

Hold Fast - May 3rd - Billboard Jesus - Clay Weed

TALK IT OVER

Key Scriptures:

2 Peter 1:12 NLT
2 Peter 1:5-7 NLT
Ephesians 5:15-17 NIV
Hebrews 2:1 NLT
Luke 10:38-42 NIV
2 Peter 1:14-15 NLT

Start reading

2 Peter 1:12 NLT

Therefore, I will always remind you about these things—even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth you have been taught.

Ephesians 5:15-17 NIV

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Psalms 92:12-15 NIV

The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, "The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him."

2 Peter 1:14-15 NLT

For our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me that I must soon leave this earthly life, so I will work hard to make sure you always remember these things after I am gone.

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What is the most outrageous or impactful advertising campaign you remember seeing? What made it so memorable?

Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read 2 Peter 1:12. Clay reminded us that that reminders are necessary. What were some of the reasons?
- Ephesians 5:15-17. There are so many things that can take our focus and attention. Name some ways that can help us stay focused on the right things. How do we protect ourselves from getting our focus pulled away from the things that are important?
- Read Psalm 92:12-15. What does a tree need to flourish? How does paying attention to reminders and renewing your mind allow you to flourish like cedar of Lebanon?
- Read Luke 10:38-42. Clay said, "We need these billboard moments in our lives to remind us to not settle for good things, but to desire the best things." In what ways does this scripture passage convict you? Do you feel that there are times where you have missed God's "billboard moments" in your own life?

Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- What steps can you take now to make sure that you are consciously mindful of the reminders all around you?
- How do you feel you are doing on a daily basis "reminding" those around you about the amazing love of Jesus? Would you say you represent Christ well to others? Or do you struggle in this area?
- Do you have a Peter in your life...an individual who reminds you to stay faithful and focused in living your life for Christ?
- Clay made the statement "Learn to take advantage of your time, or someone else will take advantage of your time". How have you seen this played out in your own time management?
- Do you currently or have you previously "uprooted" yourself from something due to being uncomfortable? Looking back, would it have been better for growth to stay "uprooted" or grounded through the discomfort?
- Read 2 Peter 1:14-15. Peter wanted to make sure that he finished well, fulfilling God's calling on his life. What can you currently do to ensure you are doing the same?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Commit to reminding those around you of the amazing love of Jesus and representing Christ well to others.

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Father, thank you that You use Billboard moments in our lives to get our attention and teach us more about you. Help us to keep our focus on you in a world that is always fighting for our attention. In Jesus Name. Amen.

Start digging. For further study.

- Read the article on the 2nd page and discuss it.

Question: "How can I stay focused on Christ?"

Answer: In our fast-paced, attention-grabbing world, it is easy to get caught up in the daily grind, get distracted, and lose sight of our true purpose in life—the worship and love of God (see Matthew 22:37). Yet we are told to run our race with our eyes focused on Christ: “Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith” (Hebrews 12:1–2). How can we resist the allure of the world and keep our focus where it belongs, on Christ?

To focus is to direct one’s attention or concentrate on something. If we are focused on Christ, then He has our attention; we are concentrating on Him and His word; He occupies the forefront of our minds. Such a focus is only fitting, because Jesus “is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy” (Colossians 1:18). By rights, He should be our focus.

Colossians 3:1–4 contains much that can help us stay focused on Christ: “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” We are to focus on “things above,” remembering that Christ is seated in the place of glory and power (verse 1). The reason for the command is also given: because we have been raised to new life with Christ. To focus on the things above, we must consciously remove our focus from “earthly things” (verse 2), and the reason is given: we have died to self, and Christ is our very life (verse 3). Helping us stay focused on Christ is the reminder that Jesus is coming again, and when we see Him we will know glory (verse 4).

Hebrews 2 lists some of the things that Christ has done or is doing for us: He shared our humanity (verse 14), He breaks the power of the devil (verse 14), He frees us (verse 15), He is our “merciful and faithful high priest” (verse 17), He suffered for us (verse 18), and He helps those who are tempted in this world (verse 18). Because of all this, Hebrews 3:1, says, “Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.”

Here are some practical ways for a born-again believer to stay focused on Christ:

Commit to reading the Bible. It is impossible for a believer to be consistently in the Word without having his attention drawn again and again to Christ: “The Scriptures point to me!” Jesus said (John 5:39, NLT; see also Luke 24:44 and Hebrews 10:7). To focus on the Word of God is to have the Son of God brought more into focus.

Develop your prayer life. If you want to know how to pray, read Jesus’ instructions to His disciples in Luke 11:1–13. As you speak to the Lord throughout your day, you will naturally be more focused on Him. Little things, big things—we can come to the Lord with any and all of our cares. The command is to “pray continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17), to always be in an attitude and atmosphere of instant prayer.

Trust the Lord as your only protector: “My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only he will release my feet from the snare” (Psalm 25:15). Once we understand the spiritual dangers we face on a daily basis, we will focus more on Christ, our one and only Savior, who alone has the power of deliverance.

Recognize your need and the Lord as the source of all good things: “Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maidservant to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he has mercy upon us” (Psalm 123:2, ESV). The world offers various means of obtaining love, joy, and peace, but they are destined to disappoint. The believer understands that love, joy, and peace (and a myriad other fine gifts) are the direct result of his relationship with Christ (see Galatians 5:22–23).

See the world for what it is: a sin-filled place of desperate need. The darker the world is to us, the more clearly the light of Christ will stand out. It’s not hard to focus on a light in a darkened room. “We . . . have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19). Those who stay focused on Christ will find their perspective on worldly things changing. As Helen Lemmel says in her hymn, “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, / Look full in His wonderful face, / And the things of earth will grow strangely dim / In the light of His glory and grace.”