

**2-9-20 MANAGING THE RAT RACE OF LIFE #2 –
BEWARE OF DISTRACTED LIVING Luke 10:38-42**

The phenomena of cell phones, texting and internet streaming have certainly changed life beyond anything that I might have imagined even five years ago.

“DISTRACTED DRIVING” is now a chargeable violation and offense! And it should be!

While the DISTRACTIONS of today have taken on a whole new level with an entirely different set of challenges ... ‘DISTRACTED LIVING’ is nothing new.

Some years ago, Linda and I had a meeting at the Long Boat Key Club (on Long Boat Key) across a bay from Sarasota, Florida. A ‘key’ is a bit like a peninsula without a land connection. Long Boat Key faced the Gulf of Mexico on the out-side and Sarasota Bay on the in-side.

I remember walking on the beach and seeing huge areas marked off by warning tape. NO ONE was to venture beyond the tape. And in the evenings, there were areas that were pitch dark --- no lights allowed!

I asked the question, “WHY?” and was told “THE TURTLES.”

You see, during nesting season, Sea Turtles would swim in from the ocean through the Gulf and lay their eggs. Months later, the eggs hatch and the baby turtles follow the PURE LIGHT OF THE MOON BACK TO THE SURF where they would then swim away.

Sea Turtle hatchlings instinctively crawl toward the brightest light. On an undeveloped beach, the brightest light is the moon. However, with all of the artificial lights of restaurants, homes, condos, and developments, these young hatchlings are DISTRACTED and move in the wrong direction.

Rather than follow the pure light of the moon to the ocean, they follow the wrong light to a disastrous outcome.

Technology, online games, texting, social media, bad habits, addictions (of all sorts), stress, busyness, and meaningless distractions lead us astray. **CAN YOU RELATE?**

Luke 10:38-42 (NIV) As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ **But Martha was distracted** by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

⁴¹ “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, **“You are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one.**

Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

TEXT & CONTEXT:

- Dr. Luke places this story immediately after his telling of the Good Samaritan.
 - Good works are important.
 - “Loving God” & “Your Neighbor” are important
 - BALANCE BETWEEN WORK & LOVING GOD!!!!
- Bethany was a small village on the back side of the Mount of Olives --- about 2 miles from Jerusalem. With other references, it seems reasonable to assume that Jesus would stay with his friends: Lazarus, Martha & Mary when he was in Jerusalem.
- Culturally & contextually, Mary’s disregard for ‘HOSPITALITY’ was a BIG FAUX PAS (slip or blunder in etiquette --- an EMBARRASSING BLUNDER).
- In the ANE ... and even today in the Middle East --- there is an UNBREAKABLE CODE OF HOSPITALITY --- actually a moral obligation to provide for your guests WHATEVER their needs might be – even to the point of depriving yourself... not just a courtesy, but a LAW OF SOCIETY.
- Martha was not only doing what was EXPECTED --- but what was REQUIRED.
- THEREFORE, Jesus’ affirmation of Mary would have sent a huge shockwave through the neighborhood!!! I LOVE IT! -- Jesus is always redefining the norms of society in preference to God’s divine view & preference ... ☺

Primary Points:

1. We have many DIFFERENT TEMPERAMENTS & DISPOSITIONS -- we must learn to be CONSIDERATE & KIND.
2. We all GET DISTRACTED & become CONSUMED with things that TURN US FROM GOD.
3. We NEED to be REMINDED that we need to RESET & REFOCUS.
4. We NEED TO MAKE A CHOICE to RESET & REFOCUS – to help our SOULS to ‘catch-up’ to our bodies ---

1st People are ‘wired’ & ‘programmed’ differently – influenced & formed by remarkably different circumstances BUT GOD LOVES EACH OF US, ALWAYS MOVING US TO THE CENTER OF HIS BEING.

Are you a “Mary” or a “Martha”?

2nd WE ALL GET DISTRACTED (& EVEN CONSUMED) BY THINGS APART FROM GOD --- YET, GOD MUST ALWAYS BE THE STRONGEST VOICE IN YOUR HEAD. IS HE?

WHAT DISTRACTS US?

Spiritual De-hydration?	Busyness?
Societal Norms & Expectations?	Stress?
Sense of Responsibility?	Expectations?
Exhaustion?	Our Past?
Other?	

Reference a scene from the movie, AVIATOR, about Howard Hughes ... OCD compulsion over the lint on another lapel.

3rd WE NEED TO BE REMINDED about the “ONE THING” THAT WE MUST KEEP FOCUSED AND CENTERED ON.

What are some ways that we might be reminded?

The Spiritual Practices of:

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| + Bible Reflection (God’s Playbook) | + Church |
| + Prayer (time to share & to listen) | + Friends & Family |
| + Fasting (see additional insert) | + Music/ P&W |

4th WE NEED TO “MANAGE” our PSYCHE & TO MAKE A CHOICE & THEN ACT ACCORDINGLY TO RESET & REFOCUS

“Do not be conformed to the pattern of the world, BUT be transformed by the renewing of your minds.” Romans 12:2

4 Steps – Per www.jefferymschwartz.com:

RELABEL --- Identify the intrusive thoughts, consumptions or indulgences & call them out – NAME THEM for what they are – They are DISTRACTING & CONSUMING!

REFRAME --- Say “why” these thoughts & urges bother you --- (it’s not you --- but your brain & emotions & feelings being allowed to run free -- - They are DISTRACTING & CONSUMING!

REFOCUS --- Direct your attention by FOCUSING your attention on something else—something that is productive & wholesome --- BALANCED & ENCOURAGING --- not DISTRACTING & CONSUMING!

REVALUE --- DO NOT TAKE THE THOUGHTS, URGES & CONSUMPTIONS at FACE VALUE --- they are simply a product of a brain, emotion & temperament that is still IN PROGRESS --- STILL TO BE “TRANSFORMED” NOT “CONFORMED.” (Romans 12:2)

Sarah Young, per JESUS IS CALLING:

Jesus says, “I am renewing your mind – when your thoughts flow freely, they tend to move towards problems. Your focus gets snagged on a given problem, circling round and round in attempts to gain mastery over you.” (February 3)

WE MUST WORK TO REMIND OURSELVES TO REFOCUS AND RESET ON THE ONE THING THAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO THE BALANCE and JOY OF LIFE JESUS!!!

IN THIS ... WE CAN EITHER CHOOSE TO TAKE CONTROL (WITH GOD’S HELP) THE EMOTIONS & COMPULSIONS THAT OVERTAKE US OR WE CAN GIVE INTO THEM ... and RISK MISSING DIVINE OPPORTUNITIES THAT GOD HAS SET BEFORE US --- ARE YOU WILLING & WANTING TO EXPERIENCE THE PRESENCE & COMPANY OF GOD?

PRAYER: Gracious & loving God, you are a GOD of NEW BEGINNINGS. You created us to be WHOLE, UNIQUE, ABUNDANT, LIVING CHILDREN. Though we get too busy and disconnected before we even realize it, you are full of grace to offer a RESET. You bring us back, refresh our spirits, and make us whole again. As we walk this journey to wholeness, prepare our hearts to let go of what is holding us back. Dear God, teach us again what it means to live lightly and freely, walking with you each and every day. Come and be present in our conversations, relationships, and lives. In Jesus’ Name, AMEN.

2-9-20 The Practice of Fasting

Fasting can be difficult to understand and to practice. Sometimes it can get misconstrued and confused with dieting, but it has nothing to do with weight loss. Fasting is about self-denial, about saying yes to God by saying no to some other competing desire. This week, you'll do a daily fast from various things that compete for space in your heart and mind, reminding you of your true desire to give God your whole heart.

DAY 1: *Fast from social media for 24 hours.* Turn these apps off on your phone, and do your best not to go there on your computer. Notice any impulses you have to check your phone or the way you get on your computer and begin to type "Facebook" before you even realize it. As you sense those impulses, ask God to be the Lord of your life. Ask God for help to make social media a fun, "extra" thing in your life and not a distraction that keeps you from being, fully present with God and with your friends and family.

DAY 2: (If possible) *Fast from food from sunup to sundown.* (or perhaps from 8am – 5 pm) Ask God to be your strength as you go about your day, relying only on God. Be sure to drink plenty of water. Throughout your fasting day, notice your cravings, your stamina, and your clarity. Lean on God's strength, and ask God to help you depend on God each and every day. When you sit down to eat again, give thanks to God for God's strength in you and God's presence with you always.

DAY 3: *Fast from words.* As much as possible, refrain from speaking for a period of time. You may need to share your practice with family or coworkers ahead of time. This is a practice of being slow to speak and quick to listen. Pay attention to what you hear when you're not forming your own responses constantly.

DAY 4: *Fast from using plastic.* As best you can, refrain from using any quick-and-easy, throwaway products. Notice the extra effort of washing a glass or carrying around a reusable water bottle. Pay

attention to what you throw away in a day, and consider how you could cut back on waste by making a few intentional choices.

DAY 5: *Fast from excess.* Super-sizing and going back for second helpings, retail therapy, and stockpiling can be second nature for many of us. Spend 24 hours practicing simplicity and moderation. Avoid second helpings. Don't buy anything that you don't need. Spend some time in your closet, purging unnecessary items and donating them to a thrift store. Spend this day taking only what you need from it and nothing more. Notice how it feels to deny yourself something that you want. Ask God to teach you to live simply and to depend on God.

DAY 6: *Fast from complaining and criticism.* Take on a spirit of gentleness and encouragement for a day. What happens to your mood? to your countenance?

DAY 7: *Fast from technology.* Go for a walk, take a nap, write letters, and cook a great meal. Let your eyes look at real things right in front of you, and be present where you are.