

Spiritual Concentration

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Introduction: What Are You Focused on?

- A. "Life consists of what we pay attention to!"
 - 1. If you were to give an account of how you spent the last few months, what you remember about it, what would you say?
 - 2. Our answer is very revealing as to what our life has been about (e.g., work, school, children, hobbies, TV/movies, games, novels, material things).
- B. How much *spiritual* concentration do you have in your life?
 - 1. Can you recall time you spent with God in prayer?
 - 2. Your personal study and meditation on the word of God?
 - 3. The good deeds that God commanded you to do?
 - 4. Your daily walk with the Lord?
- C. No matter how busy life gets, we must not lose our spiritual focus.
 - 1. Satan, through worldly means, will do his best to distract us from God and doing His will.
 - 2. Spiritual concentration is a must, if we are to live a life of faithfulness.

I. The Christian Life Requires a Spiritual Focus.

- A. To be faithful to the end, we must continually look to Jesus (**Heb. 12:1-3**).
- B. A focus on the pathway of truth (**Prov 4:25-27**).
- C. Christians are to keep their eyes on the unseen goal of Heaven (**2 Cor 4:16-18**).

II. Distractions, Distractions, Distractions!

- A. There are many responsibilities we have that constantly grab our attention.
 - 1. Work, household chores, bills, needs of our children, etc.
 - 2. While many of our responsibilities can fit into the will of God, we can easily take our focus off of God while we do them (**Col. 3:23**).
- B. The world does everything it is power to distract us from God.
 - 1. There is a great temptation to "*love the world*" and all the things in it which will take our focus off of what is truly important (**1 John 2:15-17**).
 - 2. We must beware of Satan's schemes to pull us away from God through worldly means (entertainment, politics, possessions, pleasure, media, etc.).
- C. Most people give more attention to material things than their own souls!
 - 1. Living in a materialistic society can take its toll upon our heart if we do not beware of its enticements (**Luke 12:15**)
 - 2. If our focus is upon our material possessions to the neglect of our relationship to God, our life *does* consist of the things we possess!

III. What Spiritual Concentration Requires.

- A. "*Take every thought captive*" (i.e., mental obedience) (**2 Cor. 10:3-5**).
 - 1. Many people entertain any and every thought that comes their way, even those that negatively affect the quality of their day.
 - 2. Make your mind do what *you* want (obey Christ), rather than letting it do what it wants (e.g., wander, daydream, be distracted, evil desires).
 - 3. We *choose* to think on that which is right, pure, and good (**Phil. 4:8**).

- B. Be single-minded (walk by faith)
 - 1. Often, a lack of spiritual focus in life is a lack of faith (**James 1:5-8**).
 - a. Like the “*double-minded man*” who allows his emotions or the world to cloud his judgment and cause him to doubt in God.
 - 2. To walk by faith, we must have a firm foundation of truth in our hearts so we will not be distracted by our feelings or the many opinions of others.
 - 3. This requires a commitment to prayer and Bible study (**Eph. 5:15-17**).
- C. Constantly remind yourself of your spiritual goals.
 - 1. The Christian must prioritize to put first things first (**Mat. 6:33**)
 - 2. Maintain a clear plan each day of what you hope to achieve for God; if you are confused about this, you may not accomplish much of anything!
 - 3. People who quit are those who have lost sight of their goals (**Col 3:1-2**).
 - 4. Take your spiritual goals to God in prayer each day (**2 Thes. 1:11-12**).
 - 5. Meditation upon God’s word and Scripture memorization are also ways to keep your spiritual concentration throughout life (**Ps. 119:33-40**).
- D. Practice
 - 1. It can be hard to maintain our spiritual focus in the midst of distractions (e.g., TV / radio, email, solicitors, phone calls, children, persecution, etc.).
 - 2. Sometimes we allow distractions to train our way of thinking; to easily lose our concentration at “the drop of a hat.”
 - 3. Spiritual concentration is a skill that must be exercised (**1 Tim. 4:7-8**).
 - 4. It will require patience and persistence to overcome the distractions and our tendency to give up (**Heb. 6:11-12**).
 - 5. Don’t abandon a spiritual duty the minute it becomes too challenging; in time, the spiritual focus will become stronger and more consistent in life (e.g., prayer, Bible study, evangelism, spiritual training of children).
- E. Be zealously committed
 - 1. As the saying goes “If your heart is not in it, your head won’t be either!”
 - 2. If you care enough about the results, you will be enthusiastic, you will be focused! (e.g., teaching, good deed of service, learning the truth).
 - 3. The interest we show an activity makes all the difference in the kind of effort we put forth in the works we do for God (**Titus 2:11-14**).
 - 4. Zeal is essential to having the right attitude in all we do (**Rev. 3:14-19**).
- F. Mindfully “*make the most of your time*” (**Eph. 5:16**).
 - 1. Christians especially should know that we have no time to lose!
 - 2. As long as we live on earth, there is much work to be done (**Phil 1:24**).
 - 3. We use time wisely in preparing for the Lord’s return (**Rom 13:10-14**).
 - 4. Knowing that every moment of time is precious and given by God, we will concentrate all the more on that which is spiritual each day.

Conclusion: Maintain Your Spiritual Concentration. Your Eternal Future depends on it! (Ephesians 1:18).