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WHAT WE FOCUS ON MATTERS

Have you noticed how hard it is to stay focused these days? I feel constantly bombarded by things vying for my attention- noise, news, ads jumping in front of my eyes when I'm trying to read something on the internet. It's easy to feel scattered and confused, out of control and anxious.

I'm finding it more critical than ever to remember the answer to the constant distractions and chaos found in the song "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus". If I keep looking to him and trusting that he is working in ways I can't begin to understand or see then "the things of earth will grow strangely dim".

There are so many Bible verses that teach where our focus should be. The amplified version of Isaiah 26:3 puts it this way: "You will keep in perfect and constant peace the one whose mind is steadfast (that is committed and focused on you) because he trusts and takes refuge in you." Then 2 Corinthians says, "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal". Hebrews 12 says that our faith and endurance depends on keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. Philippians 4:8 encourages us to "Fix our thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise."

However, I find that controlling my thoughts takes practice and discipline. I sometimes feel that my thoughts are like a bunch of squirrels running around in my head. I need to find ways to let them go. One of my goals is to take periodic pauses throughout the day to redirect my attention towards Jesus's Spirit within me. Another suggestion I've heard is to think of thoughts as trains passing by. I can choose to get on board or to let them keep on going.

Here are two prayers I found helpful from Sarah Young's devotional, Jesus

Listens:

“Ever-present Jesus, Help me to trust in Your unfailing Love -thanking you for the good I cannot see. When evil seems to be flourishing in the world around me, it feels as if things are spinning out of control. But I know you are not wringing your hands helplessly, wondering what to do next. You are completely in control, working behind the scenes goodness in the midst of the turmoil. So, in faith I thank you for not only the blessings I can see but for the ones I can't see.”

“Lord, please teach me how to look steadily at You in all my moments and all my circumstances. Though this world is unstable and in flux, I can experience continuity by staying aware of your steadfast Presence. Help me fix my eyes on what is unseen- especially on You- even as the visible world parades before my eyes.”

~Written by Marilyn Whisner

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