

WHERE TO FOCUS WHEN DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

2 Corinthians 2:12-17

Calvary Church of Pacific Palisades
February 5, 2012 ♦ Sunday Morning Worship

Introduction ...

Ever been so distracted that you thought you were losing your marbles?

Ill. Baby on the roof of the car. Matthew Murray, Marcus Abraham, Brian Kornbach.

Ill. Susie and I left Stacy at church one Wednesday night. AWANA commander brought her home.

Ill. Lost your keys? Alzheimers? Trouble functioning ... cylinders (synapse) misfiring. Disk errors.

Distracted, even overwhelmed ... you're not alone. All struggle to one degree or another and need to know where to focus when driven to distraction.

Please open your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 2. Page 817.

Normal spiritual life filled with distractions. **Distraction is an inability to focus ...** anxiety and worry.

Told not to worry, but the more we try not to, the more fixated we can become.

Paul shares his heart and his burdens with us, the challenging difficulties of living the Christian life ...

- Pain and discomfort; physical, emotional, relational 1:1-11
- Misunderstanding motives and actions; widely criticized 1:12-22
- Sting of broken relationships; hope of reconciliation 1:23-2:11
- Burdens and concerns that consume and overwhelm 2:12-17 Anxiety, panic and fear.
- NEXT TIME ... FEELINGS OF INADEQUACY.

Paul admits that he was deeply troubled ... no peace of mind, DISTRACTED. **Read vv. 12-13**

In Troy, waiting for Titus, worrying on word about the church in Corinth. Third journey. Acts doesn't tell.

He was only human ... had sent Titus with letter, shared that he was worried sick ... gripped with fear.

2 Corinthians 7:5 (NIV84) ⁵ For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within.

So distracted that he checked out of hotel room and left valuable personal items behind.

2 Timothy 4:13 (NIV84) ¹³ When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

He was undone. Out of commission. In turmoil, churning, restless and troubled.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE NO PEACE OF MIND ... what to do when driven to distraction?

Admit your inability to focus ... burdened, anxiety, worry. **"No peace of mind..."** On another planet?

Ill. DisneyWorld. Huge blow up just before we left, I don't even remember going. Distracted, my body got into the van but my mind and heart stayed at church for 12 days, and van traveled 3500 miles but I hadn't moved an inch, I was clearly somewhere else.

1st STEP Admit your inability to focus.

Refuse to let anxiety and fear to keep you from moving forward. "I said goodbye and went on."

He didn't sit around a sulk, or blame anyone ... he got up, said goodbye and went to look for Titus.

Ill. Every morning when I wake up ... start praying, get up, connect with God.

He knew that he had missed an opportunity, but he refused to be paralyzed by failure.

Ill. Meeting with Charlie Beery. Susie and I had had a pretty big fight the night before. I was unable to focus. Shared it with him (admitted it), he smiled at me, I went home to see if I could make it right.

Instead of focusing on worries, focus on the TRUTH ... and give thanks to God.

v. 14 "But thanks be to God."

Praise moves us from depths of despair to joy and hope ... from agony of defeat, to the thrill of victory ...
 Trade your sorrows for the “joy of the Lord” ... stop focusing on what’s missing, troubles
 Ill. Video ... ABC Wide World of Sports; “the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat.” Mohammed Ali.
 Played 1000’s of times; more painful for us than it was for the ski jumper.
 Instead of rehearsing and reliving failure ... instead of focusing on bitter defeats, embarrassing failures, ...
 focus on the TRUTH, the person on Christ, the victorious one. Grateful ... He gave His life.

How can a man so deeply troubled be so triumphant? He focuses on the TRUTH. What truth ... **vv. 14-17**
 When driven to distraction, focus on truth, give thanks to God that **Christ is ALWAYS victorious over us.**
“who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ.”

Not primarily about us being victorious. Christ is the victor who has taken us captive.

2 Corinthians 4:5 (NIV) ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. BOND-SERVANTS, CAPTIVES

Not occasionally, but always. He is always victorious.

Ill. Roman Triumph ... foreign soil, waged war, won and brings back spoils. Golden chariot, victorious
 army, Roman priests with censers, flowers thrown everywhere.

Ill. VIDEO ... Gladiator.

Jesus came to foreign soil ... completely defeated enemy (sin & death) SAVED. VICTORIOUS PROCESSION
 Now we follow Him, the victorious King ... he is always victorious over us.

When driven to distraction, focus on the truth, give thanks to God that **Christ is ALWAYS victorious in
 us and through us.** **“and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him”**
 SO WHAT ... What is Christ doing in you and through you ... JKD flesh. Flesh and Spirit.

When driven to distraction, focus on the truth that **We are the aroma of Christ.** **“for we are TO GOD the
 aroma of Christ”** In Roman triumph, cloud of incense burning for the gods.

The refreshing aroma of purity, truth, godliness. Pleasing and attractive. Fruit of the Spirit.

Living lives of sacrificial praise, on fire with the Spirit of God, producing fruit in keeping with repentance.

Conclusion ...

SO WHAT ... Stop focusing on worries, focus on the truth, give thanks to God for sending a victor.

Focus on Christ ... Victorious Always ... who for joy set before. Author and perfecter of faith. Finished
 Peace, the fruit of the Spirit, trading sorrows for joy ... thanking God for the 1000’s of gifts He gives.

Look to cross ... no longer there, he has defeated death, given resurrection power, opened doors, leading
 us in triumphal procession, the aroma of being truly alive in Christ.