

Southern Adventist University  
**Knowledge Exchange**

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The Main Thing Devotional

Office of Ministry and Missions

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## **Focus on Jesus**

Joseph Khabbaz

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*“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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2)*

**Focus on what matters most.**

In her book *Attention Span*, American Psychologist Gloria Mark highlights how, in 2004, people in the workplace spent about three minutes on a task before switching to another; by 2021, that time dropped to every 47 seconds. It seems that keeping people’s attention is getting more difficult. Mark discovered that a lack of focus due to external or internal interruptions, such as needing to find out what year a famous singer was born in the middle of doing our homework, often leads to our body’s resources becoming even more depleted. It is no surprise that people often feel stressed, exhausted, and burnt out. However, focusing on what matters most is essential for completing a task successfully; it is also vital when it comes to our walk of faith. Just as our important tasks do not always have our full attention, could the same be true when it comes to Jesus having our full focus? Could there be areas in our lives that require us to refocus on Him?

In Hebrews, Paul uses the metaphor of a footrace to describe what running the race of faith is like. In the Olympics, a runner must have total focus and perseverance to finish the race successfully. It would be strange to see an Olympian represent their country on the world stage, pulling out their phone, checking their email, responding to text messages, or updating their profile picture in the middle of a world final race. More likely, they are focused on one thing: getting to the finish line. In the race of faith, Paul’s emphasis is not on competition, who will finish first, or who is the strongest; instead, His focus is on Jesus at the finish line. Paul is seeking to remind us that if we live for God, we need a healthy view of Jesus through a personal relationship with Him.

The race of faith is not a picnic or a party. There will be countless obstacles the enemy will place on our path to take our eyes off Jesus. However, when we may feel like giving up, we can almost hear Paul shouting from the sidelines, “Keep your eyes on Jesus!” Not on ourselves, on Jesus! Not on other people, on Jesus! Not on our circumstances, but on Christ alone!

Tonight begins our Student Week of Worship, where each evening, our outstanding students will speak on our theme, “Re:Focus,” and how we can seek to keep our eyes on Jesus during difficult times. If you need to refocus your priorities, relationships, or circumstances on Christ, you will not want to miss Student Week of Worship starting at 8:00. Each night, you will be encouraged and inspired to keep your eyes on Jesus. In commenting on Hebrews 12:2, Ellen White writes, “As God’s children, it is our privilege ever to look up, keeping the eye of faith fixed on Christ...All perplexities and anxieties are committed to Jesus. As we continue to behold Him,

His image becomes engraved on the heart and is revealed in the daily life.” May God’s image be engraved in our hearts as we focus on what matters most – Jesus!

## REFLECTION

1. As highlighted by Gloria Mark, has it become increasingly more work for you to stay focused? If so, how has it affected your ability to keep your attention on Jesus in your daily life?
2. What is one way to identify if something is a distraction or a duty? How can keeping your eyes on Jesus help you prioritize life’s endless to-do list and tasks?
3. Does the "Re:Focus" theme from Student Week of Worship resonate with your desire to refocus on Jesus? If so, how?

## PRAYER REQUESTS AND RESOURCES

- **Student Week of Worship** starts tonight at 8:00 in the University Church. Our student speakers are:
  - Monday 8 pm - Justin Mertz
  - Tuesday 8 pm - Esmeralda Paulino
  - Wednesday 8 pm - Matthew Thomas
  - Thursday 11 am - Clarissa Tching
  - Thursday 8 pm - Kevin Malagar
  - Friday 6:30/8:30 pm - Melissa Maguire
- Join us this Friday for Vespers at 6:30 pm or 8:30 pm in the University Church!
- Find a meaningful sense of belonging by joining a student or faculty/staff LifeGroup today: [click here](#).
- If you are feeling anxious or have recently experienced loss or grief, call 423.236.2782 to talk to a counselor on campus! (This is a free service for Southern students.)
- **Talk** with Chaplain [Anna Bennett](#) or [Joseph Khabbaz](#) if you need someone to pray with or have a desire to grow spiritually.