformed from glory to fading.

Didn't last, did it? So why does Paul say from glory to glory? Because God doesn't want us fading. He doesn't, he doesn't want us to be the glow toys. Here you are in God's presence and you're going to leave this place glowing with Jesus.

But by this afternoon, if the cowboys lose fading away, or if you're, if, if dinner's not exactly what you like, there's too many people at the restaurant or, or whatever, whatever it is. By the middle of the week, all the glory that we had is, that's not what it is. The Lord wants us to be transformed from glory to glory.

Little by little, just more and more like Jesus. How important is this? There's a connection I don't think many of us made. Now most of us that have been in church for any length of time can quote this scripture.

So if you, you know it, you can finish it with me. I think most of you here will at least know most of it. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Have you ever wondered what that meant? You know what sin means. We know that, but what does it mean? We've fallen short of the glory. What does that mean? Hmm.

Jesus Christ was the glory of God. The perfect representation of who God is. Perfect in speech, perfect in action, perfect in attitude, perfect in obedience.

When you looked at Jesus Christ, you saw the glory of the father because Jesus was the image and is, I being sustaining all things to the word of his power. Jesus Christ is the actual true glory of God on display. So when we sin and we fall short of the glory, is it possible that what Paul was meaning is that in the beginning there in Genesis chapter one, after the Lord had made all other things on the, on the days that he worked in, he came to the six days and after he made the animals and everything else, he said, let us make man in our image and likeness.

So he, we were created by God to bear his image, to look like him, to be like him, to represent him, but all have sinned and done what? Fallen short of that. We don't speak like him. We don't act like him.

We don't represent him for who he is. We missed, sin means to miss the mark. And if the reason we were created is to bear his image and likeness to be like him, let us make man in our image and likeness.

When mankind sinned and sin began to corrupt us in the law of sin, entered the world through Adam's sin and sin passed everyone. The way we are before Christ, controlled by sin, was constantly misrepresenting who God is. We did not represent his holiness.

We did not represent his righteousness. We did not represent his goodness, his kindness, his patience, his self control. We fell short of the glory.

And so the father seeks to restore us to himself. Have you read anything in the New Testament about God renewing us into his image? Have you read this in Romans chapter 8, if you want to turn there with me? Did you know that for every single one of us, God has a destiny. God has predetermined where he wants us to end up.

Now some of us would like to think that where he wants us to end up is in heaven because we don't want to go to the other place. And we hear heaven is wonderful. And we believe that many of our the relatives that we love have gone on there.

But there are there is a lot of people who believe they're going to heaven that are not going to end up at the destiny where God has for them. But I will say this, if you do end up at the place that God has predestined, you can pretty sure you will also end up in heaven. This the destiny we're going to look at here is the important destiny that God has predestined every man for.

So if you're with me in Romans chapter eight, verse 28, Romans 8:28, for we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose. Okay, now what is that purpose? If you've been called by God, he has a purpose in calling you. Because those whom God foreknew, he predestined.

And what did he predestined them for? What did he predestined them for? To be conformed to his image of his son. So you and I, as believers, if you're a follower of Christ, if God has called you through the gospel, and you have responded in faith, you have accepted the destiny that God's will for you and I, is that we all be conformed to the image of Jesus. That we think like Jesus, that we speak like Jesus, that we act like Jesus.

So that when the world sees us, what do they see? They see Jesus. They see his glory. They see his goodness in our actions.

Did Jesus say that? Is that something that rhymes with what Jesus said? Yes, Matthew chapter 6. You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see what? Your good works.

And what does the world do when they see your good works? They glorify your father. They see God in you. They see his image.

They taste his kindness. They taste his goodness. They taste his love.

We, at that point, are being transformed into the image of his Son, doing the will of the Father, showing the world the Father's goodness. They are getting to know the Father through watching us. That's our calling.

That's the calling of a Christian. And do you realize that in particular, it's the calling for every believer? And did you know, it's the responsibility of every pastor? That's why a person is supposed to be a pastor. If you read in Ephesians 4, if you want to turn there with me, I'll go there in Ephesians chapter 4. I'll start in about verse 11.

Paul explained the purpose for a church and why the Lord Jesus gives certain ministry gifts to men for the building up of his church. In Ephesians 4, 11 and following, we read, he himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ. So these men, whether they're apostles or prophets or evangelists or pastors and teachers, they're supposed to equip us.

They're supposed to equip you and I so that the body of Christ can be built up until something happens. We're supposed to be built up until, look at the until, what are we heading towards? What's the destiny? What's the purpose for church? Until we all reach the unity of the faith and the full knowledge of the Son of God to a mature man to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. You mean, in Paul's mind, the ministry of apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers was to equip those in church until they come to the fullness of Christ? The fullness, not partial.

I'm not supposed to be happy with partial. Oh, I'm glad you tithe. I'm glad you attend Sunday school.

I'll encourage you to continue to do that. But there's more that God has for us than that. God's calling us to grow into the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ so that every day, in every place, in every home, at every job, in every situation, Jesus Christ and His fullness is always on display.

Always. That's the fullness. That's where we're going to.

That's my responsibility. It's what we should encourage one another to seek, to pursue. Then we'll no longer, he goes on to say, there will no longer be infants blown and tossed, you know, by every wind of doctrine, but instead will grow up into all things into Jesus Christ.

And Paul so felt that way that when other interferences came with that process, he groaned over it. In the book of Galatians, in chapter 4, some people that just misunderstood that they misunderstood God's purpose in the law of Moses. And they were still trying to get Gentile believers to fully become under and live under the law of Moses, to be circumcised and keep all the commandments.

And Paul, it just caused Paul to groan because they are missing the greatness of the revelation of Jesus Christ and the greatness of the new covenant. And so Paul said this, my dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of labor, like Paul was having spiritual contractions. His gut was tightening.

He said this until Jesus Christ be formed in you. Till Christ is fully formed in you. And that has to be our desire for one another.

Brother Raymond, I want every single day when Pauline looks at you to see Jesus. All day, every day. Roland, same thing.

What every situation, I want her to see the Lord Jesus Christ in you, speaking through you, working through you. I want Stephanie, your granddaughter, every grandparent, that should be your goal. Manifest Jesus Christ to your family.

Every person that has a job, manifest Jesus Christ to those on your job. Every time you walk through this door, manifest the Lord Jesus Christ to every single person here in this building. We are called to be the expression of God's glory in the earth.

We are to look like Jesus. We are not to be falling short of that. Instead, we're to be being transformed as we see his beauty.

When you're seeing a fresh revelation of Jesus Christ and you're just kind of limping along, it's gonna be hard to comfort yourself. You can do it. You can do it if you've lost a real fresh clear revelation.

You can pass off your bad moods. You can pass off your attitude. You can pass off your carnal reaction as, after all, we're just human.

No, really. The Lord Jesus Christ lives in you in all the fullness of God and he makes every grace available to you and we're all just human. No, you've lost a revelation.

You're not having a clear and fresh revelation. You might be in that same state that the Church of Ephesus was in. Remember the first church in Revelation? There are seven churches that were that the Spirit of the Lord kind of spoke to John on the Isle of Patmos when he had that revelation and there were seven churches.

The first one was the Church of Ephesus and they were doing well in quite a few areas but after praising him for the areas that they were doing well in, Jesus said to them through John, but I have this against you. You have left your first love. Not lost it.

Sometimes we hear it wrong. You've left it. Now what what do you think the first love was? It's getting to know Jesus.

It's loving Jesus himself and it's it can happen. I admit it's happened to me and I still have to guard myself. You know what we started with that verse where I'm afraid that just as the serpent tempted Eve, you may to be deceived away from your pure devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh it can happen. You can get involved in other things. You can get busy and you can claim this and that.

You can get your mind and focus on this or that and you know what it will do? Suddenly that pure flaming love for Jesus Christ. It's not the same and you can drift into this new condition so subtly you don't even realize it and you can kind of coast and exist and walk on this level. You're still trying to do good.

You remember all the Bible verses. You try to be nice to your wife and you try to do what's right as a parent to your kids and you and you try to do what's right on the job but it's not glory. It's not being filled with Thanksgiving.

It's not such a wonderful life. It's not that abundant life in the spirit that Jesus talked about. You're just maintaining.

You're gutting it up. You're still going for it. Jesus says uh uh.

That's not gonna cut it. That's not gonna impress the world. You know there's people out there in the world trying to do what's right and it's not even in Jesus name.

It's not even in Jesus name. No, no. We need to be known as those fully in love with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We're his followers. I mean he is the he's our bread of life. He's everything to us and that needs to be.

Jesus said to John to them just remember how far you've fallen. Remember the height from which you've fallen and there's a danger. If you've been, if you have fallen and you've been dwelling down here so long someone might need to help you remember because you've gotten used to just getting by.

I mean you don't think you're doing that bad. You're still trying. You're still coming.

You're still here. You still read your Bible now and then. You still try to do what's right but it's not the same as when you couldn't get enough of it.

It's not the same it when it was tis so sweet to trust in Jesus. It's not that same. That's renewal.

That's that comes with a heart of renewal and Jesus told the church of Ephesus remember the height from which you've fallen. Repent and do what you did it first. Ah what did we do it first? When we first became a believer.

I know what I did when I first became a believer. I fell in love with the Lord Jesus Christ. I wanted to know everything about the Lord Jesus that I could.

I and if you tie these two things together you constantly are wanting a fresh revelation of Jesus. Paul described it it's like looking at a mirror and what do mirrors do? Mirrors reflect light. So if I am seeing a spiritual revelation of Lord Jesus Christ and I see in him God's beautiful love, God's meekness, God's mercy, God's kindness, God's goodness, God's self-control, God's perfect attributes in every way.

It creates in me a longing to know it. I long to see that fully realized in my life. I want my wife to see it.

I want my children to see it. I want my grandchildren to see it. I want my brothers in Christ, sisters in Christ.

I want them to see it and I want people to be drawn to Jesus by watching me. That's what I want. That's our calling and that's what we need to be renewed and now and then we just need someone to come along and remind us.

We can get busy and we can get distracted and Satan doesn't mind taking even good things and drawing us away from the best things. Gotta be careful. And so I want you to pray for me as I want to pray for you and let's commit to helping each other make knowing the Lord Jesus our whole purpose.

That's our whole purpose is that we come to know him more and more so that every day in every place, in every home, at every job, it is Jesus we are filled with. His grace, his goodness, his character, his life and people around us are seeing the Lord Jesus being formed in us. Isn't that beautiful? That's our calling and that's what I'm committed to.

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