

Preparation For The Journey

The Power of Focus

The study of focus is intended to help us see things through the eyes of Christ. It is a powerful tool for keeping us on the path we need to be on in order to accomplish our goal of spiritual development. The purpose and impact of focusing are broad, yet very effective in directing our thoughts and actions in everything we do. Let's take a look at a few of the reasons why proper focus is a necessity in the life of the believer.

In our study on the "Five Deadly Fears," we read about Moses offering God his reasons for not wanting to go along with God's plan. We also read about God's response to those reasons; it is in those responses that we find **three specific goals** that God had for Moses' focus. First, God was trying to get Moses' eyes off of himself and his own limitations. Secondly, God was attempting to get Moses' eyes off of the people and circumstances that posed a threat to him and his mission. Thirdly, God was attempting to get Moses to direct his eyes towards Him and His ability. With these three things accomplished, Moses became one of the greatest leaders ever to live.

Another point to be made here is that **meditation** is in fact the **act of focusing**. To fully understand focus, we must first understand what focusing is. **Focusing deals with our thoughts**. So what is thinking? In the most elementary terms, we as human beings think in two specific ways, visual and audible (known as internal dialogue). I know the term **visualization** is a buzz word that raises a red flag for many; however, the fact is that visualization is how God made us and how He designed us to think. If we look to the world of occults, we see where visualization is often presented as a something separate from God and his intent. But remember this—**Satan has no creative ability** and, therefore, if he counterfeits something, the real thing must exist. I do not believe that just because the enemy steals a concept or a word from the church that we should simply abandon it as inapplicable to the body of Christ. Visualization is a legitimate form of thinking and meditating. If it makes you more comfortable, exchange the word visualization with **imagination**.

What are we talking about here? We are talking about **thinking in pictures**. It is how we see ourselves, our God, the world around us, our past, and our future, in our own mind. The effect this form of thinking has on us is

very powerful indeed, as I will share with you in this lesson. The second way of thinking is **internal dialogue**. This is **what we say to ourselves**. It is the most honest form of communication we have. We must learn to pay close attention to the things we say to ourselves in order that we may better understand and control the way we are thinking. **Bringing these two ways of thought into agreement with each other is what focusing is all about**. Bringing them into agreement with the word of God is what *proper* focus is all about. (2Corth. 10:5)

What you focus on will determine the actions you take. In order to be a doer the Word, you must first develop the Word in yourself and then meditate on it. This is because meditation is the act of focusing, and if you get the word of God in you and you meditate on it—meaning you are getting your visual and auditory ways of thinking in agreement with the word of God—you are then able to do what the word is teaching you. Why? Because focus determines the direction you will go and the actions you will take.

When people are learning to drive racecars, one of the first things they are taught is that if ever they go into a skid and are heading for a wall, don't look at the wall. Their best chance of avoiding the wall is to **look at where they want to go and not at where they are going**. This is true in our walk with God. If we focus on where we want to go, if our meditation is on God's word and His will for our lives, we are going to increase our chances of going in that direction and accomplishing what God desires for us. However, if we are reading the Bible, seeing ourselves doing and becoming what the word is showing us, but saying to ourselves *that could never happen to me*, or *I just can't do it*, then we are what the Bible calls **double minded** and we should not think that we will receive anything from the Lord. (James 1:7-8) Likewise, if our minds are on fleshly things but we are talking outwardly about the things of God, we again are being double minded. Bringing our thoughts into agreement with the word of God is the secret to being able to do the Word and to accomplishing the things God has prepared for us.

Focusing not only enables us to bring our thoughts into line with the scriptures, but it also acts as a **filter to thoughts that we don't want**. This doesn't mean that you won't have some unwanted or random thoughts during your times of meditation, but what it does mean is that you will have the ability to expel them from your mind if you continue to maintain your focus. The purpose of these irrelevant and/or incongruent thoughts is to break your focus and to keep you from taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Corth. 10:5). Thoughts that are in contrast to the word of God are not your friends, they are your enemy, out to destroy any possibility of your accomplishing the things of God, and keeping you from experiencing the success spoken of in Joshua 1:8.

One last point before we begin the study. You may be asking the question, *what about the Holy Spirit?* As we begin to get the word in us and yield our will to God, that is when the Holy Spirit begins to direct us as believers. The leadership of the Holy Spirit is an *if-you-ill-I-will* proposition. The Bible says if you draw nigh to God, He will draw nigh to you; we have a responsibility in our quest for spiritual growth. Paul said in Romans 7:25, that “with the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin”. We are also told in Romans 12:2, to renew our minds, if we do our part God is faithful to do His.

Three Goals of Proper Focus

1. GET YOUR EYES... Off Yourself / Limitations

“...who am I that I should go...” Exodus 3:11

“...I will be with you...” Exodus 3:12

2. GET YOUR EYES... Off Circumstances / Other people

“...I am not eloquent...I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” Exodus 4:10

“...who made man’s mouth...” Exodus 4:11

3. GET YOUR EYES... On God & His Ability

“...but suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, the Lord has not appeared to you.” Exodus 4:1

I will do miracles, signs and wonders through you. Exodus 4:2-9
(paraphrased)

Keys to Proper Focusing

1.) Focus on the Positive deal with the Negative

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice.”

Philippians 4:4 (NKJ)

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true,
...noble...just...pure...lovely...of good report, if there is any virtue and if
there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.”

Philippians 4:8 (NKJ)

“All scripture is given by God and is useful for teaching, for showing
people what is wrong in their lives, for correcting faults and for teaching
how to live right.”

2 Timothy 3:16 (NCV)

2.) Focus on God’s Greatness and Power

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we
ask or think, according to the power that works in us,”

Ephesians 3:20 (NKJ)

“...He holds everything together with His powerful word...”

Hebrews 1:3 (NCV)

“...in the beginning you made the earth, and your hands made the skies.

Hebrews 1:10 (NCV)

3.) Focus on God’s Desire & Willingness To Bless You

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to
prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory
by Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:19 (NKJ)

“And I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find;
knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and
he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened to him”

Luke 11:9-10 (NKJ)

4.) Focus on giving Thanks for His Blessings

“No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God’s will for
you who belong to Christ Jesus.”

1Thessalonians 5:18 (LB)

“It is good to say thank you to the Lord...every morning tell him, ‘thank you for your kindness,’ and every evening rejoice in all His faithfulness.”

Psalm 92:1-2 (LB)

“...let us please God by serving Him with thankful hearts and with holy fear and awe.”

Hebrews 12:28 (LB)

Helpful Hint

One very helpful way to gain or regain your focus is to ask questions. Your brain is a bio-computer, and its primary function is to make constant decisions and answer questions. It is a problem solving entity. Your mind can be likened to the program that your bio-computer runs, which is why we are to renew our minds with the word of God. When you face a problem or a challenge in your life, what you are focusing on in that situation will determine the way your brain looks at the problem and decides how to solve it. Since our brain's function is to solve problems, and it solves those problems with the information that we are giving it by way of what we are focusing on at that moment, we can control the direction of that process by asking specific questions. When you ask questions like, “why did I do such a stupid thing?” or “why am I so stupid?”, your questions filter your thought process, in a way to remove any information that would prevent your brain from answering the question. If you ask “why am I so stupid?” the question filters out anything that would interfere with answering your question, and telling you why you are so stupid. If however, you ask questions like, “what is positive about this situation?” or “how does this situation compare to the greatness and power of God?” or “How can God receive glory in this situation?” or finally “what does the Bible say about this situation, and what would God have me do about it?” If these were the type of questions you were to ask, instantly your focus is going to turn toward God and His abilities, and you are going to enter into a productive course of action and decision. Asking good questions is the fastest way to change your focus and to get you to see things through the eyes of Christ.