Devotion #234

Stay Focused

**2 Peter 1:19 (NASB)** *“So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts*.”

How many times has a parent told their child to stay focused? The hearts of children are easily distracted from what is most important. For those who are old enough to remember the movie “Chitty Chitty Bang Bang”, you will remember the child catcher. He was a disgusting character whose role was to trap children and keep them from being a part of society. One of his tricks was to tempt them with candy or various sweets, luring them out into the open so he could capture them. Nothing works better than a sweet piece of candy, even figurative candy, to entice a child and even adults into a life that is not best for them.

Because God loves us so much, He has given us His Word, the word that Peter refers to as the prophetic word, which is another way of saying, Holy Scriptures. The reason God gave us His Word, in part, is to help us stay focused on what is important so we will know how to conduct ourselves in a godly way, to be the best representatives of God that we can be.

Because of the terrible ordeal that the believers in Rome and the surrounding regions were experiencing, the believers were struggling to keep their focus on God. That’s what difficult circumstances do. They cause us to focus on the situation instead of God, and its not just the difficult situations. Often the good times, the times of peace and quietness can do the same. It is easy for any of us to lose site of the power of God’s Word and its critical place in our lives. Too often we slowly fade into sinful habits or fleshly thinking when we are not staying focused on the truth that God has given us.

Notice Peter says that the Word of God is like a lamp shining in a dark place. We understand that illustration. Who has not been outside in the dark and not able to see only to have a light turn on exposing all that was covered by the darkness? That’s exactly what the Word of the Lord does. The Psalmist said, **Psalm 119:105 (NASB)** “*Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path*.” That means that you and I need to pay attention to the Word of God - not just say we believe it but live in and through it every day, every moment. If we do not, we will be easily enticed by Satan to follow our sinful cravings. And by the way, those sinful cravings can be things like putting ourselves in isolation from others, focusing on our needs internally and externally, spending our energy on ourselves instead of others, etc. But if you remember, the Lord summarized the entire Scripture by saying, **Matthew 22:37-39 (NASB)** " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'” Notice what the Lord did not say - He did not say to focus on yourself and all your needs and wants. He said just the opposite. Our focus is to be on God and what He teaches or commands us to be like and live like. The biggest reason the people of God are weak spiritually and ineffective in living a life of joy and contentment is because we are self focused - spending too much time on ourselves and not God and others.

We have been given the greatest of gifts Beloved. We have the Word of God to guide us and keep us on the right path. We would not be wise to let the issues of this life, good or bad, distract us from what is the only thing that will keep us sane, His Word. So pay attention to everything God says. I often like to say to myself, “Think about what you are thinking about.”. Keep a mental log always of what is going in and out of your mind, and then use the Word of God as the power to keep you focused on what is true and pure and holy.