

## **“Keep Your Eyes on Jesus!”**

08-10-14

One night a house caught fire and a young boy was forced to flee to the roof. The father stood on the ground below with outstretched arms, calling to his son, *"Jump! I'll catch you."* He knew the boy had to jump to save his life. But all the boy could see was flame, smoke, and blackness.

He was afraid to leave the roof. His father kept yelling: *"Jump! I'll catch you."* But the boy protested, *"Daddy, I can't see you."* To which the father replied, *"But I can see you and that's all that matters."*

Open to Matthew 14. The disciples are out of the Sea of Galilee. They were experienced fishermen who had made this trip many times before. Tonight, Jesus wasn't with them because He had gone away to pray with His Father. The water was rough just like it always was. This was nothing unusual, but what happened next was!

Look at verses 24-27, *"but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night, (3-6 am), he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."*

Well, we all know Peter! As soon as He hears that for sure it's Jesus, He's ready to do something. Peter trusted and He moved. Look at verses 28-29, *"And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus."* Peter believed and had trust in Jesus. Because of this, he was willing to do what seemed to be impossible!

But the story didn't continue that way and actually got blown off the track! Look at verses 30-31, *"But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" Peter got distracted and sank!* But before we write Peter off, let's remember, at least Peter got out of the boat!

Many times we're just like Peter. We start out seeking a relationship with Jesus to serve and worship Him, but just like Peter, we get so easily distracted and start to sink! Let's look at 8 common distractions Christians face.

**1. Money.** I'm sure you guessed this would be on this list! We all need money to *live* in this world. We all own money, but we have to make sure money doesn't own us! Money itself isn't an interference in our walk with God, the love of money is! Listen to Matthew 6:21, *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

In a nut shell, if we trust God, He'll take care of us. That doesn't mean we should quit our jobs. We just need to realize that God's more important, and is far more than capable of taking care of us than we are. Money might be the blood flow of the world, but it's not the blood flow of those who are in Jesus, faith is!

**2. Media.** It's so easy to get caught up in the media. The Internet, TV, movies, music, video games, newspapers, magazines. The media's so dangerous because it's so easy to get consumed in it. Almost every commercial on TV, and every advertisement on the Internet is trying to convince us that we're missing something,

and they're the ones that can fill that need. The key to overcoming the media is to be wise in what we watch, read, play, and in how much time we spend with it.

**3. Church, or religion.** Believe it or not, these can be HUGE distractions in our walk with God. Church doesn't do this intentionally, but we can easily let it hinder our relationship with God. How? The main reason is that it can be so easy to pursue church, and beliefs *about* God, but forget to *pursue God Himself!* It's so easy to go to church to just go to church! The real reason we should be going church is to refuel for our week by coming together with fellow believers to worship and meditate on God and His Word!

**4. Relationships.** Family, friends, co-workers. Our relationships are our connection with the world, but when we allow any one of these relationships to become more important to us than God, they become a distraction. We need to make sure we're giving God ample time everyday! He needs to be our 1 and only! We need to share Jesus Christ with them!

**5. Routine.** This is the things that distracts us all the time. The most important thing is that spending *time with God* should be in your routine! Far too often we just squeeze God in when we have down time. It's so easy to get caught up in all the things we HAVE to do. But make sure spending time with God is a *part* of your routine. Make sure you're willing to abandon your routine, and let God have complete control!

**6. Our Work.** Work, work, work. What a distraction! Everything from a *job*, to leading worship, a Bible study, or anything! It's so easy to get caught up in our duties, but the most important thing is that we do everything entirely for Jesus. We can have great motives behind our work, but sometimes we let the work become more important than "listening to Jesus". Listen and be flexible!

**7. Desiring a blessing from God, more than God Himself.** We can pray for a specific thing over and over again, but forget about spending time with God. It's like doing something for God just to get the reward we want, not in serving Him and others! From Matthew 6:33, "*But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*"

**8. Ourselves.** Us! We're last on the list, but possibly the most likely to distract us! We are, by nature, sinful, and if we live by our nature, we won't get close to God. That's why we need to die to ourselves, and live to Christ! But no matter what we do, there will be a constant battle within ourselves between spirit and flesh. That's why we need to constantly allow God to search our heart, and purify it.

I want to challenge you to do 3 things to help you keep your eyes on God. **1.**

**Focus on a quiet time with God.** Make this a time for you and God to talk and pray.

**2. Focus on Others.** Don't just worry about yourself. Look around to see if others are sinking and need your helping hand. **3. Focus on Jesus.** Peter took his eye off Jesus, but Jesus never took His eyes off Peter! He never takes His eyes off you!

Don't let the storms of life distract you from seeing Jesus. Keep your eyes on Him alone. He's always there!