

Don't Be Distracted

Summer Series based on Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

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Three Things to Remember

1. Consider Them

- the great cloud of witnesses

2. Consider Him

- Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith

3. Continue On

- be encouraged to run with vigor the race

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Nehemiah

- setting found around 445 - 432 B.C.
- was the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes
- 70 years ago the temple repaired
- 13 years ago Ezra helped with spiritual needs
- oversaw the rebuilding of the city walls
- man who allowed burdens to motivate him

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1. Prayer Will Clarify Purpose!

- "In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. They said to me, those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been burned with fire. When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven,"

- many people today are distressed and burdened, yet do nothing beyond telling others about their pain.

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1. Prayer Will Clarify Purpose!

- God uses burdens in our hearts, if we let him.
- Prayer Clarified:
 - my need for repentance - vs.6-7
 - the promise (desire) of God - vs. 8-9
 - the purpose of God for me - vs 10-12
- Why God is burdening your heart, and what He wants to do will become clear only with time in prayer!

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2. Think Big - Imagine the Impossible

- *“In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before, so the king asked me, ‘Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart.’ I was very much afraid, but I said to the king, ‘May the king live forever, why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?’ The king said to me, ‘What is it you want?’ Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, ‘If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it.’*

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2. Think Big - Imagine the Impossible

- *“Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, ‘How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?’ It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time. I also said to him, ‘If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the King’s forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?’ And because the gracious hand of God was upon me, the king granted my requests.”*
2:1-8

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2. Think Big - Imagine the Impossible

- Don't limit God by being afraid to ask!
- God will look after the response - your job is just to do what He impresses you to do, and often that involves the impossible so you can see his hand!
- be careful to insure what you imagine for God comes from prayer and listening, not human desire on your part, but when he shows you - go for the impossible

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3. Don't Major on the Minors

- minor problems and objections can derail a project
- *“They replied, ‘Let us start rebuilding.’ So they began this good work. But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it they mocked and ridiculed us. ‘What is this you are doing?’ they asked. ‘Are you rebelling against the king?’ I answered them by saying, ‘The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it.’” 2:19-20*
- Someone will always have a problem with what God wants you to do, your response matters!

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3. Don't Major on the Minors

- *“When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria he said, ‘What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring stones back to life from those heaps of rubble - burned as they are?’ 4:1-2*

- *“They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.” 4:8-9*

- *“When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot, and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work. 4:15*

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3. Don't Major on the Minors

- Be on Guard
 - be ready to defend when attack comes
 - Let God deal with distracters - work
- Know when to Fight
 - reputations and rumors don't rate
 - real threats need to be addressed.

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Here is the gate:

- Always lead by example - if you are not willing to step out and do the job, no one else will be willing to!

So What!

1. Prayer will Clarify Purpose

- God uses burdens and broken hearts

Pray first

Pray with Perseverance

Pray with Passion

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So What

1. Prayer Will Clarify Purpose
2. Think Big - Imagine the Impossible
 - not asking limits God providing
 - Be Bold when God is Leading
3. Don't Major on Minors
 - Know a real threat from minor grumbling
 - Work and allow God to provide victory