

STAY FOCUSED KEEP YOUR FOCUS

Numbers 33:50-56

Trust God,
Tell the Truth
Keep your Promises
Stay Focused

Most of you know I enjoy the outdoors

Almost any kind of hunting
Because I love being in the outdoors.
During this falls hunting season. I read that the
highway patrol had picked up out of our road ditches more than 3000 deer.
I thought why should all those licensed drivers have the fun.
So I renewed my drivers license.
Not really I bought an east river deer license.

The first day I hunted I got out my 243 with a nice scope.
I had decided that I would first stop somewhere and sight in my scope.
Make sure that it was right on target.
At about 2:00 I arrived at the Sperry farm.
Only to discover a hugh buck standing out 200 yards in the field.
Now its not often you see a buck standing in the daytime.
And especially at 2:00 in the afternoon.
I pulled into the field
Got out of the car.
Heart beating.
Sighted my scope in on him.
I shot
He never moved.
I shot three more time
Never touched him.
Later when I sighted in my rifle I discovered the scope was
14 inches off at 30 yards.

Does FOCUS MAKE A DIFFERNCE IN OUR LIVES.

Ask any person here today who wears glasses if focus makes a difference?
We get our annual vision check up and when the new prescription is applied.
Wow---we can see.
Suddenly our mind doesn't have to think about focusing,
And our world gets a lot easier to navigate.

That is true in all areas of our lives.
That was true for the Israelites
When they were about to enter the promised land.
Stay focused.

Numbers 33:51-56 God said: “Speak to the Israelites and say to them. When you cross the Jordan into Canaan, drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places. Take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given you the land to possess.

Notice God is saying that if we are to stay focused

We must remove the things that distract us.

If we don't--- notice what this next verses say:

But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. And then I will do to you what I plan to do to them.
Numbers 33:55

they will become Barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides.

Are you living a focused life?

Or have you found you are being distracted by the good life.

I. WHAT DISTRACTS US FROM OUR FOCUS?

1. PEOPLE CAN DISTRACT US.

Numbers 33:51-56 “Speak to the Israelites and say to them. When you cross the Jordan into Canaan, drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you.

For the Israelites it was people.

Bad people.

Sinful people.

Busybody people.

Sometimes good, well- meaning people distract you from the best in life.

Martin Buber, a Jewish theologian once wrote.

In the day of judgment, the Lord will not ask me,

Why were you not more like Moses or Elijah,?

Rather the Lord will ask me, “Why were you not more like Martin Buber

Children or grandchildren are great distracters.

Little Johnny went home and said to his father.

Remember dad the \$20 you promised for a good report card.

Well, good news. I save you \$20.

Friends can distract us.

How many of you teenagers have come home late

Because you got distracted by your friends.

Missed your curfew. Maybe even got grounded.

People distract us even from God.

2. MONEY AND POSSESSION CAN DISTRACT US.

In the Angles Sunday school class last week we saw how Achan got distracted from God's focus for Jericho.

God said:

Joshua 6:17 The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the Lord. But keep away from the devoted things so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. Joshua 6:17-18

But Achan took some gold , silver and beautiful robe.

God punished the people of Israel

And they were defeated.

Until they had uncovered Achan and stoned him, his family, and all his household.

When the Shrine Circus comes to town do you,

Ever wonder how a lion trainer can go

into a cage of lions with only a whip and a stool?

He points the legs of the stool at the lions because

it has been discovered that this confuses them.

In order for a lion to pounce, it has to focus on one point.

When it sees 3 legs in front, it loses focus.

This paralyzes the lion and it becomes tame.

So, without a clear focus, we are incapacitated and we lose our passion.

3. SIN CAN DISTRACT US.

Destroy all their high places. "Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places." Numbers 33:51-56

Most of these high places were simply brothels.

Where the temple prostitutes dwelt.

And the young Israelite men whose hormones were running full tilt

Would have got caught up in that sexual immorality and debauchery and

Would have been let into idolatry and lost their souls.

It happened later on in another city.

We have all heard the cliché

When in Rome do what the Roman do.

What done in VEGAS stays in VEGAS.

My Cousin is the county nurse in Las Vegas.

He is the one who is in charge of all the free health clinics

He is responsible for tracing down sexually transmitted diseases.

He trying to get the logo change.

Because what is done in Vegan doesn't always stay in Vegas.

4. DEATH CAN DISTRACT US.

We lose a loved one and we are completely thrown out of focus,

Out of kilter. All of life takes on a different slant.

And it can be even life threatening.

It takes time and great energy to restore some sense of equilibrium.

5. EVEN OUR DREAMS CAN DISTRACT US:

Ever daydream in school.

We all have.

The math teacher saw that little Johnny was daydreaming during math class.

She called on him and said, "Johnny! What are 2 and 4 and 28 and 44?"

Little Johnny quickly replied, "NBC, CBS, HBO and the Cartoon Network!"

Hebrew writes says we must get rid of everything that distracts, entangles, hinders us.

(((Heb 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.)))

BECAUSE THERE IS GREAT CONSEQUENCES

But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. And then I will do to you what I plan to do to them. Numbers 33:55-56

The question is :

II. HOW DO WE KEEP OUR FOCUS?

1. KEEP YOU EYE ON FINISH LINE

Hebrews 3:1-6

Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

Today is UMW Sunday

We are honoring all our Methodist women.

Do you know why the UMW has been so successful?

Ever since their beginning in both the Methodist church and the EUB Church

They have kept their eye on their goal: **MISSIONS.**

They led a struggle for human rights and social justice.

They founded the early missionary societies

and helped to change the lives of women and girls in foreign lands

They incorporated the values of home and family

And addressed issues of poverty, child labor, immigration,

migrant labor, family life, racial discrimination,

full clergy rights for women, and many other social ills of the day..

Their aim from the beginning has been one of mission and service.

That focus has enabled them for more than a century

To be a vital Christian witness and continue to influence the church and the world today.

How do we stay focused:

We choose a goal and then we

2. PLAN—we plan our life.

DON'T JUST LET IT HAPPEN.

What do you want to become?

What do you want to do with your life?

When we have a plan in place.

Then our mind and will, spirit and even our subconscious

Will "work on" it in our sleep.

KEEP OUR FOCUS BY.

3. PRIORITIZE YOUR PLAN.

Of the things you must do each day:

Make a list and Prioritize the list.

identify the 5 things that are most important to be completed that day.

Start with the most difficult.

These are the things that will make you a good mother today.

These are the thing that will make you a good student today. A Good father,

A Good employee. A good Christian.

Look at Paul priority list for his focus.

Philippians 4:8-9 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-- think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me, put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:8-9

4. VISUALIZE YOUR RESULTS.

Don't let the moment distract you from the desired results of your day.

Visualizing your goal will keep you focused.

Philippians 3:14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Goals provide a compass for your efforts.

I love this story about getting results.

When a young announcer was raising funds on a local public television station, a woman called in and told the volunteer operator she would donate a hundred dollars if the announcer would shave off his beard. He agreed to help the cause and returned to work clean-shaven. The following day, the check arrived from his mother.

5. GATHER A SUPPORT GROUP.

It's a lot easier to keep at something when you work with others.

Athletes don't get medals and trophies for training hard;
 they only get them for winning in competition.
 And usually this only comes by discipline and training.
 It's easy to start something difficult, but not so easy to finish,
 But it helps when we have a coach or teammates.

Why is it that Super Bowl winners make it back to play off in another super bowl
 And the loser almost never do?
 Its because they stay focused on the hype and the excitement
 and the wonderful joy it is of being super bowl winner.
 It's the team spirit, that instills in them the drive to come back.

That's why most of you who started in Carols Heart and Soul Aerobics class
 are still in it and exercising,
 You would have quit a long time ago
 if you had been doing it alone, at home with a VCR tape.

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. Hebrews 10:25

6. REMEMBER THE LARGER PICTURE.

Keep an eternal focus and you can and will finish the job.

2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. II Timothy 4: 7-8

Unlike the popular song Paul did it God's way.

Paul had an eternal perspective.

He remembered the larger picture.

HE STAYED FOCUSED.

What he discovered was that

III. STAYING FOCUSED WILL ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE.

You're not splinting your energies in competitive ways.

You doing what need to be done.

Like a flower growing in the sun.

You will bloom.

Someone might say to Paul,

“You don't know the kind of week I've had.”

Or “you don't know what kind of life I'm having.”

In torture

Shipwreck

Whippings

Beatings.

Severe stoning,

Left for dead.----HE CALLS THEM: **LIGHT AND MOMENTARY TROUBLES –**

Paul had an amazing ability to look past the physical to the spiritual.

To weigh it out against its eternal value.

That energized his life and even raised him from the dead rock pile.

That is exactly what happened to a Pakistani Teenager.

Diana grew up in a strict Islamic family in Pakistan.

Her life was pretty typical until she met Mary who was a Christian.

Now Diana is also a Christian and on the run.

When Diana's family learned that she had become a Christian,

they repeatedly beat her and insisted she return to Islam.

But Diana refused. She was then forced to a local canal

where her uncle put a pistol to her head and gave her one last chance

to return to Islam. Diana replied, "You can kill me if you want. I will not leave Christ."

It was then that Diana's uncle noticed an extremely poisonous black cobra swimming in the canal. Believing he could escape any prosecution for his niece's death,

he threw her into the path of the cobra.

He also knew she could not swim.

Diana miraculously escaped from the canal and is in hiding today.

She is a new Christian but has already learned what it means to suffer for Christ.

She said recently "Jesus was crucified for us. Can we not endure some of the same for Him?"

DO YOU HAVE THAT KIND OF FOCUS????

Our focus in life must always be tied to the eternal.

Knowing that not even death can destroy or discourage us.

Paul writes: Now we know that if this earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. II Corinthians 5:1

When we stay focused we are energized.

God builds us up.

Isaiah 40:29-31 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. ...They who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

How do we complete, energize and fulfill our lives in Christ.

We stay focused.

And we investing our lives in the lives of others.

We become a prayer warriors; Sunday school Teachers;

student mentor, Stephen minister, bus driver,

A volunteer meal provider, a servant helper in the church.

God energizes and infuses our lives with the joy of his kingdom.

Will you check your focus!

So we do not miss out on God's goal and purpose for our lives.