

24 HOURS:

Part 4: Staying Focused

Jesus modeled for you the necessity of maintaining a vital link with God in giving life meaning.

He took this to the next step by making sure His daily activities were focused on the priorities in life that the Father had planned for Him.

This was one of the things He did to honor and praise His Heavenly Father with His life.

Mark 1:38-39

38 But he replied, "We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too, because that is why I came." 39 So he traveled throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and expelling demons from many people.

Another of the important things Jesus did to keep meaning in His life was to "Stay Focused" on what the Father purposed and planned for His life.

Before you begin:

- 1. Do you have an idea what God's plan is for your life?
- 2. Does your daily life reflect a focus on God's plan?
- 3. If one refuses to stay focused, how far into accomplishing God's purpose can he get?

Monday:

Finding Your Focus

1. Symptoms of being unfocused. Proverbs 28:19

¹⁹ *Hard workers have plenty of food; playing around brings poverty.*

- a. What results can you expect if you "play around"? (We might call it procrastination.)

- b. Procrastination generally results in work and projects left incomplete. Of what value are projects left incomplete?

- c. What do you think prompts one to make excuses? What do excuses contribute to the completion of a project?

2. Jesus is your model for staying focused. Mark 1:39

³⁹ *So he traveled throughout the province of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues*

- a. How did "discipline" make it possible for Jesus to accomplish His goal and calling? (Mark 1:39a)

 - b. What would have happened to Jesus' plan to teach in all the villages of Galilee, if He had not made responsible choices?

 - c. Jesus had a positive approach. He did not use the word "if". What kind of spirit does God put in us as we make commitments to serve Him? 2 Timothy 1:7-8
- ⁷ *For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. ⁸ So you must never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord.*

Tuesday:

Maintaining Your Focus

Ephesians 4:1-3

¹ *In light of all this, here's what I want you to do. While I'm locked up here, a prisoner for the Master, I want you to get out there and walk—better yet, run!—on the road God called you to travel. I don't want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don't want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes nowhere. ² And mark that you do this with humility and discipline—not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, ³ alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences.*

Paul has challenged the believers at Ephesus to stay focused on their spiritual growth. Consider four aspects of spiritual growth.

1. Spiritual growth is intentional. Philippians 2:12-13

¹² *Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. ¹³ For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him.*

- a. What are you to "intentionally" put into action? (Verse 12)

- b. Who is it whom you are intentionally allowing to work in you to bring salvation and bring you to spiritual maturity? (Verse 13)

2. Spiritual growth is practical. Titus 2:11-14

¹¹ *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

- a. The practical part of salvation not only changes our outward behavior but also changes our inward desires. Our inward desires are changed from desiring things that cannot go with us to heaven to those things that are eternal and will go with us beyond the grave. On what are you expending the majority of your time and energy?

- b. Which of these things can you take to heaven with you? Which ones do you need to ask Christ to help you desire less and which ones do you need to ask Him to help you desire more?
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Wednesday:

3. Spiritual growth is a process. Ephesians 4:13

¹³And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature.

- a. Paul compares the spiritual growth "process" to that of one who is physically growing taller and taller each day. How does your spiritual height compare to Christ's spiritual height? Are you taller today than you were yesterday?
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- b. As your spiritual stature gets closer and closer to that of Christ then your life will reflect more completely and clearly His image. What kind of picture of Christ are others seeing as they look at your life?
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4. Spiritual maturity is demonstrated more by behavior than belief. James 2:18

¹⁸Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." I say, "I can't see your faith if you don't have good deeds, but I will show you my faith through my good deeds."

- a. Men are not divided into thinkers and actors because every action began with a thought. No action ever happened that was not first conceived as a thought. Based on this concept, why is it important that you mature your beliefs and guard carefully what you allow to be the source of your beliefs?
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- b. What are several actions of ministry in which you are involved and what beliefs stimulate your desire to serve in these ministries?
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Thursday:

Spiritual Maturity Assessment

Ephesians 4:14-15

¹⁴Then we will no longer be like children, forever changing our minds about what we believe because someone has told us something different or because someone has cleverly lied to us and made the lie sound like the truth.

¹⁵Instead, we will hold to the truth in love, becoming more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

1. **Would you say you depend more on your own skills, knowledge, and experience or do you depend on your intimate daily walk with Christ?**
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2. **Do you find it easy and natural to consider others before you consider you own wants and needs? What have you done recently to invest your time and energy in the needs of someone else?**
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3. **How does recognizing that God the creator of the universe has a special interest in you help you to want to give Him a place of importance in your daily life?**
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4. **What thoughts and actions have you noticed changing to be more like Christ and less like the world?**
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Turning Point . . .

Friday:

Extending Your Focus

As spiritual maturity becomes more and more a reality, certain behaviors will become more natural and require less deliberate thought. What are you doing to extend your focus toward . . .

1. –genuine compassion for the needs of others? Matthew 9:35-36

³⁵Then Jesus made a circuit of all the towns and villages. He taught in their meeting places, reported kingdom news, and healed their diseased bodies, healed their bruised and hurt lives. ³⁶When he looked out over the crowds, his heart broke. So confused and aimless they were, like sheep with no shepherd.

- a. **Was Jesus just teaching the people or was He also taking actions to become personally involved in their lives and needs?**
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- b. **What are you doing to connect with others after you have taught them about God's love?**
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2. – Being a source of encouragement.

Jesus was concerned that the people did not know where to go next or what to do next. Hebrews 3:13

¹³You must warn each other every day, as long as it is called "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.

- a. **What did He do to be like a "Shepherd" to them?**
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- b. **What can you do this week to help another person find encouragement for his or her life?**
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3. – Allowing God to change you from the inside out. Romans 12:1-2

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- a. **Where do you look for a role model? _____**
- b. **What changes have you experienced in the control center of your life?**
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