

THE



“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

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DISTRACTIONS

When you are at a worship service what do you think about? Many times our thoughts are filled with what is going to happen in the coming days, what we are going to eat for our next meal, or how to solve a problem that we have encountered. We naturally get distracted from our main purpose in worship, and in the past few years those distractions have multiplied with available technology. We have apps on our phone that are wonderful resources to look up Bible verses quickly or to cross reference and find supporting verses. The problem with these apps is that it comes with added distraction. I'm not saying to give up on technology or to not use your phone

THE HARVESTER

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as a Bible. I am just saying that we need to be aware of what we are opening ourselves up to.

Here is an example: You are following along with the preacher and looking up verses on your phone as he is reading them. All of a sudden, a friend from work sends a text. Maybe it is an issue that only you can fix, maybe it is just small talk about the football game the night before, or maybe it is to ask if you want to meet up for lunch. No matter what the reason, you feel like you really need to answer the text, so you do -- in the middle of the sermon.

We hear a lot about distracted driving. We hear statistics about how looking at a text takes your eyes off the road and keeps you from being able to react and pay attention. Why is a worship service any different? God does not ask a lot from us, but He does ask that we worship Him and only Him.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (Luke 4:8)

Are we truly worshipping if we are distracted, or is Satan there trying to tempt us as he tempted Jesus?

Think about the story of Jesus as he visited with Mary and Martha.

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus 'feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. (Luke 10:38-42)

Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened to every word he said, but Martha was worried about making sure everything was perfect. Martha was distracted, but Jesus said that Mary made the right choice by ignoring the distraction and listening to Jesus.

We live in a world full of opportunities, full of ideas, and full of technology. Are we letting the world determine how we worship and how we think? If so, there is great danger in those thoughts. Think about times in the Bible when we are told to make sure we do not let the world determine what we do or what we think.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Rom. 12:2)

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. (1 John 2:15-17)

When it is said, “*be not conformed to this world,*” it is talking about us falling into the traps the devil has laid out, traps such as being distracted. In the parable of the sower, we are reminded what happens when we are distracted.

And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. (Mark 4:19)

We have a tendency to let the cares of this world make us unfruitful. We are so worried about our lives that we do not focus on what is really important...serving God. Do we think that we are ok and have nothing to worry about?

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is

common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10:12-13)

Look for the way out that God has provided. For me, it is to not use my phone because I know I will be distracted and want to look at sports news, social media, texts, or e-mails. Maybe the Bible app allows you to download the Bible so that you can use your phone in airplane mode during the service. No matter what, keep your eye on finding your way to escape from distraction. Take these verses with you through the week. Let this message apply not only to distraction during the worship service but throughout the week. Do you think about God at times other than for an hour or two on Sunday or are you distracted from Him?

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. 12:2)

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. (Col. 3:1-2)

Finally, look ahead, stay focused, and avoid distraction.

Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. (Pro. 4:25)

A. D.

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What was man created from?
2. How many sons did Jacob (Israel) have?
3. Who said “*thy God shall be my God*”?
4. Jesus asked: “*Can the blind lead the....?*”
5. What are the wages of sin?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH

...and remember last month's questions?

1. What did the dove bring back to Noah?
OLIVE LEAF (Gen. 8:11)
 2. What was on top of the Ark of the Covenant?
THE MERCY SEAT AND TWO CHERUBIM (Exo. 25:22)
 3. What was Solomon famous for building?
THE HOUSE OF THE LORD (TEMPLE) (1 Kings 7:51)
 4. To which country did Mary and Joseph escape when Herod killed all the babies in Bethlehem? EGYPT (Mat. 2:13-14)
 5. At the age of twelve, Jesus was left behind in Jerusalem. Where did his parents find him?
IN THE TEMPLE (Luke 2:42-46)
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EXERCISE

The apostle Paul admonished Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:7b-8,

Exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. (1 Tim. 4:7-8)

Perhaps your normal daily activities cause you to have a strong physical body. This would be true for healthy individuals who are on their feet much of the time, walking or climbing or running. It would be true for those who repeatedly lift or push

heavy loads. Instead, perhaps you have a more sedentary life pattern in that your normal activities do not stimulate your body to be physically strong; to obtain or maintain physical strength, you may choose to take time for exercise. Bodily or physical exercise is physical activity intended to improve strength and fitness. In general, physical exercise improves your health, wards off disease, and leads to longer life. The profit that one receives from bodily exercise is good and desirable. But the apostle Paul states in his admonition to Timothy that the profit that one receives from bodily exercise is little compared to the profit of exercising toward godliness.

What is godliness? The word translated as godliness means piety which is reverence and devotion to God. It describes an attitude that is centered on God and does that which is well-pleasing to Him. The word translated as exercise means to train the body or mind. Exercising yourself toward godliness would be to take time in your day that you devote to God and do things that you know are well-pleasing to Him. Maybe that is prayer; maybe that is praising God for his wonderful grace; maybe that is reading and studying and meditating on His word; maybe that is sharing His truths with those who don't know them; maybe it is sharing your resources out of love with those in need. Just as repeated physical exercise serves the purpose of making one physically strong, repeated spiritual activities that are devoted to God makes one spiritually strong.

A baby or young child is weak compared to most adults. Strength usually comes with age and maturity and exercise. Some Christians are weak when they should be strong.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is

a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Heb. 5:12-14)

Your heavenly Father wants you to be strong spiritually. He will chasten you to make you strong and fruitful.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. (Heb. 12:7-11)

Trials will come in your life. Your faith will be tested. If you accept God's testing and chastening and remain faithful, you will be stronger because of your experiences.

Bodily exercise makes your body stronger. Exercising in godliness has "*promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*" You are given dual promises – life that now is and life which is to come. Jesus said much the same thing.

Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. (Mark 10:28-30)

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
August 29 - September 1	Oak Grove Eubank, KY	Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY)
August 30 - September 1	Willow Oak Russell Springs, KY	J. D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
September 13 - 15	Van Lear Van Lear, KY	Hunter Bulger (Prattville, AL)
September 20 - 22	Hopkinsville Hopkinsville, OH	Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY)
September 27 - 29	Verona Verona, KY	Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY)

I have brothers and sisters all over the world. The fellowship which I share with them is sweet wherever I may go. They open their houses to me and share as there is need. I am convinced that the Christian life is the best life. A life of loving each other, of service, of purity, of righteousness, and of seeking after spiritual things rather than physical things is far better than the selfishness and slavery and guilt of sin that the world experiences. Then the second part of the promise is the promise of the life which is to come. That life will be in the presence of the Father and His son Jesus Christ; there will be no more curse; we will eat of the tree of life and experience the wonderful things that God has prepared for those who love Him.

I encourage you to exercise physically so that you can have a strong, healthy body. But I give you a greater encouragement to exercise yourself towards godliness. Such spiritual exercise gives blessings for this life and for that which is to come.

ED ANDERSON
(Sierra Vista, AZ)