

KINGDOM VISION

THE SINGLE-EYED BELIEVER Cont'd

P A R T 1 1

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“And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” (Habakkuk 2:2-3 KJV)

THE SINGLE-EYED BELIEVER (continued)

“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye is single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” (Matthew 6:22 KJV)

To maintain our focus in life requires a singleness of sight and vision regardless of whatever is going on in our world. We cannot afford to trade in our focus cheaply because the cost of distraction is fatal as we will discuss later on in our study today. In spite of being truly God and truly human at the same time, Jesus Christ—the author and the finisher of our faith—had to lay every weight of distraction aside in order to fulfill His vision and mission while on earth. Jesus made an interesting statement about what it takes to see a vision to its end:

“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:13)

He speaks of ENDURING to the end; what does that mean? Well, to endure simply means *“to hold out against all odds to the end, to sustain without impairment or unveiling, to last, and to tolerate.”* As we would recall, David taught us the correlation between patience and focus last week. In the text above, however, Jesus is drawing yet another tangent between endurance and focus. Simply put, focus is the blood supply or the lifeline of endurance; the moment our focus takes a hit, that inversely constitutes a blow to our endurance. You cannot make it to the end while lacking in endurance, and, in turn, endurance draws strength from our focus.

As we journey onwards in life, there will be plenty of opportunities for our focus to be tested and our energy to be directed. Here is how David put it,

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: But the LORD delivereth him out of them all.” (Psalm 34:19)

Did you see that? “Many,” not “a few.” That should have our attention right there! In applying that truth to the subject of vision, we can easily see that distractions are more-or-less afflictions, and if care is not taken, they can turn fatal rather quickly. A good example here is Moses; with all he did and all his hard work, he allowed others to cause a moment of distraction from obeying God and he paid dearly for it. He never made it to the promised land, though he made it to the Kingdom of God. We would later read of his appearance at the Mount of Transfiguration (which is located in the Promised Land) but never fulfilled his vision of leading the Israelites out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. In other words, you can make it to heaven but live miserably on earth if you allow your focus to be afflicted by distractions.

To be clear, we are not immune to distractions; they can creep on to the most vigilant person! However, when that happens, we can all yield and depend on the grace of God. Here is an encouragement from the wise King Solomon,

“For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: But the wicked shall fall into mischief.” (Proverbs 24:16)

If you have a 'legitimate distraction' for the lack of a better word (because, in actual fact, no distraction is legitimate, but they do happen), we are assured that even when we fall into that trap, we can't afford to stay down in a pity party; we must get right back up and keep moving. The word 'seven' in that verse should not be taken literally; it simply means 'many' or 'often'. This speaks volumes about the GRACE of God for our frailty.

LITTLE WEIGHTS

We looked at the life of Joseph last week by examining the little weights that competed with his focus. These are things that can take captive our focus if we allow them. The writer of Hebrews admonishes us,

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience 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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

SAMSON'S EXAMPLE OF FOCUS

Let's look at a few things about how Samson lost his focus and later regained it, albeit at a cost too heavy to bear for him. Remember that we have earlier underscored our need for mentors in order to prevent being unnecessarily tormented in life. Please, let us endeavor to study these precious mentors that the scriptures have given us the opportunity to know. Samson had it all and then he forgot his precious beginning; he ended up in a pit on a snowy day.

HIS BIRTH

*“And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.”
(Judges 13:24-25 KJV)*

It is very important not to forget history because it is one of the quickest ways to lose focus and that was what happened to Samson. He forgot the narrative about his birth. He forgot the divine visitation of his parents, and how the Spirit of the Lord had previously moved upon him. If you choose to detach yourself from your humble beginnings, the result will always be fatal. The entire chapter 13 of the Book of Judges was about the supernatural way Samson came into the world and the people he was supposed to serve. History teaches lessons that we cannot get anywhere and the abuse of such privilege will always cause us to run loose as a goose.

HIS STRANGE BEHAVIOR

*“Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well. But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.”
(Judges 14:3-4 KJV)*

The quickest way to lose your focus is to remain where God used to be. God called Abraham from Ur of Chaldees to go to a land which would be revealed to him. Abraham obeyed and moved. Later, God gave him a beautiful son, Isaac, for whom Abraham and Sarah waited for twenty-five years! The same God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son—and he obeyed—however, God provided a ram in the thick of the forest for the sacrifice. Samson failed to focus and remained where God was; he married Timnah because God sought an occasion to destroy the Philistines. Samson remained in the past, went into a harlot, and later ended up with Delilah—the woman who derailed his focus and finally sent him and his vision to an early grave.

HIS INABILITY TO RECOGNIZE HIS WEAKNESSES

“And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, Ye had not found out my riddle.” (Judges 14:18 KJV)

For any business to prosper exceedingly, there is always a need to conduct a swot analysis. SWOT simply means strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; when all these are duly considered, vision will be built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts (Proverbs 24:3 TLB). Samson lost his focus and vision by not recognizing his weakness. Timnah asked for the source of his strength—which was what kept his vision online but failed to check his excesses. Samson was able to survive Timnah, but he could not survive Delilah. Beware, there are many Delilahs and Timnahs out there who will sell your vision for profit. Know your weaknesses and work on improving them.

HIS INABILITY TO GUARD THE SOURCE OF HIS FOCUS (STRENGTH)

“And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver. And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee.” (Judges 16:5-6 KJV)

This is what brought Samson down; he allowed Delilah to wear him out like a cloth. You know the source of your strength; you know what keeps your focus intact; do not just cheaply give it out! When Samson did, he gave away his future —

“that he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become

weak, and be like any other man.” (Judges 16:17)

Your focus is the bridge to your future. That bridge will be damaged when you expose your superpower to your enemy.

HIS HAIR GREW BACK

“But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.” (Judges 16:21-22 KJV)

Thanks be to God that Samson's hair began to grow back—in other words, he began to regain his focus and things began to come together. Many are the affliction of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him from them all. You may fall 'seven' times but you must get up eight times to refocus and regain your destiny. Focus can be recaptured and that will rekindle your purpose in life.

YOU CAN STILL FINISH STRONG

“And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.” (Judges 16:28-29 KJV)

Anyone that comes to earth without fulfilling his purpose in the pursuit of his or her vision is like a snake that moved on the rock and left no trace or path of his passing. A purpose-driven life by the power of focus is worth all the sacrifice. Samson regained some ground by using his inner eye to pursue the mission he came for. Here's how the writer of Judges chronicled it —

“And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.” (Judges 16:30)

He slew more people at his death! My friend, regaining your focus on your God-given vision is never too late. Do it for posterity's sake today.

CALL TO ACTION

Are you keeping on to your vision?
 Are you facing any affliction?
 Have you fallen?
 Are you forgetting what history is telling you?
 Can you still hear God?
 Are you aware of your weaknesses?
 Do you know that you can still finish strong?

PONDER THIS: “THROUGH THE VALLEY OF DEATH”

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” (Psalm 23:4 KJV)

Between where we are and the fulfillment of our God-given vision is often a valley of death; it is only an unwavering focus on the Vision-giver and the vision that will get us through to the other side. Shalom.

PRAYER POINTS

1. Father, give me the wisdom to acknowledge where I am weak and to lean on You for strength and succor in the name of Jesus.
2. Lord, in any way that I have allowed distraction in my vision-driven journey, have mercy upon me and help me get back on my feet in the name of Jesus.

PS: Reach out or pray for ten souls to be added to the Kingdom in your area. God bless you as you do so.