

# 7. CAPTURED

**FOR I DECIDED TO KNOW NOTHING AMONG YOU BUT JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED.  
1 CORINTHIANS 2:2**

## Learning to Love God

In his excellent book *Jesus Mean and Wild*, author Mark Galli describes what happened when a group of Laotian refugees asked if they could become members of the church he was then through a study of Mark's Gospel. When Galli got to the passage in Mark 4 where Jesus calms the storm, he asked the refugees to talk about the "storms" in their lives—their problems, worries, and struggles. The people looked confused and puzzled. Finally, one of the Laotian men asked, "Do you mean that Jesus actually calmed the wind and sea in the middle of a storm?"

Galli thought the man was struggling to accept this over-the-top story, so he said: "Yes, but we should not get hung up on the details of the miracle. We should remember that Jesus can calm the storms in our lives." After another uncomfortable silence, another man spoke up: "Well, if Jesus calmed the wind and the waves, he must be a very powerful man!" The Laotians buzzed with excitement and worship. And while these newbie Christian refugees were having a transcendent experience with a Jesus they'd only just met, Galli realized he'd so taken Jesus for granted that he'd missed him altogether.

When the living, breathing Jesus is the center of everything in our life, fruit happens. That's just the way things work. We discover that we love what God loves, and good things grow in our soul. Out of that abundance we can give to others more generously. We don't have to spend all our energy trying to produce that fruit, anymore than a shriveled, neglected tree—dying from thirst—has to work to produce fruit once its roots have been watered and fertilized. We live out our calling in life organically, not through striving. Jesus promised "living water" for a reason—he knows we are created by God to live fruitful, purposeful lives, but we can't grow a thing if we don't know how to abide in Him. Abiding in Him means drinking deeply from His well of living water, and that water is like Miracle-Gro® for our God-given identity.

When Jesus becomes the consuming focus of our worship, we taste true freedom and purpose for the first time. Our burgeoning love for God helps us clearly understand His calling on our life, because worship has cleared away the fog. That's when Jesus' life and energy flows through us, transforming our life into a "moveable feast" that nourishes the hungry people who enter our orbit.

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## Exploration Questions

- When have you, like Rick, felt called into a deeper relationship with God—and what led to that?
- In one sentence, what does "following Jesus" mean to you?
- What impact, good or bad, has "striving" or "the tips-and-techniques of faith" had in your faith growth and development?
- What fruit in your life has appeared as you've grown closer to Jesus?