

# Distractions and Focus

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We've recently had our six year old grandchild in our home for some guided instruction as he enters first grade. I have been reminded how much children can be easily distracted and lose their focus.

- According to research, our attention span has markedly decreased in just 15 years. In 2000, it was **12 seconds**. Now, 15 years later, it's shrunk significantly to **8.25 seconds**.
- In fact, scientists reckon we now have shorter attention spans than goldfish, who are able to focus on a task or object for **9 seconds**.
- Human beings are very, very forgetful...25% of teens forget major details of close friends and relatives. 7% of people forget their own birthday from time to time, and studies suggest that each week, 39% of Americans will forget one basic piece of information or lose one every day item.
- Oh, and by the way, we're also easily distracted! An average office worker will check their email inbox 30 times every hour (yup...every two minutes...wow) and will pick up their phones more than 1,500 times per week amounting to 3 hours and 16 minutes a day.
- What about when we're browsing online? Similar story, I'm afraid. On the average web page, users will read at most 28% of the words during a visit, with 20% a more likely expectation. The average page visit lasts less than a minute and users often leave web pages in just 10-20 seconds.

We have two problems in the church.

- 1) Communication with each other. No matter how many methods we use some will not receive any of them; others will only engage sometime; and a few will follow everything we put out to stay informed and engaged. We use the following methods of communication:
  - Emails-Every Saturday morning for church newsletter and every Wednesday morning for CMI newsletter
  - Text Messages-For different zones and congregational messages
  - Website-constantly updated with all teaching resources and now our prayer requests in a private location

- FaceBook-five pages: Public, private, CMI, BAANK, and JV. With liking and asking for notifications easy to keep up with posts.
- ZOOM meetings-Each of five zones have weekly meetings
- Five weekly teachings: Sunday message(online and onsite), Wednesday training, Mind of Christ, A Faith Challenge, and Ladies Bible Class

Lonestar had a cute song called “NO NEWS” about a girlfriend who left her boyfriend and he was wanting to hear from her but there was no news. The chorus goes like this:

She could telephone, tell a friend  
 Tell a lie about where she's been  
 Send a pigeon, send a fax  
 Write it on a postal pack  
 Send a signal up in smoke  
 Tap it out in morse code  
 I'd prefer a bad excuse

To no news

- 2) But the second problem regarding distraction and focus is much more serious. It is being distracted from the work of the church which is making disciples

## **Making Disciples is More Important Than Political and Social Involvement:**

Matthew 22:15-22 Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. 16 They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. 17 Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?” 18 But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? 19 Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, 20 and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?” 21 “Caesar’s,” they replied. Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.” 22 When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

- Did these political leaders really believe what they said about Jesus? “A man of integrity who teaches the way of God in accordance with truth, one not swayed by others because you pay no attention to who they are.” Do we really believe this about Jesus? What if we did?
  - We would not become polarized in political and social debates.
  - We would not allow ourselves to be baited into pointless arguments.
  - We would be focused totally on the way of God, not caring about any alternative view.
- They asked for His opinion (even though they said He teaches the way of God). Which world do we want to live in-the world of Opinion or Truth?

- They were trying to drag Jesus into an “all or nothing” political view-it was more than simply paying taxes to Caesar. It was about political parties with platforms and agendas-revolution versus tyranny.
- Jesus wisely brings them back to what is important-show me the coin. Whose picture? The focus is to give to God what is God’s while not taking away what belongs to Caesar. See what Jesus does? He is not distracted by politics, but focuses on God’s work-what or who has the image of God stamped on them? Our work is about people made in the image of God-not on coinage.

### **Making Disciples is God’s Way of Affecting Change Within The Political and Social Environment:**

When Christians forget (or are distracted) and do not fill the world with the teachings about Jesus, other messages and movements fill the space.

Acts 4:12-22, Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” 13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. 14 But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. 15 So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. 16 “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. 17 But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.” 18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! 20 As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” 21 After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. 22 For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

- The central message to society is “There is no other name under heaven by which man must be saved.” Hear me: When Biden or Trump is spoken a 1000 times more than Jesus, the church has become distracted.
- Ordinary men and women talking about Jesus can shift the focus of a city.
- The church must resist being told not to talk about Jesus.

It is the mission of the Central Church of Christ to lead people to have authentic and growing relationship with each other and with the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In this day and age when we are so easily distracted and lose our focus, let’s recommit ourselves to what Jesus called us to do, to make disciples who make disciples.