

You Jesus & The Father: It's a Relationship, Not a Religion

Terry Williams

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This guide to fulfillment in Christ is presented in pulpit style, both forceful and urgent.

You Jesus & The Father by Terry Williams is a ninety-day guide to religious commitment, full of encouragement and instruction for Christians.

Williams counsels people of faith to let go of living life in a self-driven, self-focused way. Instead, he writes, they should learn to live in Christ, and experience the freedom and joy that come with that choice. Williams's message will be familiar to many Christians: we get in the way of our own goals and happiness, but God has a way for each of us to experience true fulfillment. All a person has to do is follow him.

But the text suggests that this isn't a message that many people fully embrace. *You Jesus & The Father* works to correct this. The book covers a variety of real-life topics, from dealing with finances to facing fear, as well as spiritual issues such as trusting Christ and living a devotional life. Its intention seems to be to help those who follow Christ do so more fully.

This book speaks most clearly to adult Christians who feel held up in life, and who want their beliefs to resonate more fully in their lives. Pages filled with supporting scripture bolster Williams's points and give the impression of biblical knowledge. The book's day-by-day structure mimics the daily life of faith. Still, at times it is unclear how these scheduled days flow together, or what, precisely, they're building toward.

The style of the book is very oratorical. The text includes rhetorical questions and participatory language, such as instructions to readers to write points down. At such moments, it is almost like Williams is writing from behind the pulpit to his readers in the pews. This preaching format may strike some as apt, but is sometimes off-putting.

The use of all caps for emphasis adds an aggressive edge to Williams's exhortations. He offers internal encouragement, but the tone sometimes seems more pushy than supportive. Williams's manner has this matter-of-fact quality from the beginning, where he emphasizes the urgency of his message: "You as a believer have to understand Jesus did not come to accomplish what he accomplished for us to be self-sufficient and live self-willed lives." Secure readers will be able to appreciate this, but it may alienate those who are still seeking.

The book's editorial quirks, including the missing comma in its title, and page layout are a point of distraction. Many sentences are overly wordy. Visually, the pages look crowded, and aren't balanced between text and white space. At two sentences long, the back-cover copy does not impart a full sense of the book's contents, and front matter does not clarify this much, either. It is apparent from the start that the volume is about Christian faith, but its particulars have to be worked out more slowly.

You Jesus & The Father pushes Christians to move away from self-focused living and follow Christ fully.

MELISSA WUSKE (December 21, 2015)

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