

Selfies with Jesus



Jeremy Dover

'The selfie is about ME, because I am the centre of the universe, aren't I?'

The 'selfie', or self-portrait photograph, is a reflection of our self-obsessed modern society. Wikipedia tells us "selfies are intended to present a flattering image of the person, especially to friends whom the photographer

expects to be supportive".

PSI Young writer Alison Barkley explained in her article, "The selfie stick, in my opinion, represents the great desire to define oneself today! It symbolises a vast yearning to 'capture' oneself for the sole purposes of projecting an idealised version to the outside world. A version of ourselves that will be adored and admonished for our beauty, or style, or intrepid adventures."

Would we take a selfie with Jesus?

Is your faith like taking a selfie with Jesus? That is, "I am the focus and Jesus is the celebrity that makes me look good." Do an assessment. Where is the focus of your faith and church? Is its central message about why God loves you so much because you are a lovely person? About why God is working hard to make all your dreams come true? If it is, then perhaps it is a little too much like taking selfies with Jesus.

The Bible storyline is focused on the return of God's Kingdom. Jesus proclaims early in Mark's gospel, "The Kingdom of God is near" (Mark chapter 1, verse 15). His salvation is about redeeming His people from their sins (Matthew chapter 1, verse 21) so He can be praised (Revelation chapter 5, verse 12). None of this focuses on us, but on Jesus. Often today the concept of salvation is couched in individual terms. But the Bible always explains

it in corporate terms: He saves His people, the Church. It's about Him, not me.

Even the common term "grace" points to Jesus, not us. Grace is getting favour while actually deserving something else. If we compare our deeds and thoughts against God's perfect standard and law we fall short (Romans chapter 3, verse 23). That is, we are "sinners." We deserve to be separate from God because of our rebellion. We are not the beautiful, good people our selfies make us out to be.

We are not the heroes of the Bible storyline. The Bible, however, explains that while we were still sinners Jesus sacrificed Himself in our place in the ultimate act of love (Romans chapter 5, verse 8). This is grace. We deserve death but Jesus gives us Life. Grace points to how amazing Jesus is, not how good we are.

Even the picture of heaven presented in Revelation shows all of creation around Jesus. And the angels worship Him for everything He has done. There is no "extra" worship saying, "Praise be to you Jesus for all you have done, and praise be to you also Jeremy for having the intellect to choose Jesus and giving Him your precious time." No! All praise goes to Jesus. So heaven is about Jesus, not about letting us play golf or take long walks on the beach or being able to sit and read a book in quiet.

His glory, not selfies

This is a counter-cultural view. Everything else in our society says we are the centre of the universe. We vote for political parties that offer us benefits. Our employment is about our own advancement. Even helping charities or doing a mission trip can be about "getting an experience." The challenge is to read the Bible in context of His Kingdom coming, not our own. The challenge is in making our churches focus on His glory, not about taking selfies with Him.

Check out some Bible verses for reflection, Mark chapter 10, verse 45 and Revelation chapter 5.

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Jeremy Dover's previous articles may be viewed at www.pressserviceinternational.org/jeremy-dover.html

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