

## Forward Focused – The Danger of Distracted Driving

4/15/18 – Pastor Randy

---

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration distracted driving is dangerous. It claimed 3,477 lives and causing 391,000 injuries in 2015 alone. Many of us suffer from spiritual ADD. We lose our focus. We get distracted. Distracted driving, both literally and figuratively, is dangerous.

Philippians 3:7-14 (NLT)

*I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done.<sup>8</sup> Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ<sup>9</sup> and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith.<sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!<sup>12</sup> I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me.<sup>13</sup> No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: **Forgetting the past and looking forward** to what lies ahead,<sup>14</sup> **I press on** to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.*

Last week I drew your attention to the fact that Paul, in this passage reveals an attitude towards the past present and future: He was **Forgetting the past, looking forward to what lies ahead in the future, and pressing on in the present.**

*Your car came equipped with a windshield and a rearview mirror, correct? With my life, as with my car, it is necessary to have a bigger windshield than rearview mirror. Rearview mirrors serve an important purpose. We need occasional glances backwards, but if we fix our eyes on the rearview mirror it is impossible to make*

## Forward Focused – The Danger of Distracted Driving

4/15/18 – Pastor Randy

---

*forward progress - at least not without crashing. The windshield reveals where we are headed and that is where our focus needs to be.*

Your “Life Windshield” is a divinely displayed vision of the future.

This “spiritual windshield” needs to be clear, unobstructed, and the object of your focused attention.

What was Paul’s focus?

*I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, **so that I could gain Christ. I want to know Christ...***

*... to experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead.*

*... to suffer with him, sharing in his death.*

*...to experience the resurrection from the dead!*

If we don’t read Paul’s particular statements in this passage in light of the whole, we might get off course and think that his goal is “eternal life” or to get to heaven. When we pay attention to his train of thought we realize that the reason he is looking forward to the resurrection is because that is the moment that his goal which is to know Christ comes to perfect completion and fulfillment. At our future resurrection we will receive glorified bodies that fit us to dwell in glory with our glorified Savior-King: Jesus Christ. *Paul said he was, “**looking forward to what lies ahead**”, “**the end of the race**” when he would “**receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us**”.*

The “goal” for Paul was the final, complete, and perfect realization in the future of what he had already begun to experience in the present: Knowing Christ. It will one day be a “knowing” that is unhindered, undisrupted, unmediated; a perfect and full experience of God’s presence.

Christianity is an inherently future oriented worldview. Christians have often been criticized as being too heavenly minded so as to be of no earthly good. In reality, **unless** we are heavenly minded we will be of no earthly good!

## Forward Focused – The Danger of Distracted Driving

4/15/18 – Pastor Randy

---

A heavenly mindedness does not mean one sits around all day dreaming about heaven. It does mean we understand the big picture of life so that we don't get distracted with frivolous, trivial, matters.

Those who are not living with an eternal perspective of life, are living with a distorted perspective of life. If it is appointed for us once to die and then the judgement, and if that judgement results in either the presence of God in the new creation as our eternal destiny, or torment as our eternal fate, then our priorities will be radically reordered!

When we meet with parents who are interested in dedicating their children to the Lord we talk about the importance of beginning with the end in mind. If there is nothing more to this life than 75-80 years then why not make this life about maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain?

We must focus on our windshield and see clearly what lies ahead.

**1. We Share a Common Ultimate Destiny** – Rom. 8:29 tells us that it is God's plan for all of his children to become conformed to the image of His Son. Christlikeness is the common ultimate goal for all of God's children. In the first chapter of this letter Paul encouraged the Christians in the city of Philippi by affirming that they were moving towards this destiny and that God's love for them and power which was towards them would bring them to their final destiny. He wrote, *"And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns."*

**2. We Possess a Unique Destiny** – Beyond our pursuit to know Christ and be conformed to the image of Christ, God does have specific missions or purposes for us to fulfill during our earthly life that are unique to us. No one else possesses that exact same call as you do. Ex. To be faithful to your spouse; to disciple your children; to share Christ with your co-workers and

## Forward Focused – The Danger of Distracted Driving

4/15/18 – Pastor Randy

---

neighbors; to use the gifts and abilities that God has given you to glorify Him and build His church. **I spoke to Lynne Ewing**

Paul uses the imagery of an athlete running in a race on a couple of other occasions. One of those is in 1 Corinthians 9:22-25 where Paul wrote, **"When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. <sup>23</sup> I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.<sup>24</sup> Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! <sup>25</sup> All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize."**

Paul's unique mission or destiny was to spread the good news about Jesus to non-Jews all over the known world. Paul's missionary work and life ended in Rome; a destination which God revealed to Paul ahead of time.

Paul's windshield was clear; He saw ahead of him a world full of gentiles that were without Christ and without hope, but who were welcome into God's family because of what Christ had accomplished through His death and resurrection. Someone needed to tell them that there was hope and Paul was called by Jesus to do just that!

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a clear vision of what God wants you to become and a clear vision of how he wants you to serve him.

**Vision = "The ability to see beyond the way things are to the way they should be."** When you add faith to vision it becomes the ability to see beyond the way things are to the way they should and COULD be." Paul saw a world of gentiles who were excluded but who should be included and could be included!!

We are all driving in a world where many situations - in our personal lives, in the lives of others, as well as in systems and institutions of our world – are not the way they should and could be. We want to drive our lives in a direction that moves them to where they should and could be!

## Forward Focused – The Danger of Distracted Driving

4/15/18 – Pastor Randy

---

### Distractions to Discern and Resist

#### **A. The Good and the Urgent > The Best and the Important.**

*Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." - Luke 10:38-42*

Martha's actions were good, not evil. Her intentions were good, not evil. But she allowed herself to place too high of a priority on preparing a meal on time. She confused the urgent for the important!

God hasn't called you to save the world. He hasn't called you to be take in every orphan child and homeless person. He hasn't called you to give to every worthy charity that is aligned with God's kingdom purposes.

**B. Media & Entertainment** – We all need R&R. Truck drivers have a limit to the hours they are allowed to stay focused on their windshield. You need to take a break and rest. BUT...the bigger problem is not Christians failing to **take a break** from God-ordained pursuits, but failing to **break away** from devil-devised media distractions. Our internet, TV, movies, sports, youtube, create an alternate reality for people. Consider this article from Psychology today about the impact social technology has on student's ability to focus: *"Recently my research team observed nearly 300 middle school, high school, and university students studying something important for a mere 15 minutes in their natural environments. We were interested in whether they could maintain focus and, if not, what might be distracting them... The results were startling. First, these students were only able to focus and stay on task for an average of three minutes at a time, and nearly all of their distractions came from technology... The major culprit: their smartphone and their laptop, which were providing constant interruptions. We*

5

## Forward Focused – The Danger of Distracted Driving

4/15/18 – Pastor Randy

---

*also looked at whether these distractors might predict who was a better student. Not surprisingly, those who stayed on task longer and had study strategies were better students... So, what was going on with these students? We have asked thousands of students this exact question, and what we hear is that when alerted by a beep, a vibration or a flashing image they feel compelled or drawn to attend to that distraction. However, they also tell us that even without the sensory reminder, they are constantly thinking internally, "I wonder if anyone commented on my Facebook post," or "I wonder if anyone responded to the text message I sent five minutes ago," or even "I wonder what interesting new YouTube videos my friends have liked."*

*-Dr. Larry Rosen in Psychologytoday.com (Apr 09, 2012)*

### C. Temptation –

*Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. <sup>26</sup> Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. <sup>27</sup> Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil. – Proverbs 4:25-27*

I have a friend who told me that one day he had a fender bender because he allowed himself to get distracted by a young lady on the street. She must not have paid much for her clothes because they were made out of very little material. Temptation to sin is the most obvious distraction we need to avoid.

**D. Peer Pressure** – Some Christians get off course because they start looking at where everyone else around them is going. Don't follow the crowd, follow Jesus. Romans 12:1,2 warns us not to allow ourselves to be conformed to this world. Peer pressure influences adults as well as teenagers. We need to keep our attention on God's voice, not the voices in the crowd.

# Forward Focused – The Danger of Distracted Driving

4/15/18 – Pastor Randy

---