

24 HOURS:

Part 4: Staying Focused

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A popular opinion today is that twenty-four hours doesn't seem to last as long as it used to. Jobs, family and other commitments may consume up to 20 hours per day. Even if we increase the time that we dedicate to getting things done, it seems that we achieve less and less. Our response is to believe that even the simplest tasks cannot be completed in just one day, and depleting our days of meaning.

But what if we could fill our days with meaning...enough that we could accomplish the impossible within one day? Many have speculated if this notion is truly possible, and if so, how it could impact our world.

Jesus has already shown us how in a 24 hour period, we can literally change the WORLD, through living a life of MEANING.

Jesus was able to attach meaning to each day through a daily commitment to:

- His priorities – passion, people and purpose
- His investments and the return He received from them.
- Spending quality time alone in the presence of God.

Another aspect of Jesus' life of meaning was His commitment to staying focused on His purpose for living.

Mark 1:35-39 *While it was still night, way before dawn, he got up and went out to a secluded spot and prayed. Simon and those with him went looking for him. They found him and said, "Everybody's looking for you." 38-39 Jesus said, "Let's go to the rest of the villages so I can preach there also. This is why I've come." He went to their meeting places all through Galilee, preaching and throwing out the demons.*

Finding Your Focus

Without focus, life can quickly become an exercise of random acts and events driven by circumstances.

As a result, our lives become exceedingly tiring, with nothing to show for in the way of accomplishments at the end of the day.

Proverbs 6:6-11 *Go watch the ants, you lazy person.*

Watch what they do and be wise.

*7 Ants have no commander,
no leader or ruler,*

*8 but they store up food in the summer
and gather their supplies at harvest.*

*9 How long will you lie there, you lazy person?
When will you get up from sleeping?*

*10 You sleep a little; you take a nap.
You fold your hands and lie down to rest.*

*11 So you will be as poor as if you had been robbed;
you will have as little as if you had been held up.*

A lack of focus can result in...

...procrastination

...an inability to finish things

...excuses

...dissatisfaction

Jesus' example of being focused resulted in:

- observed discipline
- consistent responsible choices
- a proactive approach to daily challenges

Maintaining Your Focus

A daily commitment to maintaining our focus on our life's purpose is the path to spiritual maturity.

Ephesians 4:1-3 *"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. 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, alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences."*

Spiritual growth is:

1. intentional

Philippians 2:12-13 *"Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. 13 For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him."*

2. practical

Titus 2:12-13

12 We're being shown how to turn our backs on a godless, indulgent life, and how to take on a God-filled, God-honoring life. This new life is starting right now, 13 and is whetting our appetites for the glorious day when our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, appears.

3. a process

Ephesians 4:13 *"This work must continue until we are all joined together in the same faith and in the same knowledge of the Son of God. We must become like a mature person, growing until we become like Christ and have his perfection."*

4. demonstrated more by behavior than belief

James 2:18 *"Someone might say, "You have faith, but I have deeds." Show me your faith without doing anything, and I will show you my faith by what I do."*

As we mature in our personal relationship with God, we...

...depend more on our intimate, day-to-day relationship with Him.

...shift our attention from ourselves to others.

...get a firm understanding of the greatness of God.

...see our thoughts and actions becoming more like Christ's.

Ephesians 4:14-15 *Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.*

Extending Your Focus

Once our daily focus on our life's purpose becomes engrained in our behavior, we can extend our focus toward:

- genuine compassion for the needs of others

Matthew 9:35-36 *Then 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. When he looked out over the crowds, his heart broke. So confused and aimless they were, like sheep with no shepherd.*

- being a source of encouragement.

Hebrews 3:13 *But encourage each other every day while it is "today." Help each other so none of you will become hardened because sin has tricked you.*

Hebrews 10:24-25 ²⁴ *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

- allowing God to change us from the inside out.

Romans 12:1-2 *"So brothers and sisters, since God has shown us great mercy, I beg you to offer your lives as a living sacrifice to him. Your offering must be only for God and pleasing to him, which is the spiritual way for you to worship. 2 Do not be shaped by this world; instead be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you; you will know what is good and pleasing to him and what is perfect."*

The Turning Point...

The foundation of a commitment to living a life of meaning is shaped by our willingness to stay focused on our life's purpose.

Each day of our lives that we continue to focus on God's Will for our lives brings glory to Him as we bless others.