

November 13, 2005

DEALING WITH THE DISTRACTIONS OF DAY-TO-DAY LIFE

Psalm 55

INTRODUCTION

We are an easily distracted people. It doesn't take much for us to be distracted. Most of us have probably driven up on a rear end collision. You know how most of those rear end collisions occur, don't you?

The driver of the car has become distracted?

Lessons one and two of this series are crucial to successfully implementing today's lesson. Taking God as your partner in your business and/or career will help you face the nagging distractions of day-to-day life, as will making the effort to start your day with a heart full of praise and worship.

But what do you do when you've made the choice to take as your partner, you're seeking his presence first thing in the morning and you still end up losing his presence by 10:00AM.

How do you stay in God's presence despite the distractions of the day?

In Psalm 55 David talks about this very thing.

Psalms 55

55:1 For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A maskil of David.

Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea; 2 hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught 3 at the voice of the enemy, at the stares of the wicked; for they bring down suffering upon me and revile me in their anger.

4 My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death assail me. 5 Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me. 8 I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm."

9 Confuse the wicked, O Lord, confound their speech, for I see violence and strife in the city. 10 Day and night they prowl about on its walls; malice and abuse are within it. 11 Destructive forces are at work in the city; threats and lies never leave its streets.

12 If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. 13 But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, 14 with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God.

15 Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the grave, for evil finds lodging among them.

16 But I call to God, and the LORD saves me. 17 Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice. 18 He ransoms me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me. 19 God, who is enthroned forever, will hear them and afflict them—Selahmen who never change their ways and have no fear of God. 20 My companion attacks his friends; he violates his covenant. 21 His speech is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords.

22 Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall. 23 But you, O God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of corruption; bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not live out half their days.

But as for me, I trust in you. NIV

PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF GOD 24/7 MEANS LEARNING TO DEAL WITH THE DISTRACTIONS OF LIFE.

As David went about his typical day, he faced complications of all sorts. In Psalm 55 he lists some of them:

I. Distractions to His Presence

A. *Destructive Mental Attitude*

David says...

2 My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught.

4 My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death assail me. 5 Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me

This is what Zig Ziglar refers to as "stinking thinking."

Thoughts that aren't designed to get you through a situation, but can only serve to immobilize you.

It's thinking things like:

- "What's the use? This project will never get off the ground."
- "What's the use? I'll never get over this problem."
- "What's the use? I'm doomed to fail anyway. I'm in over my head; I'm outmatched; I'm bound to lose."

"Stinking thinking" always distracts us from the presence of God

Appl: Do you often fall prey to "Stinking Thinking?" Are prone to think the worst? Have you cornered the market on negative thinking? If so I guarantee that you get distracted from his presence.

B. *Depressing Circumstances*

It is a sad fact that life is not always easy. Circumstances can be difficult and overwhelming. We can be going about our busy and then all of a sudden something goes wrong or turns for the worse.

9 Confuse the wicked, O Lord, confound their speech, for I see violence and strife in the city. 10 Day and night they prowl about on its walls; malice and abuse are within it. 11 Destructive forces are at work in the city; threats and lies never leave its streets.

The Distracting Circumstances can be anything from:

- Employee problems
- Employer problems
- Computer problems

- Money problems
- Over-extended schedules
- Over-priced contractors
- Over-booked flights
- More items on your to-do list than you can possibly get done in one day.

Appl: Are you a victim of the depressing circumstances of your day? Do you lose sight of his presence due to circumstances?

C. Disloyal Friends

Sometimes one of the big distractions from His presence is that we are dealing with feelings of abandonment by friends.

In 2000 UCLA alumni and fans made UCLA football coach Pepper Rodgers's life miserable during a season when his Bruins got off to a horrible start. Nobody in Southern California would hang out with him. "My dog was my only true friend," Rodgers said of that year. "I told my wife that every man needs at least two good friends. She bought me another dog."^[1]

12 If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. 13 But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, 14 with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God.

Disloyalty is one of the complications we'll have to deal with from time to time.

Appl: Does how you are feeling about other people distract you from his presence? Do you allow others to distract you from his presence?

D. Desire to escape

Daydreaming—

Jeremy and Christine Krauss are going to spend three weeks in Hawaii. Now aren't we all just a little bit distracted by that? Wouldn't we all just want to join them? Don't we sometimes think that if we could just get away it would be better?

Have you ever wanted to run? Have you ever wanted to just get away? The desire to escape can be a tremendous distraction in our daily life.

- It causes us to day dream about being single, when we know that divorce isn't an option.
- It causes us to spend more time watching TV than we should.
- It causes us to spend more money than we should on meaningless diversions.
- I causes us to eat more than we should, or abuse alcohol, or abuse drugs.

6 I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest-- 7 I would flee far away and stay in the desert; Selah

The distractions in our everyday life can lead us to losing the presence of God that we sought in the morning. If you're not careful, you'll find yourself in a situation where you start everyday with a bang, and end everyday with a whimper. That will always lead to one thing.

We need God's presence throughout the day. In Psalm 55, David shows us how to get it.

II. Overcoming the Distractions to God's Presence

Here they are...

- A. Return to God again and again throughout the day.**
- B. Keep casting your cares on him through out the day.**
- C. Reaffirm your confidence in Him.**

16 But I call to God, and the LORD saves me. 17 Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice

22 Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

But as for me, I trust in you.

This is the walk of a person of the presence.

CONCLUSION

Every day comes with its own distractions, problems, and complications. These are inevitable, and unavoidable. Even Jesus said,

"Do not worry about tomorrow...Each day has enough trouble of its own." (Matthew 6:34)

If you let them, these troubles can rob you of experiencing the benefit of God's presence in your life.

If you want to experience the power of God's presence in your life around the clock, 24 hour a day, seven days a week, you need to develop the habit of returning to him again and again throughout the day. Just like David.

(v. 17) Evening, morning and noon, I cry out in distress and he hears my voice.

Isn't it time to push the hindrances away?
 Isn't time to stop making excuses?
 Isn't it time to finally press on as a person of the presence?

*I am reaching for the highest goal,
 That I might receive the prize.
 Pressing onward, pushing every hindrance aside, out of my way,
 'Cause I want to,
 I want to know You more.*

[1] Washington City Paper (10-26-01)