

Focus

Ponder: Where is your attention centered?

Scripture: “All to well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition” (Mk. 7:9, NKJV).

How times have changed! I remember receiving a Kodak Instamatic camera for Christmas when I was in high school. As a junior photographer on the yearbook staff, I happily set aside the light meter I had been using to know where to set my parents’ old camera. Now I had flash cubes! Before long I purchased a 35mm single-lens reflex and felt like I had arrived. It had its own light meter to tell me how wide to open the lens, and I focused it manually to obtain sharp, clear photos.

Today auto-focus is common. The camera measures the distance to the subject electronically and focuses the lens automatically. But what if you want a picture of the beautiful mountains in the distance while someone is standing ten feet in front of the camera? You may get a crystal-clear photo of the person while the mountains in the background are fuzzy! The camera focused on the wrong thing.

We humans often focus on the wrong thing. The majority of people Jesus encountered failed to recognize Him as the Messiah, largely because they focused on erroneous issues. The supernatural signs He worked verified His identity, but His critics concentrated on their own traditions and misinterpretations of the Law of Moses. Did He heal a woman who hadn’t been able to stand upright for eighteen years? Yes, but that involved “working on the Sabbath,” so He must be a sinner! (Lk. 13:14). So, you can water an animal on the Sabbath, but helping a human is off limits! (v. 15).

Misguided religious traditions can hinder us, too, but more often we focus on the world’s attractions rather than on the Lord. “The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things” occupy our attention, distracting our focus from eternal, spiritual matters (Mk. 4:19).

Auto-focus may be OK for your camera, but make certain that you deliberately focus yourself on the right subject!

Hymn: “I’d Rather Have Jesus”

Prayer: Father, we are so easily distracted by the things of the world. Help us to stay focused on Jesus and on Your word. In Jesus’ name, Amen.