

Introduction:

- Overcoming spiritual distractions is a continual journey for believers. If you are anything like me, dissatisfaction and disappointment often create an environment where distraction runs wild. We focus on the wrong things and lose track of what it is that God is trying to do in us, or through us. So, what should we do? How do we overcome spiritual distractions? How do we get a breakthrough and overcome distractions? The answer is all about intent. The more intentional you are when it comes to your day to day the easier it will be to focus. Being intentional protects you from being pulled left and right by random thoughts and feelings. Being intentional means, you respond from a place of truth, not from a place of emotion.
- ***“And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.” (Hab 2:2 ESV)***

I. What are you looking at?

- A. This verse in Habakkuk gives us some insight into what it takes to stay focused. The problem is usually we read this verse in a long term context. We use this verse when we talk about church vision or long-range personal spirituality. We think about this verse on January 1st when we are trying to plan the year. Typically, we don't think about "our vision" for the next five minutes and how that could help overcome a spiritual distraction.
 - B. Our vision isn't just about what we have as a plan for our lives or our ministry or our passions. It is literally what we see right in front of us. I think that being intentional about what we actually see is a part of the key to getting a breakthrough in this area. The vision you have for your life won't happen by accident. You will need to intentionally design it with the help and leading of the Holy Spirit.
- C. **Breakthrough with intentional distraction**
 1. As with a lot of things, trying to eliminate the issue requires thinking about and dealing *with the issue*. What generally happens is we think about the thing distracting us, and then we get focused on that rather than not being distracted at all.
 2. Case in point ... try not to think about a grilled cheese sandwich. Don't think about it. Stop it. See...you can't.
- D. **Leverage our spiritual distractions**
 1. We can purposefully and intentionally place distractions in our life that take us out of the mundane and into life-giving experiences. The point is that you need to structure your distractions into your life, instead of just letting them take you away into your imagination. What if you set a notification, or an appointment reminder or emailed yourself every day? What if the message was super simple like, "Hey how are you today...? Tell Jesus one thing you are thankful for."
 2. How would your day change if you intentionally insert a meaningful distraction? Many people feel guilty that they don't connect with God enough and often wrestle with spiritually connecting. You could accomplish the goal of connecting with the Father and opening your day to Him by intentionally structuring your day.

II. Your attention is being fought for

- A. ***"I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord."*** (1 Corinthians 7:35 ESV)
1. You may not hear much about the crisis called "**distracted living**". This is where you miss out on much of your **life** because you generally aren't paying attention - or your attention is so torn in many directions that you really don't focus on anything.
 2. "Some people use **social media** to create something that they are not," he says, explaining that the virtual world can **distract** people so much from their real lives that they either forget who they are or become so involved in the **reality** they've created that they don't want to work on their own issues.
 3. Distractions of oversharing that will get many likes, and at the same time, there's no hesitancy in sharing what they don't like about you! They don't even know you, at least not the real you. And people lose their identity being more concerned about their virtual persona than their Kingdom identity.
- B. ***Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*** (1 Peter 5:8 ESV)
1. The enemy has traps that causes us to forget who we really are, distractions that slowly causes us to become less focused on Jesus and the authority we have in Him. Rendering us ineffective. When divine appointments filled with opportunities to glorify the Father appears, believers are not quite as ready as they were supposed to be.
- C. ***"I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord."*** (1 Corinthians 7:35 ESV)
1. What do you see? Major companies are specifically studying how our brains work when it comes to distraction so that they can use that to make addictive products. Sneaky right? Ya well, Facebook isn't just a fluke...it taps into who we are as people on so many different levels. It uses a distraction called **algorithm**.
 2. An **algorithm** is a mathematical set of rules specifying how a group of data behaves.
 3. **Social media algorithms** are a way of sorting posts in a users' feed based on relevancy instead of publish time. **Social networks** prioritize which content a user sees in their feed first by the likelihood that they'll actually want to see it. If I research a particular item or topic on any social media platform I'll soon begin to see it all day whenever I open my browser. And you know what, we are very desensitized to it. And that is exactly what satan wants us to become, desensitized to his distractions.
 4. But what if amongst the noise we could spin it back the other way...what if we could **leverage distraction** for the right reason?
 5. What if we could purposefully and intentionally place distractions in our life so that instead of being 10 minutes into our Instagram feed we were 10 minutes into the Holy Spirit reminding us who we are?
 - What if we inundate our day with declaring and decreeing who we are and our position in the Kingdom?
 - What if we spoke those things that be not as though they were with a smile and a confidence that shakes hell to its core?

- What if we actually planned the night before to focus our day on exercising our Kingdom authority to get people healed, delivered, free, and restored back to God?
- What if we said yes to what God says yes to and no to what God says no to?
- What happens? We will avoid the traps of the enemy because we have leveraged distractions!

III. One step further - giving it away

- A. Let's take this one step further while we figure out how to impact our own lives, let's also distract ourselves into someone else's life. What if the most important activities in your day were looking for chances to give life to other people?
- B. **Jesus** was so good at not letting His own goals come at the expense of impacting other people. It seemed like He was always willing to share, always willing to love and always willing to not just be God but also be a real man.
- C. How would it look if your daily email reminder was, "Hey...the answer is YES, you have something to give. Find someone around you to compliment or encourage. You have the spirit of God inside you!!" How could life change if your daily distraction wasn't just about you but also about how you could leverage your anointings, giftings and talents to impact others around you?

IV. What if life is *inside* the interruption?

- A. We are going to have our attention interrupted. I think that even for the most focused of people there are times when they get distracted. In fact, escapism or entertainment is probably unavoidable. The key is to be able to control the frequency of the interruptions and the duration of time while distracted. But, what if we were interrupted from our daily routine of things we enjoy by something God is allowing to get our attention?
- B. **Jesus was often distracted by people during His day today and it was when He engaged with these people that we saw incredible things happen.**
 1. Think of the Samaritan woman at the well in **John 4:7**. Jesus intentionally went to the well and when He was engaged by the woman, He was willing to give life to her from His spirit. I know He was there intentionally because men were not supposed to be at the well at that time.
 2. He also knew that the woman was not supposed to be there at that time either. Women went to the well early in the morning because it was cooler. This woman was at the well in the middle of the day to *avoid* interaction with the other women. Jesus knew that she was ashamed and that she needed life. Do you have somewhere that you could position yourself so that you could give away the life of Jesus inside you to another person?
- C. **What if your interruption came in the form of intentionally encouraging someone else?**
 1. *Jesus was also distracted by the woman with the issue of blood when she reached out and touched Him in Matthew 9:20-22.*
 2. **"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor (passion), serving the Lord."** (Romans 12:11 ESV)
 3. *The enemy's greatest distraction to render us helpless is to attack our identity.*

- a) *1Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.... 11Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. (Matthew 4:1 & 11 ESV)*

4. **Jesus was victorious in passing the distraction test of temptation because He remembered His identity!**

- E. Who you are doesn't change because of your job or because of your relationship, or because of anything. Who you are is set and established in Christ...it's figuring out who that person is and then acting in faith based on that knowledge. Dissatisfaction in life comes because we get caught up in where we are and what we are doing. Take a minute to think about who you really are. Instead of your job title, think about what Jesus has created you for. The key to breaking dissatisfaction is acting based on who you are.
- F. **Dissatisfaction creates distraction.**
- G. Dissatisfaction is usually amplified because you're not filtering where you are and what you are doing through your identity. If your complaint is tied to your work, or your situation you need to take a step back. God probably doesn't have you where you are **because of where you are** but because of **who you are!**

V. Deal with your dissatisfaction.

- A. Take some time to figure out if there are underlying issues that need to be dealt with. Change the question from **why** I am here to why **am I** here. Put the emphasis on figuring out why God has you where you are. Satisfaction comes when we are using the gifts and talents that God has given us regardless of the circumstances. Work on who you are and then being that in your environment.
- B. **Identify Distractions.**
- C. Are there any re-occurring distractions that you can identify? Do they come at a certain time, or from a certain person? Potentially the answer to that particular distraction is removing the source. Does love or faith contribute?
1. *Ask Holy Spirit, "Lord is this You?"*
 2. *What does the Word say about this?*
 3. *If I do this will God be glorified?*
 4. *If I don't do this will it be a missed opportunity to present Jesus?*
 5. *Does this represent Jesus well?*
 6. *Repeat step 1 until you receive an answer.*
- D. **Implement Intentional distractions.**
1. As mentioned above, I think you need to write your vision. Spend some time thinking about what you actually want your day to look like. Then put things in place that will intentionally get you that vision. You have so many tools at your disposal to help you. Notifications, emails, calendar, to-do lists...etc.
 2. Start putting things in there that remind you to connect with God and then take His spirit and share it with the people around you. It's probably why you are there in the first place. God doesn't do all the work, he partners with us in the places we are to reach the people who need Him. It's how it works. Who could you impact today?