

Freedom From Distraction

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon calls believers to prioritize hearing God's voice and to remain free from distractions in a world filled with temporary concerns.

Duration: 29:52

Scripture: Psalm 46:10, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 7:26-31, Philippians 4:6-7, Colossians 3:2, Hebrews 4:7, James 1:22, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Distractions", "Focus on God", "Overcoming Distractions"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the importance of remaining focused on God's voice amidst life's distractions, urging the congregation to prioritize their relationship with God over worldly concerns. He highlights that life-changing decisions stem from a responsive heart to the Holy Spirit's guidance, and encourages parents to instill the significance of hearing God's voice in their children. Beach warns against the distractions of societal pressures and personal ambitions, reminding believers to seek God's will while remaining content in their current circumstances. He concludes with a call to repentance for those who make excuses, urging them to embrace God's truth and avoid distractions that lead away from eternal significance.

Transcript

This morning, we know that you have spoken to all of our hearts, and we know, Lord, that it is your love that moves you to speak to us. We sense, Lord, how deeply you long for the deepest of our hearts' affections, how you want our hearts to belong to you alone, nothing else. We pray, Lord, in these next few moments, through your Word, that you will simply confirm what you have spoken to us by the Holy Spirit.

Place it very deeply into our spirits, Lord. Help us to guard against losing what you have spoken to us. Help us to guard against being distracted from what you have spoken to us.

We pray, Lord, by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is a sacred time because God is calling us. A most sacred time.

It is these kinds of moments where life-changing decisions are made. Life-changing decisions are made. The life-changing decision is based upon whether or not the Holy Spirit finds a responsive heart to his voice, a responsive heart that says, yes, Lord, I want your way.

Today, the Scripture says in Hebrews chapter 4, Hebrews chapter 4, verse 7, again, he sets a definite day. Today, today, if you would hear his voice, and when you hear it, do not harden your heart. Today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your heart.

1 Corinthians chapter 7, today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your heart. Every single parent here needs to listen. And if you're not a parent, listen.

Because if you're not a parent, you should be given the advice that we're about to hear from God's Word to as many people as you know. Every single parent here, every person here should make it your life's goal to continually remind both yourselves and all those who are in your life, listen to what God is saying to you and obey. Parents, you need to teach your children that the most important thing that they ought to desire to know is the voice of God to their hearts as he speaks through his Word.

Every parent here should be nurturing their child's heart, preparing it as best as they can through the means by which God has provided to hear the voice of God. Every single parent here, what voice are we teaching our children and one another to love more than any other voice? What voice? The voice of vainglory calling? The voice of selfish ambition calling? The voice of the gods of this world? The voice of narcissism, self-love, infatuation with oneself? What voice are we teaching our children to listen to? The voice of men who encourage them to maximize their personal potential? What voice are we teaching our children to listen to? Oh, please, dear ones, make it a point to pray that you will be inclined by God to teach your children and to encourage one another in your life to both seek to hear and listen and obey the voice of God as he speaks to us through his Word. 1 Corinthians chapter 7, Paul is responding to a few questions that were asked to him regarding marriage, divorce, virgins, and he has an overall theme that he's dealing with, beginning in verse number 26 of chapter 7. The Holy Spirit is concerned about one important issue with these Corinthians, and Paul deals with it in this verse and the following verses, and this is what the Holy Spirit is saying to us now.

He's concerned about one thing, and that is this. In all of your searching to understand what the Lord's will is in the context regarding whether or not you should be married, whether or not you should be single, what you should do if you're a Christian couple and you're having problems, what you should do if you are married to an unbeliever, what you should do if the unbeliever leaves, all of these questions are fine. All of these questions are legitimate, Paul's saying, and there's answers to each one of these questions, but don't get too focused on answers to your questions because something more important than simply answering your questions is at hand right now, and that is what is at hand right now.

That's what is at hand right at this moment, this now moment. This is what the Holy Spirit is saying to us through the Word of God. Verse 26, I think then because of the impending distress.

Now, Paul used a word here, the impending distress, or because of the present distress, another translation, because of the coming calamities. It is a word that has been used in the New Testament that is associated with, listen, the particular difficulties and trials and calamities that will be coming upon the world right before the coming of the Lord. And so Paul is summing up all of his advice on marriage, remarriage, divorce, celibacy, by focusing the attention of the reader, and your attention and my attention, on the overwhelming fact that at the present time, because of the coming distresses, or because we are living in the time of God's time plan, when there are horrendous trials that are about to come on the face of the earth, and you and I are going to be affected because Christ is about to come.

In light of this, I want to give you a word from God, Paul says. It's fine to want to know what you should do in relation to your marital status. That's okay.

But don't get too focused on it, because there's something more important at hand. If you have been contemplating lawful questions in your life, Lord, should I go through with the deal? Some of the businessmen here are constantly, Lord, is this you? Should I sell this? Should I buy this? Should I expand my business? Should I sell the shop? Should I expand my business? Should I go to another career? It's okay. It's lawful.

We need to know, because we don't know the way. We're asking our shepherd. But the Holy Spirit is now speaking through Paul, and he is speaking through the Holy Spirit to us.

And he's saying, okay, God will give you wisdom to know, but don't get too focused on that, because there's something that supersedes, something that needs to be understood in our hearts that exceeds in importance than simply knowing what the Lord's will is in relation to everyday affairs. It's important to know it. We ought not to do a thing unless we do know the Lord's will.

But don't stay there. There's a danger if we stay there. And here's what the Holy Spirit is saying.

I think because of the present distress, it is well for a person to remain as he or she is. In other words, Paul is saying, the Holy Spirit is saying to these dear Corinthians, and he's saying to you and I right now, it's okay to seek to know the will of God. But in light of the coming disasters and calamities and troubles, it's okay for a person to remain as he is.

In other words, it's okay if someone is single, it's okay for them to wonder whether the Lord wants them to be married, but it's okay if they stay single. It's okay if they're not so preoccupied with what do I do? It's okay if they just remain the way they are. In other words, seek to know the will of God, but don't get on the bandwagon and make that your life pursuit.

Be content with where you're at. Because there's something of greater value, something of greater importance. And then he goes on and explains, verse 27, are you bound to a wife? Now understand, he just got done teaching these believers the godly principles of how to discern the will of God in relation to these very questions.

Then he throws in these thoughts that seem to almost contradict what he just told them. But it's not contradicting them, it's elevating them into a heart posture that they have to maintain. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free.

He just got done telling them that in certain situations they could be free. And now he says, don't be free. What's he saying? What's the Holy Spirit doing? The Holy Spirit is trying to accomplish a work of grace in our heart so that we do not become distracted from what really matters.

And we'll see that. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. Are you bound? Do not seek to be free.

Are you free? Don't seek one. But if you do marry, you do not sin. And if a virgin marries, she does not sin.

Yet those who marry will have physical and earthly troubles. And I would like to spare you of that. He's being honest with them.

He's telling them, listen, listen, the most important thing is to be free from distraction as a Christian. Free from distraction. Free from those things that can distract our heart.

Now watch. I mean, verse 29, brethren, the appointed time has been winding down and it has grown very short. From now on, let even those who have wives be as if they have none.

And so he basically says, if you don't have a wife, don't seek one. But if you got one, be like you don't have one. In other words, the Holy Spirit is saying, don't give your heart to anything.

Don't labor for that which perishes. Don't focus your energy and your time and your mind and your thoughts and all of your valuable resources on something less than God's highest. Don't do it, he said.

Don't do it. Don't do it. Are you married? Act as if you're not.

Now is Paul condoning irresponsibility in marriage? Is Paul condoning neglecting the responsibilities that we have as husband and wife one to another? Absolutely not, with a capital A. But he's saying in the midst of your marriage, be careful, be guarded. Don't get distracted. Why? Because there's very important issues that we as believers need to be preoccupied with.

And it can't be the issues of earth. They can't be the thing that preoccupies us. From now on, let even those who have wives be as if they have none.

And those who weep and mourn as though they were not weeping and not mourning. And those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing. And those who buy as though they did not possess anything.

And those who deal with this world, or a better translation would be overusing the enjoyments of this life. So Paul is really saying, if you're dealing with this world and you're borderlining or possibly even engaging in overuse, overuse of the things of this world. As though they were not absorbed by it.

And as if they had not any dealings with it at all. For the outward form of this world is passing away. Verse 32, the beginning part, this sums it up.

Beloved, my desire is to have you free from all anxiety and distressing care. Or, brethren, I would that you would be free from all distraction. There's the heart of the Lord.

I would that you would be free from all distraction. Verse 31, the latter part. For the outward form of this world.

The Greek word there is translated in the King James for the fashion of this world. The word fashion comes from a Greek word that was taken from the culture of the day. It was referring to a theater.

The fashion of this world. It was referring to a theater and the show, the passing show. That is here playing for a moment and then it's over just like in the theater.

You go to a movie and you watch a show and before you know it, it's over. It's gone. And that's what Paul was saying.

That's what the Holy Spirit is saying here. The fashion of this world. The things of this world.

The wheelings, the dealings, the affairs of this world is just like the theater. It is here for a moment. It passes before your eyes and before you know it, you see the sign.

The end. It's over. And we are in eternity then.

We stand before a holy God who will be our judge. Think of a movie you saw recently. When you first started.

And when you ended. Just like that. It's over now.

It's over. Young people, older people. That's the intent of the Holy Spirit here.

Don't be distracted with the passing affairs. The passing fashion of this world. Don't be distracted by it.

It's not worth being distracted by it. Because it will be gone. It will be gone.

Stay focused on what matters. Stay focused on eternity. Stay focused on the Son of God.

Stay focused on offering your life as an instrument for Christ to be manifest. And to reach out and touch a dying world. To reach out and touch your brother and sister.

To reach out and touch you with the power to pray. To intercede. To give yourself to selfless service.

Don't get distracted. Brothers and sisters. Because life is like the movie theater.

And maybe with some of us, we're right at the end. We could be. We don't know.

And even if some of us, I see the younger children, babies, even if they're at the very beginning, how long will it last? You might have time to eat one bag of popcorn. That's it. Your life, according to this scripture, as we dig into the implications the Holy Spirit would want us to derive, your life is like sitting before a movie theater and watching an hour and a half movie and having just enough time for a medium sized popcorn with butter and a large Pepsi.

The end. It's over. It's a memory.

It's gone. And then we stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account. That means we have to answer to God for what we did in our body.

We have to answer to God for everything. We have to answer to God when our loving Savior looks at us and says this. Where was your heart? Did you obey my word? And that's the day when our excuses won't work.

Let me just say this and we're closing. If you're an excuse maker, I beg you right now, by the mercy of God, to confess your sin to God. Because it's better now to stop making excuses and to deal with your life than to keep making them and fool some people some of the time.

But you're not fooling all the people all the time. But you might fool some people some of the time. But it's better to give it up now and deal with your life and deal with the inconsistencies and deal with the sin and deal with the struggles than to keep making excuses, get through life, fool some people some of the time, but then end up standing before a holy Savior and your excuses end up like chaff before the fire.

They burn and you can no longer present them to God. Your excuses won't work then. You will be stark naked before God spiritually.

You will have no power to wiggle your way out. The Holy Spirit is speaking now. Stop wiggling.

Stop wiggling. Stop manipulating. Stop living in darkness.

Stop lying. Stop denying the truth that God might reveal to you in your heart. Don't.

Don't. Confess it. Tell God, say, God, deliver me from this horrible pattern in my life of making excuse after excuse after excuse when you call me, when you speak to me.

Help me today to say, Lord, no more excuses. Let's bow our hearts. Bow our hearts.

Lord, help us today to hear your voice. Help us today to hear your heart. Every heart bowed, please.

Every heart bowed before the Lord. Father, thank you for your presence today. Thank you for the wonderful movement of the Holy Spirit searching our hearts.

Thank you for your Word that clearly articulated what your Holy Spirit was wanting to say. Thank you for your Word that has taught us your heart, that you don't want us to be distracted, that it's okay to be engaged in questioning what is lawfully your will, but that we can't stay there. We've got to get above it.

We've got to get above it to where though we are engaging in this world and we have to deal with real life problems and decisions in our marriages and in our businesses, Lord, we must not be distracted. Rescue our hearts from the tendency they inherently possess to be distracted. And give us multiplied grace this morning that will enable us to stay focused on what really matters and hearing your voice and obeying you.

And I pray, Lord, for the one who has mastered making excuses all their life. I pray, God, that you will convict and bring to deep repentance that heart so that they will not give excuses, but submit to your word and your spirit so that they won't have to, on the day of judgment, experience much loss and sorrow when they find out their excuses won't work with you. Please, Lord, perform your word today with your gentleness, but firmness, we pray.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Keep asking, keep seeking the Lord, but don't get distracted. Don't get distracted.

God will do it.

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