



Focused or Distracted? – Bible Study Notes

Introduction

2 TIMOTHY 1:6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Timothy was dealing with the challenging situation of having his mentor and father in the faith, in prison. It would have been a very challenging situation for the young pastor who would have been facing all sorts of reproach and threats under the circumstances. But Paul admonishes him and every one of us in the same situation saying, please remember that you have a gift inside you. You have the gift of the same faith that was in your pedigree. You also have the gift of the Spirit of power, love and a sound mind!

In the midst of the challenges we face in life, we need to remember that we have the gift of faith and the Gift of the Spirit of power, love and a sound mind. Paul is saying, stir up those gifts, particularly in trying times. To stir up is to rekindle, it is to fan into flame. The implication is if you don't stir up these gifts you will be intimidated, by the circumstances you face.

Today we will get to understand the primary principle that governs stirring something up is focus/distraction.

Latent Gifts

Now we need to stir up the gifts because we can have these gifts, yet still be overwhelmed by life because the gifts, and the power in them, are LATENT. When something is latent, it means it is existing but not yet developed or manifest; hidden or concealed. God almost never gives gifts in their fully developed form. He gives us gifts in seed form, underdeveloped, because the real blessing is in the journey or the process of discovering the potential of the gift. Regrettably however, many of us are living life with gifts that are latent, unused, untapped, dormant, inactive!

Now it's good that it's there, it's great that you always have the gift of the Spirit of God in you...it's great that you always have the gift of faith, the ability to believe God in you, but it is much better when the gift is not dormant! It's better when it is stirred up! It is better when the Holy Spirit is not



trapped in you! It's great to have faith, but it's better to exercise your faith. Latent heat is great, but a roaring fire is better. Just like a nice relationship is great, but a sizzling relationship is better! A good life is great, but an abundant life is better! Going to heaven is great but bringing nations with you is better! **Having the gift in you is great but having the gift drive you is better!**

The process of stirring up your gift is the process of turning latent heat into a roaring flame! God's desire for you is that the gift is roaring!

"I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!

Revelation 3:15-16

Jesus is speaking to some Pastors, angels of different houses, and He expressed an important sentiment, He says I would prefer if you are hot or cold, I can't use you lukewarm.

1 Corinthians 9:24 Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So, run to win!

In **1 Corinthians 9:24**, Paul says we are to run like we are running to win the race. When you stir up the gift in you, you It means that you are fully engaging that gift, you are using it to the max! It means placing a demand on the gift you have been given for the race of life, because you intend to realise the full potential of that gift!

How to stir up a gift

Now the most important question you should be asking is how? How do I stir up the gift that is within me?

Write this down: **often times, the difference between a roaring fire and latent heat your focus and distractions.**

Every gift that is fully functioning has been given a degree of focus that other gifts have not been given. The difference between a roaring campfire and one that is dying out, is the focus it has



been giving. Roaring fires keep roaring because someone is focussed on that fire. Someone is throwing things in the fire to keep it burning, someone is stoking the fire, tending to it.

Having the gift of faith and the gift of the Spirit in you is no guarantee that you will live well, it is your focus and your distractions that that will determine how well you live.

1 Corinthians 9:25

All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.

The discipline of an athlete is nothing more than focussing on activities, diet, words that will amplify their ability to win the race. The ability to run, to throw the Javelin is already in the athlete...but their discipline, their focus will determine how far that potential takes them.

Psalm 1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law, he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

The counsel of the ungodly, the path of the sinner, the seat of the scornful are all distractions! This man is blessed because His focus is in the Law of the Lord.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, 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, 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.

The Sin is the distraction, distractions entrap you and hinder your ability to run well. Jesus is the focus. When you are focussed on the gift, you experience the full benefits and potential of the gift!



In **Mark 4:18**, the thorny ground soil did not produce, it had the word, it had the ability in itself to produce, but it was distracted by the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things...but it turned its focus away from the Word and gave into the distractions.

Your focus will determine your productivity. Distractions hinder productivity.

Colossians 3: 1- 2 (NLT) - Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honour at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.

If you want to produce heavenly results, then earthly things cannot have your affection and focus in the same way that heaven does. To the person who has no interest in the kingdom of God, earthly things are their focus. But to those of us who are interested in the establishment of heaven on earth, heaven needs to be our focus and the things on the earth, as essential as they are, need to be seen as a distraction.

Are you focussed or distracted?

A key thing that determines if your gifts are stirred up or not is how you answer this question: based on your thoughts, words, emotions and actions today, are you focused or are you distracted?

Are you distracted by the storm or are you focused on the Lord?

Are you distracted by the mockers or are you focused on building the wall?

Are you focused by the thorns or are you focused on the Word?

Is this person you are dating the focus in this season, or are they a distraction?

There is so much distraction around so, many people live life constantly distracted! Especially in our time, there is so much distraction on our phones, on tv, in your car...everywhere you go. And people are not stirred up, many people don't have a roaring fire on the inside because we are distracted. Turn off your TV one evening and you will realise how distracted you have been. Leave your phone at home on morning and go the whole day without it and you will be amazed at what you will begin to see and notice on the tube or as you walk to uni.



Several times in scripture, **Luke 5:16, Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35** the scripture said about Jesus that He went to a quiet place to pray alone. Because Jesus understood that the power to do what He is called to do is to get away from distractions in order to focus. Jesus found great power in getting away from distractions to focus! That was the essence of His times of prayer. This should also be the essence of our prayer times.

Here are some practical ways to focus or to stir up the gift:

- Reading the Word
- Reciting bible verses out loud
- Singing songs that are about Jesus, the ultimate gift
- Fasting
- Making it part of your daily life to pray on the go
- Taking time out to switch off from everything else to pray
- Listening to Faith filled sermons
- Journaling your thoughts and prophetic words you have received directly from God, or through other people of faith whom you trust.
- Speaking well of yourself on purpose, very regularly
- Identifying the gift, you have
- Practicing using your gifts.
- Praying in tongues

Conclusion

You have to believe that everything you need to help you deal with what you face around you is already inside you. You have to make a decision about what you believe should be your central focus at any point in your life. If we don't choose our focus in life, we will be handed distractions from our gifts by life. If we don't make a conscious decision to be focussed on the gifts of God within us, we will live life distracted and we will die with unfulfilled potential. If we don't make a conscious decision to keep the gifts of God in us stirred up, we buy the lie that we can and should be overwhelmed by what we face around us.