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The Main Thing Devotional

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## Keeping Your Focus

Joseph Khabbaz

*Southern Adventist University*, josephk@southern.edu

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### **The Main Thing Devotional: Keeping Your Focus**

*So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up." When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." Exodus 3:3–4*

**When you keep your focus, you will not miss God's flame.** Just a few years ago the *Oxford Online Dictionary* added a new phrase to its current definitions of English words, can you guess what it was? Some context may help you with the answer. In 2013, Netflix streamed a long-anticipated television series, and what they would learn after the premiere of the show would even shock Netflix. Going against industry norms, Netflix released all 13 episodes of their new show, but they were stunned to discover that 678,000 viewers consumed the entire 13-hour series in one weekend. Grant McCracken, an anthropologist paid by Netflix to investigate this novel habit reported, "TV viewers are no longer zoning out as a way to forget about their day, they are tuning in, on their own schedule, to a different world. Getting immersed in multiple episodes or even multiple seasons of a show over a few weeks is a new kind of escapism that is especially welcome to today."<sup>1</sup> Can you guess what the new phrase added to the *Oxford Online Dictionary* was? Binge-watching. When describing our own spiritual life, are we satisfied with just one season with God, or do we stay tuned to the point where we are accused of "binge-worshipping?"

In Exodus 3:3-4, the Bible says that when Moses came to take a closer look at the burning bush, God then called out to him. I believe it is no coincidence that the inspired writer stated this sequence. First Moses went over to look at the burning bush *then* God called him. Moses was a person God could use because he had been tuned-in for 40 years. For 40 years he had been "binge-worshipping" in the wilderness even throughout his humble occupation of being a shepherd. Moses could discern the difference between an ordinary bush engulfed in flames versus a bush enflamed by divinity – a bush that was in flames but not consumed. What would have happened if Moses reasoned away this phenomenon? He could have whispered, "My eyes must be playing tricks on me in the heat of the sun." If Moses had excused the sight before him, he would have never heard it - the call of God. Could it be that there are places of spectacular fire in our everyday lives, but we never pause to take a look?

What would happen if, through the eyes of faith, we stared in amazement at the things people might pass off as ordinary? I believe that in 2020, God still calls out to us! He calls students who are not preoccupied with personal interest but seek to serve others, He calls faculty who see the marvelous when others see the mundane, and He calls staff who trust Him even when they are unable to trace His presence. When we keep our focus on God, we will not miss His flame in our everyday lives.

You might be experiencing difficulties that seem insurmountable. The sight of the burning bush and the miracle of it staying upright while being engulfed in flames holds a significant spiritual lesson. Like the people of Israel in Egypt, the fire of their captor's affliction would not consume God's promise of their freedom. In other words, whatever circumstances may be seeking to overwhelm you, God promises that you will not be consumed by it. Like the burning bush, the

fire will not destroy you – you will remain upright. Today, keep your focus on God and then listen for His Spirit calling you.

### **Reflection**

Take a moment to think about distractions in your life. On a piece of paper, write down your top three biggest distractions. How are distractions in your life impacting your studies, family relationships, marriage or your relationship with God? What practical steps can you take to both limit your distractions and pause to focus on God’s presence in your life? One way may be taking an intentional pause on your studies or work, another way may be enjoying the rest that Sabbath brings and not being consumed with to-do lists and deadlines.

### **Prayer**

*God, thank you for meeting me right where I am! As You met with Moses in the wilderness, I trust that You will also meet with me in my desert places. Forgive me for the times I have missed Your marvelous presence in my life - being distracted by fear, the pride of life, or un-forgiveness. Today, give me the eyes of faith to see Your all-consuming presence around me and give me the ears to hear your calling for my life. Even in the wilderness, I choose to find peace in the promise that the fire I see will not consume me, for You are in my midst.*

### **NEWS AND RESOURCES**

- **Vespers Tomorrow Night:** Our speaker will be Anna Bennett, Associate Chaplain, who will be sharing a message entitled - “The Cost of Belonging.” You must reserve your Vespers seat in advance. You can also join our [livestream Vespers](#) service here [southern.edu/events](https://southern.edu/events) from your residence. We have two Vespers services:
  - First Service: 6:30pm-7:30pm: [Reserve Your Tickets Now!](#)
  - Second Service: 8:00pm-9:00pm: [Reserve Your Tickets Now!](#)
- **NEW Grief Support LifeGroup:** Whether you are grieving the loss of a family member, friendship, or the loss of your “normal,” this group is a space for you to process with others. Led by graduate students from the School of Education and Psychology, this LifeGroup will cover the five stages of grief and stress relief. [Sign up here!](#)
- **Student Missions Emphasis Week September 21-25 “Live Different”:** Support Operation Child Rescue, an organization that works to get girls out of trafficking in India and into a safe house by: 1) purchasing our special slush from KR’s (“Passion Passport”), our special smoothie from the Kayak (“Island Impact”), or our limited edition “Live Different” sticker (\$3, sold in the student center daily). Also, learn what it takes to be a student missionary – live different, so others can too!
- Check out our Chaplain’s Office [Parent Newsletters](#), which include worship opportunities parents are invited to join, a short article describing our weekly Vespers service, spiritual reflection questions for parents, and ideas for how parents can spiritually engage with their college student(s).
- **Prayer at the Flagpole:** Every morning from 8:15-8:30 (M-F), students, faculty and staff gather to specifically pray for an end to any racial division within our nation, church and campus. For more information, feel free to contact [Stephanie Guster](#).

- Share your prayer requests or praises with us via text message using your mobile phone. **Text-to-Pray: 423-281-8996.**
- **Need to talk to someone?** We encourage you to make an appointment with Chaplain [Anna Bennett](#) or [Joseph Khabbaz](#) if you need someone to talk to for support, prayer or have a desire to grow spiritually.