

CLARITY TRUMPET

For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

First Corinthians 14:8, 9

The Importance of Proper Focus

Ever since one of my students introduced me to an Argus 35mm camera back in the 1960s, I've been somewhat of a photography buff. I even got good enough to where I was able to supplement my income in those days. I did weddings and freelanced on my own in other ways. The international headquarters of Burger King was located in Miami and I did work for them for their company magazine and for some of their local television commercials. From a purely photographic perspective, I know a little bit about the importance of proper focus.

The dictionary defines focus as *a point of concentration or directed attention*. In the spiritual realm—concerning our relationship with God—there are few things (if anything) more important than being properly focused. Consider, for instance—

God's Focus on Mankind

God Himself has been focused on man from the very start. Regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, John 1:9 says that He “*was the true Light which gives light to every man who comes into the world.*” So even before a human being is able to speak, to reason or to choose, Jesus Christ has already focused on him—giving him an inborn light (or awareness) of God. In addition, *God so loved the world (everyone) that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever (any individual) believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life* (John 3:16).

The Lord does not want any to be lost as indicated by First Timothy 2:3, 4: *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.* Second Peter 3:9 reiterates the same thought when it says, *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

God's focus on all mankind is very real and very important; so much so, that He yearns for a response from men. Note Psalm 14:2: *The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God.* He longs for men to know Him. As the apostle Paul was addressing the philosophers “*in the midst of the Areopagus*” (Mars Hill) he made it clear that God “*has made of one blood every nation of man to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from any one of us*” (Acts 17:26, 27).

Not only does God focus on men in general, but also there is another aspect of His focus.

God's Focus on His Own Children

Let these precious verses sink in.

- *He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous....(Job 36:7).*
- *Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy (Psalm 33:18).*
- *The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry (Psalm 34:15).*
- *...But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who*

trembles at My word (Isaiah 66:2).

- *For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.... (Second Chronicles 16:9).*
- *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him (John 4:23).*

Our Focus on God

If you are His child through faith in Christ, you are never out of His sight. And He is particularly attentive to you when you are loyal or faithful to Him. Jesus put it this way when He was encouraging His eleven disciples in the upper room: *You are My friends* (rather than just servants) *if you do whatever I command you* (John 15:14).

There is no one nor anything that is as deserving of our total commitment and trust (*our complete focus*) than the God who has redeemed us to Himself and saved us from an eternity separated from Him, but it is so easy to be distracted from what is really important—our daily, moment-by-moment walk with Him.

A Command. Proverbs 4:25–27 instructs us: *Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your feet from evil.*

An Admonition. We are in a race—a marathon, and we must never lose sight of our Savior or of His purpose for us, as Hebrews 12:1–3 reminds us: *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses (the Heroes of the Faith in chapter 11), let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (by God), looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.*

A Promise. Concerning the routines of life—working, learning, raising a family, running a household, being involved in ministry—there are few passages of Scripture that have been as encouraging to me over the years as this one found in Isaiah 40:28–31: *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. There is no searching of His understanding. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*

A Prayer. Dear Christian friend, in this world of corruption and ungodly distractions, it is so imperative that we **allow Christ to be the center of everything**—our thoughts, our dreams and plans, and all areas of life. I can't think of a better prayer for myself (and for you who know Christ as your Savior) than that found in Psalm 119:36–38: *Incline my heart (cause me to long for) Your testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way. Establish Your word to Your servant, who is devoted to fearing You. Turn away my reproach which I dread, for Your judgments are good. Behold, I long for Your precepts; revive me in Your righteousness.*

Much of our frustrations come into our Christian lives because we are so torn back and forth from one interest or priority to another. May each of us know the joy of **a total focus** on our precious Lord. How our lives would be simplified and enriched if it were so.

