

## #87 “Keep It Simple”

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It is easy for us to lose heart, to lose focus, and to get off track in our spiritual lives. It is not easy to make time to be with our Lord and to open His Word. It is not easy to take in Biblical teaching. Satan has a way of deluding us and distracting us, even when we are aware that we are being attacked. By faith, we must stand firm, resist him, and walk according to the Word and by the Spirit. One of Satan's greatest ploys is to make things more complex than they really are. After all, the gospel is very, very simple such that even a young child can understand it. Paul reminds the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11:3, "But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ." We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9) based upon the work of Christ on the cross on our behalf. We receive Him as Father, and we become His children (John 1:12-13). We turn from our sin, and we receive His cleansing (1 John 1:9). It is simple, really. Satan can make us begin to think that we can do things to earn God's favor or that we can begin to lose our standing in heaven. But it is not about us gaining or keeping our salvation. Salvation, sanctification, and our future glorification is a gift and work of God in and through us. Our job is simply to respond humbly, contritely and according to His Word. Jesus is the main thing, and life only makes sense when it is centered around Him. We would do well to keep our focus simple and our ways pure, for the way of life, happiness, and joy forevermore is through relationship with Jesus, nothing more, and nothing less. It is only in His presence that joy is found that will not disappoint or run out (Psalm 16:11).

It just makes no sense to keep living life as if we are supposed to find some one thing outside of Jesus that is going to make us happy given that the simple and pure answer has already been given to us in Christ. Why run the treadmill of happiness-seeking when happiness is already available in Jesus? Family is wonderful, but family is not Jesus. A successful career can be fulfilling, but it is not soul-filling like Jesus. A new and improved physique can boost self-esteem, but it is not going to satisfy our hearts' deepest longings. There just isn't something else that can take the place of Jesus. Satan will try to draw our attention away from this fact both when things are going wrong and when things are going smoothly. But our call is to remember the simple truth that Jesus is the answer, the reason, the end, the beginning, the sum, and the fullness of all in all (Colossians 1:19).

Here are three "one things" from the Bible that we would do well to remember so that we don't get distracted from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. First, we need to remember the glory and certainty of being a child of God lest Satan steal our joy and bring us doubt as to our salvation. Like the blind man who physically received his sight, so, we who have received spiritual sight must never forget the change which we have experienced (2 Corinthians 5:17). The blind man said in John 9:25, "One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." There is one thing we must know, one simple,

pure thing, namely, that Jesus made us to see. Secondly, in order to keep things simple, we ought to remember what one thing we are to do. Paul says in Philippians 3:13, "One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Paul knew that he hadn't arrived spiritually, but he kept on pressing on to the prize of the upward call in Christ Jesus, a call to purity, to devotion, and to the eternal praise and glory of Christ. He didn't let his past failures keep him from present faithfulness and future rewards. One thing he sought to do, and that was to keep on serving Jesus and yielding to the Spirit's work in his life. Thirdly, one thing should be our heart's desire above all other things. David says in Psalm 27:4, "One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple." For David, there was nothing like a relationship with His Creator. To be intimate with God all the days of his life was the greatest thing he could think of, and this was coming from the king of Israel who had it all. He knew rightly that only God could fulfill his deepest longing and give his life order and meaning and purpose. God is the only perfect being, and as such He is the definition of perfect beauty. He is reason to marvel, to have awe, and to glory. Only He can supply us with joy that will never expire. Only His pleasures are forever (Psalm 16:11).

In this year and in the days beyond, let us remember each day that God is our all in all and that Christ is our life. There is no other path to joy and no other way to freedom. Let us keep it simple, remembering the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Special thanks to a message from Alistair Begg called "One Thing" which pointed my attention to these "one things"