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TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS

CHORUS: Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free!

Thru death into life everlasting
He passed, and we follow Him there;
Over us sin no more hath dominion—
For more than conquerors we are!

His word shall not fail you—He promised;
Believe Him, and all will be well;
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell!

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I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Ephesians 1:18-21

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REFOCUS

Have you ever lost your focus? Several men and women in the Bible lost their focus; some temporarily, some permanently. The reasons vary, but often it was their circumstances.

Sara lost her focus, growing older and older with no sign of a child on the way.

Aaron lost his focus, as Moses delayed coming down the mountain.

King Saul lost his focus, deciding to keep King Agag and the best animals after attacking the Amalekites.

Elijah lost his focus, believing wicked Queen Jezebel more powerful than God.

Martha lost her focus, distracted by the preparation of physical food.

Demas lost his focus, loving the world more than the Lord.

Recently visiting friends in another state, I had the opportunity to observe a seasoned hunter, Bill, as he practiced on the shooting range. Using the scope on his gun which brightens the image and magnifies the target, he aimed and



shot. He then got up, walked to the target several yards away and looked to see how close he came to the bull's eye. This process was repeated several times. He never shot without first using the scope to refocus on the target. This practice on the shooting range pays off when Bill hunts.

What Bill did as a hunter is what we need to do as Christians. Refocus daily! When we lose our focus, due to busyness, discouraging news, disappointment on the job, health issues, financial reversal, or relationship difficulties, we must stop and spend time with the Lord. Be intentional in your relationship with the Lord. Set aside time daily for Bible study, reflection and prayer.

There will be many reasons for not spending time with Jesus. Satan will deceive us into believing we are too busy, other things are more important, and that we just don't have the time. But Jesus says, "...apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Here are four quick suggestions for remaining in Jesus:

1. Pull away – make time, find a place that is quiet where you can be alone with God. The family room, bedroom, car, park, library, or garden. Jesus often went to the hills. Richard Foster, in "Celebration of Discipline," says in contemporary society there are three major distractions to practicing the inward disciplines: noise, crowds, and hurry. Instead of noise, we need silence; instead of crowds, we need solitude; and instead of hurry, we need time. I believe—like Jesus—we will have to be intentional to make room for solitude, silence and time.
2. Ponder – meditate on God's Word rather than just reading it. Ask questions as you read. Think about what it means. Read the words over and over perhaps in a different version so they will be fresh. Meditation connects the message of God with the realities in our lives. Meditation is turning to his Word and making sure our thoughts are influenced by his thoughts.
3. Pray—there are all kinds of ways to pray. I like Ephesians 6:15 which says, "Pray with all kinds of prayers." Try praying the scriptures. Read a few verses, meditate on them, personalize them and then pray them back to God. This has been called "prayer-a-phrasing." "Prayer-a-phrasing" is learning to think God's thoughts while we pour out our own heart to Him.
4. Put it down – keep a spiritual journal. Write your thoughts, questions, scriptures, doubts and prayer request. A spiritual journal is just a record of our spiritual journey with God. It is a valuable tool in our discovery of God. Journaling helps us stop from the busy pace and activity of life and reflect as we write. I've journaled for over 40 years. I write my prayers in blue or black ink. Periodically I come back and

write God' answers in red ink. More than any sermon, seminar, book or lesson, journaling has shown me God's provision, love, care, guidance, and faithfulness daily. My journal helps me remain and know my Lord better.

Don't wait until circumstances throw you off focus. Spend time daily with the Lord, and you will be prepared for whatever comes your way!

Sally Shank, Vienna, West Virginia

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LOOKING FOR GOD EVERYWHERE

I have driven significant miles. It's just the nature of my life's pursuits. Sometimes I'm asked how I stay alert on the long stretches, the 600- or 800-mile days. The answer, a little complicated, is this: I look for God around every corner and over every hill. I keep my eye on the goal—spiritually and physically. I stop every two or three hours and do something to get my heart rate up a little. I keep nuts and water handy, and I do simple mathematics—how far from point A to point B, time and distance, and regularly figure the remaining details. I create small goals to help me reach the big goal. I can't drive 600 miles all at once. I can only do it an inch at a time, a foot, a yard, a tenth of a mile, a mile, and so forth. It's like walking with God—one step at a time, one choice at a time, one course correction at a time. There are stops along the way—detours, roadblocks, and potholes. It sometimes seems a long journey; but when I get to my destination, all those small steps, inches, miles, and stops will seem very insignificant. In fact, I probably won't remember most of it. You and I know what to do—just stay the course, be attentive, keep our eyes on the way to the final destination, keep moving forward, and hold on. There's still a way to go.



Chuck Hicks, Searcy, AR

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BUGLE BOY

In elementary school, we had a young, beautiful teacher who infused in her students not only a love for music but also a delight in singing with all our might. This dynamic woman understood something about children. She knew that if we sang with all our hearts, a joy would overtake

us. When that happened, nothing would be able to dampen our enthusiasm.

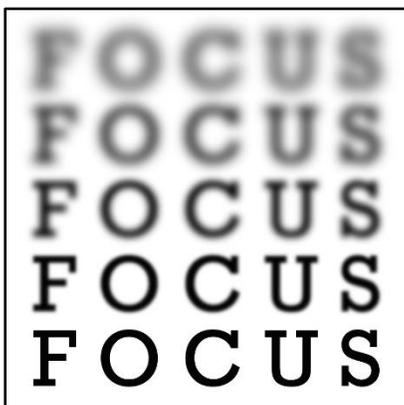
Miss Ruggles likely spent some time correcting our errors. She must have taken effort to actually instruct us about music because, even as young as second grade, we were learning fairly complex pieces with different parts and harmonies. By fourth and fifth grades, we were traveling in an old school bus all over Missouri performing in a multitude of venues.

Yet, there was nothing exceptional or striking about us. We weren't the Vienna Boys Choir or even a select group of slightly above-average kids who possessed some atypical musical talent. Every single kid in school was included, and every single kid was phenomenal. How in the world was that accomplished?

I don't know if I can answer that because I imagine it's actually a pretty singular set of gifts Miss Ruggles brought to the table. However, I am certain of at least this: of all the things she taught us, she really only focused on one thing; it wasn't music; it was love.

Miss Ruggles loved us fiercely and loyally and thoroughly. She didn't pamper us. She didn't let us be lazy. She had exceedingly high expectations and maintained discipline through engagement, humor, and apt response to inattention. She was discerning. While she allowed us to shine individually, the greater success of the group was always her primary objective. No single student dominated the stage; everyone was indispensable. The boys did Barbershop Quartets while the girls danced the Charleston. Soloists sang up front occasionally while supported by the rest of the choir, and they also sang the "doo-wops" for less talented children whose poorer quality of singing was supplemented by distracting kicks and turns and hand claps.

Instead of spending a lot of time focusing on how we needed to deliver all our different parts and maintain perfect pitch, Miss Ruggles talked about the lyrics and what they meant. When we learned Boogie Woogie



Bugle Boy, I imagined that soldier blasting his trumpet in reveille while the basic guitar played with him. Yes, that was a little out of context. But I sang, "a-toot, a-toot-diddleyada-toot, he blows it

eight-to-the-bar" as an honor to that surely very-heroic soldier; and my voice, along with almost sixty others, delighted audiences everywhere and brought not only esteem to that soldier, but also to our young Miss Ruggles, our elementary school, our administration, and even our community.

As we moved into sixth grade, Miss Ruggles didn't travel with us to the junior high. Later, I learned that she had left the district. Surely, the grand theater she'd produced during those five years with us kids had brought her better career opportunities. I grieved her absence for years. Our new teacher, Mrs. Rambow, seemed mostly concerned that we **not** call her Miss **Rain**bow; and she focused on our obedience in that area. Sadly, our singing reflected that and other petty concerns and little else.

My five-year-old granddaughter, Lydia, cannot read yet. But if you're sitting near Lydia at church, you'll hear her praising the Lord. She sings each word just a micro-second after everyone else. By the time she knows how to read, she won't need a book. She'll already know the words because she'll have been singing them with all her heart and mind and soul for as long as she's been able. There are other children in our church family who do the same thing. Watch Todd and Jean's children.

These kids are learning right now how to praise our Father. How we teach them to praise Him will infuse their ideologies about the church in ways that impact them all their lives. Is it important that all the parts be right and perfectly pitched in order to sing out in mighty and joyful praise? Is it important to pay attention to the lyrics when you're singing? Is everyone needed to make the praise glorious and worthy? If you can't sing well, should you be excluded or are you just excused from participation? Does everyone's contribution matter? If you're too loud, should people turn to look at you? If you're off-key should you just be quiet and merely move your lips a little? If you don't know the song very well, should you refuse to sing until you do?

And yet, are these questions really just about a song service?

In our church family, what would happen if, instead of spending a lot of time focusing on how we need to deliver all our different parts and maintain perfect pitch, we concentrated more on the "lyrics?" What if we sang with all our might—deliberate, heart-felt words of praise—blending our joyful voices to the delight of our audience, our righteous and holy God. *"...speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."*

Like the “boogie woogie bugle boy of Company B,” who could only blow a note as long as “the bass and guitar is playin’ with ‘im,” let’s sing our notes with love, praise and the understanding that we are singing to the Lord, God, Most High, who is more than worthy.

Donna Roberts, Rolla, MO

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SUNDAY, THE LORD'S DAY

My daughter, Kyla, loves to run. When she was here recently, she decided to do a 4-mile run; and I went with her while riding my bike. It rained the night before, and the dirt roads behind our home was still "mucky." In case you don't know, that's an amalgam of muddy and yucky! Even so, we started out feeling fresh and determined.

The mud immediately caked up on her shoes and on my bike tires, so thick it would come off in huge clumps, and then start building up again. It became so deep on my tires that I had to get off and walk for a while. I felt angry because we had barely started, and I was worn out after only a half mile. If it hadn't been for Kyla's determination to complete the run, I would have turned back. A nagging voice in my head kept telling me to give up trying that day and try again later.

Then we turned a corner, and the road was much dryer. It had an incline, but that was nothing compared to all the muckiness! As we approached our halfway mark, we did have to change course. Around the second corner there was a small pool of mud and water, so we turned right instead of left, went about a half mile longer, and then back tracked our way to the house. Four miles accomplished!!! Then came the great feeling I always love when I have elevated my heart rate and sustained it for a good while, when my muscles are tired and my whole body relaxes. I used to get that from running like Kyla does; but, due to my bad knees now, I can only get it from biking.

Have you ever had to go through a mucky place? It sucked at your feet and tried to hold you in place. The mud made it very hard to continue on your way. Perhaps you even lost a shoe or a boot!

How like our lives this can be. Satan will do his best to keep us from accomplishing our plans. He will make it "rain" when we expected a dry day. He will get in our ear and tell us to give up today and try again tomorrow. We all know how that goes. We will find a different road block tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow until so much time has gone by that we never even started toward our goal.

We need to remember there's always a corner up ahead. A corner we can only get to if we continue on the hard path set before us. We just have to keep on keeping on; and even then, we might need to change our plans. Perhaps there will be another corner to turn, and we will be able to see danger ahead and know we need to go a different way—not stop, not give up, but find a better way to get to our goal.

The best part of all is, once we have accomplished the task set before us, we will have that wonderful feeling, that tired, worn-out feeling, knowing we have won against sin and satan. And think of all the things we might not have at the end of the struggle. That shoe or that boot stuck in the mud is like the sin in our life that we **need** to leave behind because we are striving toward something better, moving toward something God wants for us, and striving for a cleaner life.

My bike needs to be washed off at this point. The mud has dried on it like concrete to the point it almost seems impossible to get it off the tires and the frame. But, I know a good power wash with our hose will get it all off, every speck, and it will be ready for another ride. God has made it possible for us to get all the sticky sin that seems like concrete in our lives off, every yucky, muddy speck. We think it is so inured to us, there's no way to ever get rid of it. Satan is telling us it's a part of us, very deeply embedded; but God has a power wash like no other. Acts 2:38-39 MSG Peter said, "Change your life. Turn to God and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, so your sins are forgiven. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is targeted to you and your children, but also to all who are far away---whomever, in fact, our Master God invites." His invitation is open today just like it is every single day. But what better time to get clean than on the Lord's Day.

Peggy Bailey, Crosby County, Texas

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Sunrise
The Newsletter For Women By Christian Women

Sunrise is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by members of the Rolla Church of Christ. All previous issues can be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserveandlove.org>. Click on Resources, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

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