“Adhesiveness” is a huge issue in the world of technology today. Adhesiveness is the way that digital platforms keep us glued to their content. For example, if you watch a video on YouTube, or if you “like” a post on Facebook, you will be offered another video to watch or a post to read, and another one after that, and then another one after that. Websites gather your personal information, your likes and your dislikes, and they send “pop ups” to your screen. If you click on the pop up, they’ve piqued your interest and you’re hooked. Companies make their money from keeping you engaged, so they are always working to increase their adhesiveness.

Ayad Akhtar writes: “Behind the suggested offerings is a logic of emotional response. The technology is seeking your trigger, whatever drives you deeper and keeps you clicking...The longer we stick around” on YouTube, Facebook, Amazon, or a news app, “the deeper we scroll, the greater the yield of information, the more effective the influence.” Adhesiveness is everything. Online platforms are optimized to keep us glued, to keep us engaged. Which is kind of scary, isn’t it? Big business knows a lot more about us than we realize, and they want to know even more.

When AT&T acquired HBO, the CEO said to his employees, “We need hours a day.” What he meant was the hours a day that he wants customers glued to HBO. “I want more hours of engagement,” he said to them, admitting that hours are important for one simple reason: “Because you get more data and information about a customer.” HBO, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter are in a race to increase their adhesiveness. They want us to be stuck to them so that they can gain our data, our information, and our money. Big business wants to capture our eyes, our hours, and our hearts. Adhesiveness is central to business today, something we need to keep in mind every time we look at a screen.

**Jesus Wants Eyeballs.** But what about adhesive faith? Jesus desires the same type of engagement from us, but for much better reasons. We connect to Jesus through our eyes, our hours, and our engagement. In the world of digital marketing, success comes from getting people to look at your website. An “eyeball” is a visit to a site, so to get a lot of eyeballs means to get a lot of visits. Jesus wants your eyes on him, especially as he is revealed through Scripture. Paul writes that Jesus “is the image of the invisible God” (v. 15), meaning that if we want to see the face of God, we look to Jesus. If we want to understand the will of God, we listen to the words of Jesus. If we want to receive the guidance of God, we follow Jesus. If we want to feel the love of God, we move closer to Jesus.

Jesus should have “first place in everything,” according to Paul. In *everything*. “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (vv. 18-19). All our understandings of the Bible should be passed through the filter of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We should attempt to see the world through his eyes, understand the will of God as he did, walk the path that he walked, and love the people that he loved. Keep your eyes on Jesus, for he is the image of the invisible God.

**Jesus Wants Hours.** Jesus would probably agree with that HBO executive who said, “We need hours a day,” but not because he wants to obtain our data and information. Jesus desires hours of work done with honesty and integrity. Hours of attentiveness to family members and friends. Hours for worship and study and prayer and service. David Miller is a theologian and businessman who studies the ways that people practice their faith at work. He discovered that workers of all types, “whether data entry clerks or senior executives, are no longer content to leave their souls in the parking lot. Businesspeople today want to find moral meaning and purpose in their work.” The desire of such workers is “to live an integrated life, where faith teachings and workplace practices are aligned.”

The key, Miller finds, is to live according to a word found in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *avodah.* The root of the word means “work and worship,” as well as “service.” It holds together our desire to be well, to do well, and to do good. When we put hours into *avodah,* our work can earn us a living, while also honoring God and serving our neighbors. Hours devoted in *avodah* benefit us, our communities, and God’s creation. Jesus wants our eyes on the goal and our hours to be productive. He also wants our sweat equity in the project.

**Jesus Wants Engagement.** Christian faith is not a spectator sport, but a life of active worship and service. Jesus wants our faith to be stronger than epoxy glue, which happens when we make him “first place in everything” (v. 18). Paul encourages us to give thanks with joy to God who enables us “to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light” (v. 12). Our thanksgiving is expressed first in worship, because God “rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (vv. 13-14). The sequence is momentous: first God offers us a glorious inheritance, made possible through the rescue and redemption gained for us by Jesus, and by which we are forgiven forever. God engages us by bringing us into the kingdom of Jesus. We return this engagement through active thanksgiving.

We strengthen our connection through consistent Christian service, by acting as the hands and heart of Jesus in the world. This may include feeding the hungry and housing the homeless, as well as teaching children or mentoring teenagers. It may include donating a portion of our income to a charity or giving some time to help in our community. As we do these things, Paul predicts that we will be “made strong with all the strength that comes from [God’s] glorious power, [and] prepared to endure everything with patience” (v. 11). Paul assures us that such engagement does not lead to burnout, because we are promised strength and patience in the face of every challenge. When we turn to Jesus, the invisible God made visible, we join ourselves to the force that gives life and binds the galaxy together.

Stanford University is the site of a linear accelerator, a mighty two-mile long atom smasher. It is a great lever with which scientists try to pry the lid off the secrets of matter and discover what is in the miniature world of the atom, the neutron, and the proton. Linear accelerator scientists have discovered a complexity they never dreamed of, and they have found particles that they cannot even invent enough names for. But one thing they are consistently discovering is that there is some strange force that holds everything together. They do not know what to call it, and they do not know how to identify it. They talk generally about a kind of cosmic glue that holds things together. But here, in Paul’s letter, we learn the name of that universal force: His name is Jesus.

*Eyeballs, hours, engagement*. These are keys to the practice of adhesive faith. When we stick to Jesus in this way, we are given strength, endurance, and forgiveness. We remain connected to the one who shows us the face of God and holds all things together.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the living, powerful, and glorious gospel of Christ, which was planted in my heart by many faithful witnesses. I pray that I too may be a good and faithful servant and abide in Your love, day by day, in spirit and in truth. I pray that I may bring forth the precious fruit of faith, love, hope, and righteousness. Help me to grow in grace and in a knowledge of You, to Your praise and glory. In Jesus' name I pray, AMEN.

**Sources:**

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**Adhesive Faith**

Sunday, November 20, 2022 [Colossians 1:9-20](https://biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1%3a11-20&language=en&version=NRSVUE)

Federated Church, Fergus Falls, MN

Jesus Christ “is before all things,” says the apostle Paul to the Colossians, “and in him all things hold together” (1:17). When it comes to holding things together, Jesus is stickier than Super Glue. Stronger than Gorilla Glue. More lasting than Loctite Ultra Gel. Without Jesus, everything falls apart. Jesus is the glue. “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation,” says Paul, and “all things have been created through him and for him” (vv. 15-16). Jesus was part of the creation of the world, long before his birth in Bethlehem. As the eternal Son of God, he continues to live and hold everything together with a powerful bond. Jesus is all about adhesion.

Speaking of adhesion, did you hear about the guy who quit his job at the Super Glue factory? He got too attached to his coworkers. He couldn’t separate himself from his work. He was stuck in a rut. He didn’t want to adhere to the rules. Turns out he was spying for another glue factory: he was a real bonding agent. It was a sticky situation.

But seriously, Jesus is the glue that knits everything together. For his followers in Colossae, Jesus was much more than a Jewish rabbi. He was the invisible God made visible in flesh and blood. Pastor Rob Bell says that Jesus “was the ultimate exposing of what God has been up to all along.” What God hoped to achieve through Jesus was unity. “Unity,” says Bell. “Unity. To all things. God is putting the world back together, and God is doing this through Jesus.” Jesus is the adhesive agent, working to put a shattered world back together. Paul says that through Jesus, God is “pleased to reconcile to [God’s Self] all things” (v. 20). Through Jesus, God restores broken relationships between people and God, and between estranged persons. God is working for unity through Jesus, holding everything together.

Paul also says that Jesus “is the head of the body, the church” (v. 18). Jesus is stuck to us in the same way that a head is attached to a body, and Jesus wants us to be his hands and heart in the world. As people who are the body of Christ in the world today, our challenge is to take our cues from the One who is our head: to be responsive to Christ’s leading; to follow Jesus with great devotion; to give him “first place in everything” (v. 18). In other words, we should have adhesive faith.