

# Deadly Distractions: 4 Things That Kill Your Ability to Focus

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I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. [13] No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

Philippians 3:12-14 NLT

## Opening Questions

- God calls each of us toward a greater purpose for our lives; we just have keep moving forward to reach it.
- What purpose is God calling you toward? Are you focused on achieving this vision, or is something distracting you?
- Here are 4 distractions that can take away your focus, and how to get your focus back to moving forward toward your purpose.

## Bible Study

### 1. Guilt and Regret

My guilt has overwhelmed me. Like a heavy load, it is more than I can bear.

Psalm 38:4 GWT

Before I confessed my sins, I kept it all inside; my dishonesty devastated my inner life, causing my life to be filled with frustration, irrepressible anguish, and misery. [4] The pain never let up, for your hand of conviction was heavy on my heart. My strength was sapped, my inner life dried up like a spiritual drought within my soul.

Psalm 32:3-4 TPT

- When we don't talk about and deal with the things that make us guilty, we become overwhelmed and frustrated. We become more easily fatigued and wiped out, and even small tasks or circumstances feel like they are more than we can handle.
- We get distracted because we either focus too much on the guilt or try to do everything we can to avoid the guilt. Either way our focus is in the wrong place.

- What guilt is weighing you down? (bitterness in a relationship, jealousy, deceit, etc. Look at Galatians 5:19-21 for other examples of what may be weighing you down)

Then I let it all out; I said, "I'll make a clean breast of my failures to GOD." Suddenly the pressure was gone— my guilt dissolved, my sin disappeared.

Psalm 32:5 MSG

[1] Since we are surrounded by so many examples of faith, we must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially sin that distracts us. We must run the race that lies ahead of us and never give up. [2] We must focus on Jesus, the source and goal of our faith. He saw the joy ahead of him, so he endured death on the cross and ignored the disgrace it brought him. Then he received the highest position in heaven, the one next to the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1 GWT

- Being honest with God and people about all of our guilt relieves the weight that slowed us down and gets us back on track toward our goal and purpose.
- God doesn't want us to be honest about our guilt because he wants us to feel bad about ourselves, but because he knows it's distracting us from actually being happy and moving forward toward our purpose.
- What can you be honest about today to stop being distracted by your guilt? Pray about it and pick two to three people to be honest with today.

## 2. Unchecked Emotions

My eyes of faith won't focus anymore, for sorrow fills my heart. There are so many enemies who come against me!

Psalm 6:7 TPT

Dear, dear Corinthians, I can't tell you how much I long for you to enter this wide-open, spacious life. We didn't fence you in. The smallness you feel comes from within you. Your lives aren't small, but you're living them in a small way. I'm speaking as plainly as I can and with great affection.

Open up your lives. Live openly and expansively!

2 Corinthians 6:11-13 MSG

- There are two ways we can become distracted by unchecked emotions.
- As the first scripture says, we may let our emotions take over. We get tossed back and forth because we ride the waves of each emotion that comes, so there is no way to focus on anything because we have let our emotions get out of control.
- The second way we may become distracted by unchecked emotions is that we stay closed up, and are unwilling to be open and vulnerable about what we feel. We end up thinking and living small, because our main focus is to just keep everything in.
- Which is your response to dealing with emotions? Regardless of your response, both distract us from becoming who we are meant to be with God.

Why am I so overwrought? Why am I so disturbed? Why can't I just hope in God? Despite all my emotions, I will believe and praise the One who saves me and is my life.

Psalms 42:5 Voice

- In this Scripture, David acknowledged his emotions but did not let them distract him from keeping his hope in God. It was a choice he made to be honest about his emotions and not let them keep him from focusing on his purpose and relationship with God.
- What emotions do you need to take to God so that you can move forward?

### 3. Fear and Anxiety

[40] But Martha became exasperated by finishing the numerous household chores in preparation for her guests, so she interrupted Jesus and said, "Lord, don't you think it's unfair that my sister left me to do all the work by myself? You should tell her to get up and help me." [41] The Lord answered her, "Martha, my beloved Martha. Why are you upset and troubled, pulled away by all these many distractions? Are they really that important? [42] Mary has discovered the one thing most important by choosing to sit at my feet. She is undistracted, and I won't take this privilege from her."

Luke 10:40-42 TPT

[25] "Therefore I tell you, stop being worried or anxious (perpetually uneasy, distracted) about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, as to what you will wear. Is life not more than food, and the body more than clothing? [26] Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow [seed] nor reap [the harvest] nor gather [the crops] into barns, and yet your heavenly Father keeps feeding them. Are you not worth much more than they?"

Matthew 6:25-26 AMP

- Fear and anxiety can distract us from what really matters. The chores Martha was so worried about still needed to get done, but they didn't need to be her number one priority. Jesus reminded her what he reminds us - God takes care of our needs, so we don't need to worry about them!
- What worries and "to-do's" are distracting you? How is God trying to show you what is truly important?

### 4. No Vision

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Proverbs 29:18 KJV

And if anyone longs to be wise, ask God for wisdom and he will give it! He won't see your lack of wisdom as an opportunity to scold you over your failures but he will overwhelm your failures with his generous grace. [6] Just make sure you ask empowered by confident faith without doubting that you will receive. For the ambivalent person believes one minute and doubts the next. Being undecided makes you become like the rough seas driven and tossed by the wind. You're up one

minute and tossed down the next. [7] When you are half-hearted and wavering it leaves you unstable. Can you really expect to receive anything from the Lord when you're in that condition?  
James 1:5-7 TPT

- Vision is the thing that makes us keep moving forward. When we don't believe that God will help us accomplish our purpose, we end up half-hearted and wavering, constantly tossed back and forth and never willing to fully commit to the vision God has for us.
- What vision have you stopped believing in?

Jesus passionately determined to leave for Jerusalem and let nothing distract him from fulfilling his mission there, for the time for him to be lifted up was drawing near.

Luke 9:51 TPT

- Jesus didn't let anything distract him from his vision and purpose. He wholeheartedly believed that he was meant for something greater, and so kept moving forward, relentless in his mission.
- What purpose is God calling you toward? How can you turn to God today to help you not get distracted and keep moving forward?



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