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## In All Things...

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## In All Things...

### **Abstract**

"As Christians, we like Jesus - as long as it's our Jesus, the one we like best."

Introduction to *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/in-all-things/>

### **Keywords**

In All Things, God, questions and answers, creation

### **Disciplines**

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### **Comments**

*In All Things* is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service](#) at Dordt College.

# In All Things...

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 [inallthings.org/in-all-things/](http://inallthings.org/in-all-things/)

Neal DeRoo

There's a scene in the 2006 Will Ferrell movie *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby* in which Will Ferrell's character, Ricky Bobby, is saying grace before a meal. He addresses his prayer explicitly to "baby Jesus." After a few such invocations, his wife interrupts: "Hey, Sweetie, Jesus did grow up. You don't have to always call him baby. It's a bit odd and offputtin' to pray to a baby." Ricky Bobby's response gives us a better window into contemporary Christianity than I think we'd like to admit: "Look, I like the Christmas Jesus best, and I'm saying grace. When you say grace you can say it to grown-up Jesus, or teenage Jesus, or bearded Jesus or whoever you want."

As Christians, we like Jesus—as long as it's our Jesus, the one we like best. Maybe we like the 'historical' Jesus or 'love Jesus,' Shane Claiborne's 'homeless Jesus' or Mark Driscoll's tattooed, prize-fighter Jesus who has [the commitment to make someone bleed](#). Maybe our Jesus is someone else altogether, but whichever Jesus we like, that's the guy we'll love and worship—and only that one. We get uncomfortable when people start talking about Jesus any other way, and when we get uncomfortable we either lash out ("No real Christian could say that!") or we retreat to our own corner of the world (-wide-web) where everyone thinks like us and talks like us and likes our Jesus as much as we do, and where we can all see how silly that other Jesus would be: no way the real Jesus could be that way.

But the Jesus we get in the Bible is about as complex and complicated as a person can be. He refuses to judge the woman caught in adultery...but he also curses a fig tree because it has the audacity to not bear fruit out of season. He says he has come to turn son against father and brother against brother... and that he has come that we might have life to the full. He is love and judgment, peace and violence, comfort and critic. He is divine, immortal God...and a crying infant, a broken and bleeding man. He is a dead corpse...and a resurrected body, living eternally at the right hand of God.

The reason we see so many Jesuses in the Bible is because Jesus (even more than Paul) is indeed all things to all people. Not only was Jesus fully human, and so able to relate to all kinds of human conditions and temptations, but Jesus is also the firstborn of all creation (Col 1:15). There is nothing that exists that cannot, in some way, see itself in Jesus, for "all things were created by him and for him ... and in him all things hold together" (Col 1:16-17). Jesus is the key, not just to moral living, or human living, or eternal living, but to creation—to life—itself. Because of this, the writer of Romans can say that "everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory" (Romans 11:36, New Living Translation).

This is one simple idea that has profound consequences for how we live as disciples of Christ and as human beings. It throws wide the door of creation: "For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim 4:4-5). In principle, we can do everything and anything; as long as it is received with thanksgiving and consecrated by God's word and prayer, there is nothing that Christians cannot (or ought not) do.

Here at In All Things, we are firmly convicted by the claim that "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength" (Phil 4:13). We are equally convicted by the claim that "I can do all things [only] through Christ who gives me strength." We are here to explore what it might mean, not just to do anything and everything, but to do it through Christ and for Christ, because everything is ultimately of Christ. Christ cares

about sexual ethics and social justice, unborn babies and unwed mothers, ecology and economics—everything from A(rt) to Z(oology) is of Christ, and therefore should be done for Christ.

But seeing Christ in all things is easier said than done. We live in a world in which it can be very hard to see God at work in any meaningful way, a world in which pain, tears, death and destruction lead on the evening news and in our collective imaginations. We often find ourselves with more questions than answers, struggling to make sense of the God we so desperately want to believe in and the world we so stridently want to ignore (or make into something else, something better). We want it all to make sense and, even more, to feel right and good. But so often it doesn't, and we wonder whether the problem is with us, with the world...or with God. There are no easy answers or simple solutions to this—but I hope you'll join us as we struggle through this complex tangled mess together, freed by Christ to ask any question and explore every nook of creation so as to be drawn ever-deeper into a love for God and His world. Together, we hope to help each other learn to find Christ in all things in the hope that this may help all things find themselves in Christ.

In All Things is committed to a Christ who is bigger than human life, who stretches at least as wide as the cosmos. You might already be familiar with this Jesus, or you might have a ton of questions about him. In fact, if you are familiar with this Jesus than you probably have more questions about him than anyone else! If you have questions, send them our way and we'll try to find someone who can help you answer them. We will almost definitely have questions, and we'll send them your way, to see how you can help us wrestle through them. The task that lies before us, as a community, is to live in Christ in everything we do. This doesn't leave much "out of bounds" for Christian thought or action. Think of In All Things as a place where every question can be asked, where every conversation can occur, where everything and anything can be brought into the light of Christ, of whom, through whom, and for whom are all things. There is nothing we cannot ask—so where should we start?