

***Ephesians: The Purpose and Plan of God***  
**The Importance of a Focused Life**  
February 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015

***Acts 20:20-24***

When Paul returned to Ephesus after several months, he spoke to the elders, giving them instruction on how to continue to serve God's people. Paul emphasized...

- ... The Importance of teaching the Word of God and
- ... The Importance of a Focused Life

**The Characteristics of a Focused Life**

*Focus*: “[Latin *focus* a fire, ... Spanish *fuego*] ... A central point; point of concentration.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Self-Surrender “*But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself,...*” Acts 20:24

❖ Past accomplishments did not hold Paul!

📖 Philippians 3:1-16

- ✓ Worldly gain counted as loss (verse 8)
- ✓ Self-righteousness worth nothing (verse 9)
- ✓ Forget what lies behind (verse 13)

Jesus said...“*So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be My disciple.*” Luke 14:33

2. Obedience “*And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit,...*” Acts 20:22

❖ Imprisonments and affliction did not deter Paul!

📖 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Romans 8:18 “*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*”

📖 1 Peter 2:21-25

3. Determination “*... if only I may finish my course and the ministry I received...*” Acts 20:24

*Determination*: “... firm resolution; settled purpose; ... Absolute direction to a certain end. ...”<sup>1</sup>

❖ Paul realized that his ministry was given by God!

Philippians 3:12 “*... I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own.*”

Acts 9:15 “*But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.’*”

❖ Paul knew that the fulfillment of God's call on his life would take a commitment to finish strong!

📖 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

4. Right Priorities “...to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

- ❖ To testify to the good news of God’s grace, Paul would have to keep Jesus in focus!

*John 1:17 “...grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”*

*Philippians 3:10 “...that I may know Him...”*

📖 Hebrews 12:1-3

“... looking to Jesus...”

Look: (Greek) “to look away from one thing so as to see another, to concentrate the gaze upon.”<sup>2</sup>

“Fixing our eyes on Jesus, for He is our goal.”<sup>3</sup>

- ❖ To fulfill God’s will for his life, Paul would have to follow Jesus’ example.

*Luke 22:42 ... “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done”*



“The successful man is the average man, focused” - Unknown

*“But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24*

Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Webster, Noah. *American Dictionary of the English Language (1828 Facsimile Edition)*. San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> Vine, W.E. *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*. Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Robertson, A. T. *Word pictures in the New Testament*. Nashville: Holman Reference, 2000.

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