

Proximity Delusion

Ready:

“For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?” --Mark 8:35-37

Set

I was sitting in the stands of a track and field meet with a first-time track attendee. I smiled as this football player got a glimpse into a sport new to him. “Wow,” he said, “she’s a lot taller than I expected!” He was referring to the athlete who dominated the distance competition. I can only imagine how many he might have heard similar statements, as many athletes do, about himself. From way in the stands athletes appear much smaller --- sometimes so small you can hold them in your hand. On the contrary, dynamic performances, close camera angles, highlight reels and social media posts can make athletes appear larger than life. When you see these guys in person you might think, “Hmm...you’re much shorter than I thought.” I call this phenomenon proximity delusion.

We can experience proximity delusion in our faith journey also. The closeness of the world, our athletic responsibilities and desires make their associated troubles and priorities appear so big and important. What we can see, touch, hear, taste and smell in this world easily block out the things of God which are considered foolish to those without His Spirit.

When you choose to see God up close, you see Him for the size, might, and power that He truly is. You can see that He is bigger than your challenges, strong enough to carry you through them, powerful enough to change them, but knowledgeable enough to know the best course of action to take. In contrast, if you keep God far off, He will always appear too small and incapable of meeting your desires and needs.

The psalmist writes in Psalm 16:8 CSB, “I always let the LORD guide me. Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.” The NIV translation reads, “I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With Him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.” (Psalm 16:8 NIV)

When you keep Jesus close in proper proximity, you may experience a change in perspective. Perhaps there are some things you need to do differently, behaviors that you need to change or decisions you need to make, maybe you need to change the way you do things both on and off the field of play.

Don't fall prey to proximity delusions. Keep the Lord near and distant bird's eye (stadium seating) view of everything else – challenges and desires alike. As John the Baptizer proclaimed, "The kingdom of heaven has come near" (Mark 1:15, Matthew 4:17, Matthew 3:2).

Go

1. What are the greatest challenges you face today?
2. Size God up to those challenges. In what ways is God greater?

Workout

Romans 1:20

Colossians 1:15

1 John 2:17

Zephaniah 1:14

Philippians 4:5-7

1 Corinthians 2: 6-14

Overtime

Lord, help me to keep you close with an accurate view of great you are. You are bigger than every challenge. No matter what I face, I am secure in you. Amen



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