



### HOW ARE WE LOVING JESUS BETTER THIS WEEK?

[1 Corinthians 2:9] Let's memorize it this week! Pastor Andrew commented that we should be wholly undone by these words.

1. Take a moment to reflect on this verse and how it influences loving Jesus better this week.

### MOST OF US ARE SEEKING CHANGE IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

Turning to Colossians, there was a directed assault in Colossae about who Jesus was. Paul addresses this question. Paul wants us to know that, as believers, we've been infused with the life of Christ in us. What does this fully mean? We have to be comfortable in faith with certain things our minds can't explain because they are beyond us. We need to know this because we typically want change in life and are drawn to things that seem to offer it, and yet only Christ offers us true transformation. That's where we start today—our part in this process of change through Christ.

2. Are you wanting change within yourself or in some other way today? How hard do those changes seem to be?

### WHAT IS OUR PART IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGE THROUGH CHRIST?

There's something in us that desires to become the best version of ourselves. True and lasting change begins with Jesus. We try many different things like willpower or how-to books. (Note: This is where some spiritual leaders fail because they become spiritual life coaches instead of proclaimers of the good news of Jesus who wants us to conform us to His image.) We look at trends in neuropsychology for change or copy our put-together friend, but then realize these are just temporary fixes to a much bigger issue. Here is our hope—Paul explains how to think and be different with the vertical, the internal, and the external as the pathway to meaningful and Christ-oriented change in our lives.

3. Have you asked God into the process of change in your life in specific areas? Why or why not?

### THE VERTICAL: SEEK

[Colossians 3:1-3] Don't just look at these verses as a to-do list. Realize, because of the indwelling Christ and the mind of Christ, we are able to pursue the life of Christ. (See Colossians 1:27 and 1 Corinthians 2:16) (Repeat those underlined words one more time!) Christ gives us what we need to pursue who He wants us to be. Paul tells us to SEEK. This is seeking like when you can't find your keys. You start tearing things up with tenacity to find those keys. That's the kind of seeing that Paul means, not casual looking. This is intentional and intense seeking of the things of God. It's something we hunger for and we pursue Christ with that drive. There is nothing significant we've accomplished in our lives by accident. Paul then says to set your mind on things above. This is all about intentionality—knowing what you're going to do and how you're going to go about it. There needs to be a plan because it's easy for other things to occupy our thought space.

4. What would it look like to seek God with the intensity of those lost keys before a meeting you just can't miss?

### THE INTERNAL: HEAD SPACE

[Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:5-7] It's easy for other things to occupy our thought space. But, whatever occupies the space in your head, captures your heart and affects your hands. What we allow to have the most prominence in our minds will be the directive for our lives and gives passion to our heart and affect our actions. For some, this could be the alleviation of pain in your life to the point where you navigate life to avoid the hard things. Paul is very specific about speaking first vertically and then internally. He is adamant about what we seek and put our minds because in order to seek the right things, we need to address what we're inclined to do. We still have things in us that want the opposite of what God wants for us. This is why we need to do vertical first and then internal.

5. How can you better honor God with what occupies your head space?

### WHAT WANTS TO DESTROY YOU?

[Colossians 3:5-7] Paul uses strong words. We often entertain things and play with things that are bent on not just our entertainment, but our destruction. Theologian John Owen states, "Be about killing sin, or sin will be about killing you." That feels heavy, but the truth is that sin is weighty. It's bondage. You need to be about going after what is going after you. If you don't evaluate what's good or bad, you'll find yourself entertaining things that aren't just questionable, but sinful and destructive of your character and the core of who you are when no one is watching. These things don't stay private. In looking at these verses, the church has focused on sexual sin because it's what's most seen and more easily discerned; however, this minimizes the other sins we're fighting. We need to admit we're all struggling with something. This is why Paul emphasizes wanting more and associates being dissatisfied with idolatry. The issue is less about wanting more than it's about what we're setting our minds on and pursuing. Sin isn't about a thing or behavior, it's about a rival god. Whatever we put our focus on is what we're worshipping. We're all a worshipping people—it's just a matter of what we're worshipping. Everything other than Jesus over-promises and under-delivers.

6. What things in your life would like to compete for the worship of Jesus?

### THE EXTERNAL

[Colossians 3:8-10; 12-14] Another list! But what's interesting is that we go vertical to internal and now this list is about the external behaviors interpersonally, involving how we think, speak, and interact with others. Many times we want to change how we're living externally when we haven't gone back to what we're pursuing and what we're worshipping internally. It's only when we address those things that we can see the external changes. We can't love others until we understand how we are loved and what we are loving. It gets even better when we look at verses 12-14 where Paul says to put on love. Paul says lasting change is nothing different than when Jesus told us that it all boils down to loving God will all our hearts and loving our neighbors as much as we love ourselves. Our maturity is shown by how we love God and others. We can't accomplish love of others until we understand God's love for us and we seek God and fall in love with Him. To see lasting change in your life, love God, pursue Him, understand what He has said and has for you.

7. Which of these steps to change most resonated with you—vertical, internal, or external—and why?
8. Considering practical steps this week, how has this study inspired you to turn up the intensity of your love for God?