



## Outer Growth - Focus

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

*Romans 12:2*

**Father** - Matthew 23:9

**Obey** - 1 Samuel 12:14,15

**Christ** - 1 Timothy 2:5

**Ungodly** - 1 Peter 4:18

**Salvation** - Luke 3:6

What is your focus? People today are attentive to many things they deem significant to them, whereas some individuals have their minds focused on specific goals. Focus relates to the center of attention. Most people carry two sets of goals: short-term and long-term. The short-term is what they plan for today, which builds for their long-term for the future, in which they pattern their lifestyles.

On the other hand, believers have a renewed mind and live a transformed life in Christ that can test, prove, and affirm that God's will is good, desirable, and perfect. Wherefore Satan slanders God's will as not good, undesirable, and imperfect, as transformed believers know and embrace God's will as the highest and best way of life. However, saints of God may undergo various trials and challenges to sway them away from what the Lord has in store for those who stay on course with Him. The devil is a deceiver and a con artist who uses deceptive means to make believers lose their focus on what God has to follow his way, which is destructive.

The focus for the people of God should be first on the Heavenly Father: The Maker of all things, including heaven and earth, as in Genesis one, verse one, and the human beings, as at the beginning of Genesis one, verse twenty-six.

Today, unbelievers focus on self, material things, and an ungodly lifestyle. When we hear of self, it is either about pride or self-control. Self in the world today is about self-pride, ego, and arrogance. Not all people conduct themselves that way, but most individuals do, which generates hostility that may lead to trouble. Material things are associated with self and cause those to be busy and consumed with the things of the world. "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," as in First John two, verse sixteen.

The other is self-control, which is a challenge for everyone on many levels. In Proverbs twenty-five, verse twenty-eight, "He that *hath* no rule over his own spirit *is like* a city *that is* broken down, *and* without walls." The devil will use various devices to create those who live in his world and his way, the broad way, to keep them bound and away from God. Due to the world's focus, Jesus said, in John twelve, verse forty, "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." Although the verse applies to those Pharisees for whom Jesus performed many miracles, the scripture is appropriate for this example.

Today, people focus on the future, family, and friends, which is not bad. However, it is not all that good when they forget or do not include the Heavenly Father, who made the heaven and the earth. For believers, Jesus gives an example in John fourteen, verse nine, "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Christians today who attend church know about the Heavenly Father but do not know Him personally because they focus on what they want from Him and do not ask what He wants.

The focus should be obedience to the Lord and His Word. However, the world focuses on options, obligations, and being online by cellphone, laptop, or computer instead of, being in line with God. In Job thirty-six, verses eleven through twelve, "If they obey and serve *Him*, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures. But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge." God will add to those whose hearts are towards Him and put Him first and not things or others before Him. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," as in Matthew six, verse twenty-one, or Luke twelve, verse thirty-four. The focus on God is through Jesus Christ. If the Son of God is in your heart, then God will be present. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine," as in Exodus nineteen, verse five. To obey is better than to sacrifice, as Samuel describes to Saul in First Samuel fifteen, verse twenty-two. The first part of both verses twenty-seven and twenty-eight of Deuteronomy eleven, "A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day. And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God."

For every believer, the focus should be Jesus Christ because He is the only one who allows the sinner to become a follower. Still, the Son of God is the link between God and humans. In Hebrews thirteen, verse eight, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." However, for the ones that do not believe, the unbelievers, the focus may be on several things such as children, a family crisis, a health condition, earning cash, gaining capital, cleaning up chores, or chatting on their phone. However, this is not to say fellow Christians do not do these things. But this should not be their full attention.

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest, as in Joshua one, verse seven. Joshua had to step up courageously after his leader, Moses, was no longer there. God was

telling Joshua not to get distracted, to keep his focus, and to keep his eyes on the instructions given. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success," as in Joshua one, verse eight. We, believers, can be distracted by screens and other things that cause us to take our eyes off God and the wisdom in scripture in Second Timothy three, verses sixteen through seventeen. Instead, as we remain alert, "by keeping our eyes on Jesus," as in Hebrews twelve, verse two, we can spring into action when God calls, as did Joshua, and not let distraction miss our attention to the Almighty One above. Why is it vital to keep our eyes on Christ? Because He loves us. All believers should pray, "Dear Jesus, please help me to avoid distractions as I follow you."

For believers, the focus should be on the ungodly, not in the sense of being like or hanging around them, but to influence and live according to God's Word and will to help save them. The godly who know God and not just know about Him should realize the ungodly are unable to understand **their situation spiritually**. Therefore, to win them for the kingdom of God, believers will have to decide to follow God's Word to fulfill **His will**. The beginning of Luke six, verse thirty-five, "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again." Then Matthew five, verse forty-four, declares, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

The Lord said in Ezekiel eighteen, verse twenty-three, "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? Saith the Lord GOD: *and* not that he should return from his ways, and live?" The mission of the Lord is to save all of humanity and not lose any. The first thing believers should remember is that God is love, and love gives. In First Corinthians thirteen, verse two, "And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so

that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

God's will is to help change the ways of the ungodly to godly. The whole duty of the people of God is to serve Him, which will require some effort to follow and keep His commandments. In Proverbs twenty-five, verse twenty-one, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink." For a person to show hospitality towards their enemy requires God's mercy and grace for them to do so. The first requirement from believers is to win the lost, as in Ephesians four, verse thirty-two, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

The believer's heart must first change toward the **ungodly to eventually no longer be one** with the Spirit of God leading and directing. In Second Timothy two, verses one through two, "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way." How can a believer who claims to be a servant of God live the same way and expect to win the hearts of unbelievers? It will require time in prayer to intercede on behalf of those we encounter for God's sake so He will intervene to help them see the truth. The challenge for believers is in Titus three, verses one to two, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, showing all meekness unto all men."

The focus for all humankind should be salvation. One may ask, "Why do I need this? And saved from what?" In Hebrews two, verse three, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." No one knows when their time on earth is over; only the one above will know.

All must receive salvation through accepting Jesus Christ to see God, for there is no other way. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be

saved," as in Acts four, verse twelve. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, as in First Thessalonians five, verse nine. Those who willingly receive the Son of God will get guidance from Him. "To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, as in Luke one, verse seventy-seven.

For believers, we know, "Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people," as in Psalms three, verse eight. Those who receive the Son of God have access to call as in Psalms thirty-eight, verse twenty-two, "Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation." No matter the trials and opposition, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" The believer's life is to be a godly example to help others change from ungodly and believe in the Lord God Almighty.

What is the focus of your life? Is it the Heavenly Father? To obey His commandments? The Son of God? To win the loss?