

Rivet Your Eyes On The Destination

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Having worked for thirty-seven years in the food service industry, I have traveled to places and done things I never could have done in many other professions. The travel had its obvious drawbacks, but meeting and working with some of the top people in the industry helped me to appreciate the many talents God gives to man. Added to this benefit is learning the lessons that they and I distilled from the life we live.

The president and owner of a large food distribution company and I had planned to call on a customer in San Diego. I planned to pick him up in my car and drive the hundred miles to our destination. When we met, however, he decided to take his car, and instead of getting on the freeway, he drove us to the airport, rented a small plane and took off for San Diego.

I must admit that is the way to make a sales call! We were met at the San Diego airport, made our call, had lunch and headed back toward Orange County.

On the flight back, he asked if I would like to fly the airplane. I thought, "It looks easy," and took over the controls. He gave me what I thought were easy instructions: "Keep your altitude at this setting and your compass heading here." It all sounded easy, but I was in for a surprise. Within about ten seconds He said, "You're dropping the nose." Then, "You're falling off on your left wing." Then, "You're letting your right wing drop." Then, "You're off course."

I should have told him I was in training for international aerobatics competition, but we both knew I just was not handling things as I should. Then he gave me some advice that taught me a valuable lesson, smoothed out the airplane and put us right on course.

Focus on the Goal

He instructed me to *focus my eyes on where we were going* and to quit focusing so intently on the dials and gauges. My friend had me focus on a point of land about seventy miles away, and the moment I did that everything stayed where it should.

Since then, I have used that principle in driving on difficult mountain roads. By looking beyond the road right in front of the car to the curves coming up, my mind starts to prepare my body to make the right adjustments in steering, shifting gears, breaking or accelerating, as the case warrants. The result, of course, is that the ride smooths out. Looking ahead also lets us see the dangers in the roadway early, thus giving us a better chance to avoid any hazards.

In these last few years, it has been so very easy to take our eyes off the goal of reaching our destination, the Kingdom of God, and focusing on all the events taking place around us. Many doctrinal storms have caused our focus to slip from our destination to government, holy days, the calendar, new moons, how often to give an offering, divorce and remarriage, etc. The Church of the Great God alone has received over forty "requests" to change doctrines.

By all means we should respond to subjects and questions submitted. These important requests must be looked into so we all have a working knowledge of why we believe as we do. However, in focusing our attention exclusively in these areas, we take our eyes off our destination. Getting a request answered on a specific point of doctrine can become of such major importance that we can become myopic. Our nearsightedness shrinks our world to a pinpoint compared to the breadth and depth of God's truth.

Casting off Restraint

In the King James Version, Proverbs 29:18 reads, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." In the New King James Version the same verse says, "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint." For God's people to cast off restraint, losing sight of where they are going, is to lose sight of the need to build godly character, to have faith, to be patient, to show love, kindness, to promote peace, to pray, to study and to draw close to God in fasting.

In these last days, *it is vital that we keep our eye on the goal, our destination!* If we fail to do this, *we may well be lost!*

To those who are willing to hear, God did not fail to warn us of what has indeed come upon us.

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (II Timothy 3:1-5).

In this end time it is so easy to lose our way. Mailing lists and individual addresses have been procured by various means, and every imaginable type of religious material floods into our mailboxes and sometimes into our minds. What is the beacon we *must* focus on so as not to become lost? How can we avoid losing our concentration on our goal?

The Way

Jesus Christ understood what we would face at the end of the age. For us and for all those throughout the ages, He left instructions to avoid becoming lost. Jesus says to Thomas and to us, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

What is this "way" Jesus is talking about? It is His perfect example, the way Jesus Christ the man, God with us, lived His life!

He says, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (verse 9). We can tell the way we should be going, how we should be acting, and what our energies and mind should be focused on by observing how Jesus lived His life. As we do this, we see the very nature of God the Father as well.

What was Jesus' focus? Matthew 23:23:

Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice, and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

Jesus was certainly concerned with tithing—in fact, with all of His Father's laws—but He placed the emphasis on justice, mercy and faith. Looking at the life of service and sacrifice that He led, we can see that the weightier matters included being faithful, teaching the truth, loving one's enemies, forgiving others, serving the brethren and being patient, thoughtful and kind. In Matthew 25:34-41, feeding the hungry, satisfying the thirsty, clothing the naked and visiting the sick and the imprisoned are listed with the above as "the way," the manner of life that leads to the Kingdom of God.

How should we approach technical questions that need to be answered? Should they be allowed to become more important than following the giving and serving example of Jesus Christ? Of course not.

Some answers come easily, others take much time, research, prayer, fasting and meditation. Our part is to submit questions in faith that God will reveal the right answer, then to exhibit patience until the answer comes, all the while never taking our eyes off "the way" we should go.

From now until Jesus Christ returns, Satan the Devil's pressure to distract, disturb and derail us will increase greatly. To be sure we make it to our destination, we must *rivet* our eyes on the example of Jesus Christ, and measure our thoughts and actions against that standard (Hebrews 12:1-29). If we do this, we may not always have a "smooth flight," but *we will* be prepared to enter the Kingdom of God.