

Where is your focus?

I recently read an article that was talking about woodpeckers, that they have hearing that is so acute that they can hear bugs moving inside trees when they fly by. This writer likened that to his childhood thoughts of superman's super powers and asked, "How do they figure out what to listen to, pay attention to?" He concluded that he wasn't sure about superman, but the woodpecker must pay attention to the bugs moving in the trees because their lives depended on their finding them as food.

God has given us so many gifts, so many blessings, so much evidence all around us that points to who He is and how much He loves and cares for us. In Matthew 10 and Luke 12 Jesus shares how much we are cared for by our loving God, even using a bird illustration, from Luke 12:6-7 *"Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."*

If we are honest though, there are times that the very blessings of our Father's love can get in the way of the Father. How easy it is for us to focus on the food we eat, the house we live in, the clothes we wear, the job we have, the families we love; even with recognition that they are gifts from God. Good gifts, good blessings, but they can become the focus. It also seems that when the blessings aren't exactly what we would have wished for the focus can become even more intense. In the midst of all that is good from God (and what we perceive to be not so good) how do we figure out what to listen to, to pay attention to? Going back to Luke 12 the full context of the passage quoted above helps give focus. Look at it again starting in verse 1.

"Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: "Be[a] on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs. "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. "I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God."

Do you see it? Joshua 1:7-8 says it this way, *"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."*

The gifts and blessings of God are products of His love but, as wonderful as those blessings can be, if we focus on them instead of on Him who gave them, we have lost sight of what to listen to, to pay attention

to. God, as He reveals Himself to us in His Word, is our “bugs in the tree” – our lives depend on God’s Word to feed us.

We need to pay attention to our life-critical mission, to seek Him and Him alone. Jeremiah 29:13, *“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”* It is just as Peter found when he stepped out of the boat, when his focus was on Jesus he could walk on water, but when he took his eyes off Jesus, he sunk. (Matthew 14:28-30)

Where have you taken your eyes off of Jesus? Where has your life-critical mission lost its focus? Important questions to ask so that we stay ready to serve when called upon!

“And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” Hebrews 12:1-3

Almighty God, we are ever so thankful for the goodness you daily and richly pour from your hand to us. We don’t deserve anything from you, and yet you continue to bless through your grace and mercy. Thank you. Keep us though solely focused on you as you reveal yourself to us in your Word. Let us always remember to let your Word illumine our path. Keep us mindful that you and you alone are our life-critical mission and create in us a hunger and thirst for your Word so that we may seek you where you will be found with our whole heart. Amen

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