

Spiritual Focus

Introduction. Focus is an act of concentrating interest or activity on something, and it is so important. When we see a picture that is out of focus, it ruins the essence of the photograph. Now, it is just like that when it pertains to us. When you see a Christian who does not have the proper focus, it just ruins the essence of their proclamation of faith. Our focus is spiritual. Hebrews 12:1-2 defines the essence of our focus as Jesus. Focus also implies concentration. This means “with centering.” So much of focus has to do with perspective or attitude. It means looking at where we are in relation to where we ought to be, so let’s take a look at several elements of spiritual focus.

I. Humility

- A. This is necessary for a good point of view. Humility is the by-product of doing right (Proverbs 15:33; 16:19; Matthew 18:4).
- B. Pride has to be removed (Isaiah 66:1-2; Ephesians 4:1-2). We need to have more love for Christ than for ourselves.

II. Contrition

- A. This is the state of feeling remorseful and penitent. It comes from an old word meaning “ground down”. Godly sorrow from a sense of sin, a guilty conscience, and a broken heart will produce the proper fruit (2 Corinthians 7:10).
- B. As a Christian confronts the holiness of God and contemplates the life he was supposed to live, he sees his helplessness and hopelessness. This person will show contrition (James 4:8-10; cp. Revelation 3:15-19).

III. Control

- A. We are fitted for service (2 Corinthians 5:14). David had controlled strength in the face of Goliath who wanted to shame him (1 Samuel 17:28).
- B. Do we have the control to keep on going for God? It is a true mark of godly character (Proverbs 25:15; 1 Timothy 6:11; James 3:17).

IV. Appetite

- A. This should be natural. We should have a spiritual appetite (Psalm 27:4; 63:1; 1 Peter 2:1-3). We need to have the appetite of newborn babes.
- B. Our appetite needs to be developed, but it must be fed specific “food” (Ezekiel 34:14; John 6:35, 68; Acts 20:32).

V. Empathy

- A. This is about getting our focus on sharing — feel what people feel. Project yourself into the lives of others. Are you sorry for every sinner even though that sinner offends you (Luke 23:34)? Do you have pity upon all who are victims of the world and the flesh and the devil (Mark 10:21)?
- B. Jesus became an incarnate man and suffered on our behalf (Hebrews 5:8-9). How did He feel giving up His glory in Heaven (Philippians 2:5-8)? How did God feel sending Him to the cross (John 3:16)?

VI. Perception

- A. This is the ability to discern or see what is good (Proverbs 8:5-8; Philippians 1:9). Christians can see God in a sense that nobody else can (1 John 3:2-3).
- B. A Christian can see God in nature, whereas a non-Christian cannot. There is a vision possible to the eye of faith that no one else possesses (Hebrews 11:27; John 1:18).

VII. Peaceful

- A. We have to esteem others better than ourselves because this is necessary for growth (Philippians 2:3-4; cp. 1 Corinthians 10:24, 33; 2 Corinthians 8:3, 9).
- B. If we seek peace, we seek unity (Psalm 133:1-3; cp. Genesis 13:8; Titus 3:9). We are looking for the final outcome of the battle (Romans 5:1-2).

VIII. Commitment

- A. Our trials are simply opportunities for us to show our devotion to Christ (1 Peter 1:6-7; James 1:2). Jesus told us to expect suffering (Matthew 10:22).
- B. By suffering we become stronger and we get to glorify the holy name of God (Hebrews 11:32-38; 1 Peter 4:12-16).

Conclusion. These are the beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-11). We are blessed or happy for knowing all of this. There are three general lessons to be drawn from the beatitudes. First, all Christians are to be like this. This is not merely the description of some exceptional Christians. Our Lord does not say here that He is going to paint a picture of what certain outstanding characters are going to be and can be in this world. Second, all Christians are meant to manifest all of these characteristics. Third, none of these descriptions refers to what we may call a natural tendency. These are dispositions produced by the grace of God. Jesus is the perfect personification of all these qualities of focus and concentration.

These beatitudes show the essential difference between the Christian and the non-Christian. This is where focus becomes so important! Have you ever noticed that if you have a picture that is badly out of focus, you cannot even tell who the individuals are? Think about your spiritual focus. If you don't grow, you don't go (1 Peter 1:8-9).