

Focus on Jesus



If You Want God's Best (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we continue with our theme for this week, which is expressed in an incomplete sentence, "If You Want God's Best…" The "if" at the beginning confronts you with a personal choice: Do you want God's best, or don't you? Only you can make that decision.

If you decide that you really do want God's best, then, in my talks each day, I'm supplying various appropriate ways to complete that incomplete sentence. That is, I'm sharing with you various things you need to do to find God's best for your life. In each case I've already pointed out, the advice that I offer is based on three things: first of all, Scripture; second, my own experience; and third, my observation of others, some who have produced a hundredfold, some who've produced sixty, some who've produced thirty. And I'm trying to share with you the lessons that I've learned from watching really productive Christians.

In my talk yesterday, I suggested a way to complete that sentence that is very simple, very obvious and yet immensely important. And what it is this: want God's best, settle for nothing less. I want to say the complete sentence: If you want God's best, want God's best. That sounds to be a truism but it's so important. Your decision is what's decisive.

Today I'm going to share a second way to complete that sentence, "If you want God's best…" The way I'm going to share today is: focus on Jesus. So the completed sentence will read, "If you want God's best, focus on Jesus." And I'm going to begin with a passage from the 12th chapter of Hebrews, verses 1 and 2:

> "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. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith…"

There's a number of logical steps in what the writer says there. First of all, he points out that we're surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses and he's referring to what he's said in the previous chapter of Hebrews, chapter 11, where he's

spoken about the great saints of the Old Testament who succeeded, men who found God's best. And he says we have a cloud of witnesses around us, people who proved in their life and experience that it really is possible to find God's best. So that's the starting point. Then he says, "If we want to find God's best, it's going to consist in running a race and, in order to run the race successfully we have to do certain things. We have to throw off everything that hinders. A runner does not carry any single ounce of unnecessary weight on his person or in his clothing. And the sin that so easily entangles, we must be sure that there is nothing that will trip us up. And then let us run with perseverance, the next thing that's needed is perseverance. I pointed out earlier, in connection with the good soil in the parable of the sower, that the three conditions were: hearing the Word, retaining the Word, and bringing forth fruit with perseverance. But having laid those foundations for success, the writer of Hebrews now comes to what I consider to be the critical point of what he's saying. He says: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith…" That's what I want to suggest to you is a key to success: Focus on Jesus, keep your eyes on Him. And the writer points out that Jesus is both the author and perfecter of our faith. To use two other simpler words, He's the beginner of our faith and the completer of our faith. We probably all realize that Jesus is the beginner but sometimes we forget the fact that Jesus is also the completer. And if we want our faith to be completed, we have to go on focusing on Jesus. It's not enough to begin by focusing on Jesus, and then get distracted and look away somewhere else because if we do that our faith will never be completed. And, in this connection, I want to point out to you three simple facts, each of which is a reason why we should continue to focus on Jesus.

First of all, Jesus is our Lord, we can only enter into salvation through confessing Jesus as our Lord. So, if He's our Lord, then our supreme purpose is to please Him. That's what it is to say that He's our Lord. So, we need continually to keep our eye on Jesus to make sure that everything we're doing pleases Him and if at any time as we look at Him we get an indication that what we are considering would not please Him, that's a sufficient reason for not doing it. But we cannot received such indication unless we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

The second fact about Jesus is: He's the only standard of righteousness. This is brought out by a statement that Paul made to the men of Athens in Acts, chapter 17, verse 31, he says:

> "[God] has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all, by raising Him from the dead."

So the one who is going to be God's judge of the world is the man whom He raised from the dead, that is, of course, Jesus Christ. God's going to judge the world in righteousness by that Man.

That tells us two things: that Jesus is the judge but also that He is the standard of righteousness. We are going to be judged by the standard of Jesus. It's important to see that God has only the one standard of righteousness. If we want to know what is righteous in the eyes of God, the ultimate place we must look for the answer is always Jesus. We may look at Christians who do the things that Jesus would not have done, but we cannot accept them as our standard of righteousness because that's not God's standard. To find out God's standard of righteousness we have to keep our eyes focused on Jesus.

And thirdly, Jesus is our pattern or our example. 1 Peter 2:21 says this:

> "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."

So Jesus is our example, He's gone the way ahead of us. And to follow in the right path we have to see where He planted His steps and plant our footsteps in the same places. All that involves this one important requirement that we focus on Jesus, that we keep our eyes fixed on him.

I want to give you one more important reason why it is necessary to focus on Jesus. It's a very simple reason, a very practical reason, but a very important one. The reason is this: The whole gospel centers in what Jesus has done for us. This is stated so clearly by Paul in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 3 and 4, where he says to the Corinthian Christians:

> "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance [Notice there are orders of importance in the things of God, but these things that Paul now speaks of are of first importance. And he makes three simple statements, each of which relates to Jesus:]: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures…"

That is the gospel. Those are the facts of the first importance. Everything else is of secondary importance in the gospel compared with those three facts, all of which

center in Jesus: that He died, that He was buried, that He arose again the third day. So we can never afford to let anything else become more important than those three facts about Jesus. We must be careful never to be enticed away from these basic truths centered in Jesus. Paul, I think, warns Timothy of this in his second epistle to Timothy, chapter 2, verses 8 and 9, written very near the end of his life, written from prison. And this is what he says to Timothy:

> "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained."

Notice those key words: "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead… This is my gospel…" How simple! It's just like what he says in 1 Corinthians 15, the whole gospel message centers in Jesus; His death, His burial, His victorious resurrection. And he says to Timothy, "Never get distracted from these central points, never lose them in your focus, keep your eyes focused on Jesus." Let me say to you there's a great danger for Christians to become too sophisticated or too spiritual. I think a lot of Christians lose out by becoming too spiritual. People sometimes say to me after I preach, "Brother Prince, that was a deep message." And I find myself wondering, "Did I do something wrong?" In a certain sense (and now you'll have to understand the sense), I don't want to go too deep. I never want to go so deep that people lose sight of Jesus and the central facts of the gospel: His death, His burial, His resurrection.

Let me say to you what Paul said to Timothy: "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead." And let me say in closing one very important, practical way to remember Jesus is through the communion or the Eucharist or the Lord's Supper, whatever you want to call it. Jesus said, "Do this, as often as you do it, in remembrance of Me." It's a very simple, scriptural practical way to remember Jesus, to keep your eyes focused on Him. And remember, He did say "Do it as often as you do it", not as seldom as you do it.

Radio Program

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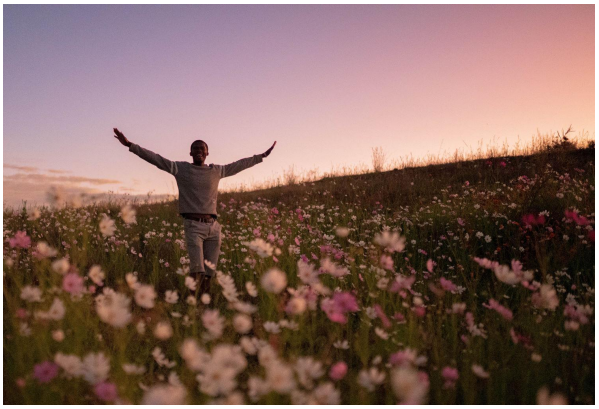

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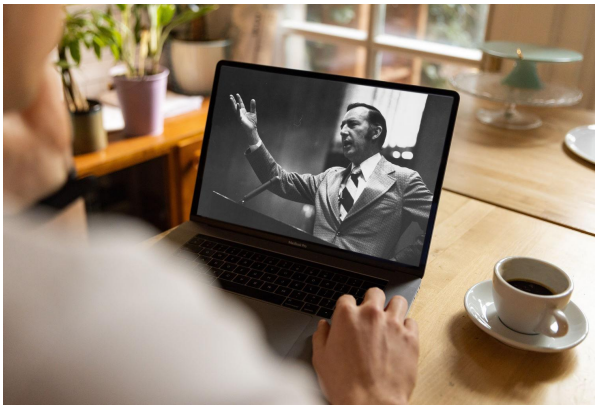

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