



Distractions: An Enemy to Covenant

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Grace Fellowship of Morehead, KY



God's View of Covenant

Isaiah 54:10 – “For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.”

We have spent much of the past couple weeks talking about God's view of covenant relationship.

We clearly see that it is UNSHAKABLE and UNCHANGING!

His view of covenant:

God is NOT unpredictable!

He is ALWAYS in a good mood towards His covenant people!

He wants US TO HAVE a blessed assurance!

He wants us to have a SAFE PLACE to flourish in ALL AREAS!

BELOVED: It is essential that we understand God's view of covenant relationships!

Not just the importance of us and Him...which is uber essential.

But also the covenant with His body! One another!

UNDERSTAND: Which is NOT lesser than our covenant with God...it is the SAME COVENANT!

Matthew 22:37-39

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 ***And the second is like unto it,*** Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

The second is the same thing as the first...operates the same way!

THINK ABOUT these Scriptures to really understand God's view of interpersonal relationships. Deuteronomy 32:30 tells us if one can put a thousand to flight, two can put ten thousand! Ecclesiastes 4:12 – “And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken.

Matthew 18:20 – “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

NOTE: “Gather together” means assemble. Which reminds me of Hebrews 10:25... “forsake NOT the assembling of yourself together.”

Matthew 18:19 – “Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

1 Corinthians 11:29,30

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

God started everything out with covenant.

Genesis 1:26-30 – Edenic Covenant...requirements and promises.

Man fell and things did change for mankind.

God, the Father, used covenant to bring us back to Eden!

Isaiah 51:3 – “For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.”

Ezekiel 36:35 – “And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited.”

Joel 2:3 – “A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.”

Jesus came to the earth to restore covenant!

- 1.) Luke 19:10 – “For the Son of man is ***come to seek and to save hat which was lost.***”
- 2.) Matthew 20:28 – “ven as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, ***and to give his life a ransom for many.***”
- 3.) John 10:10 – “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: ***I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.***”
- 4.) Matthew 11:27 – “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and ***he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.***”
John 14:9 – “Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? ***he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;*** and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?”
- 5.) 1 John 3:8 – “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. ***For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.***”

The enemy hates when God is working in the lives of His kids...covenant partners.

John 10:10 – “***The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.*** I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

The enemy will do anything in his ability to stop us from enjoying God’s best and enjoying our covenant benefits. His plan is to steal, kill and destroy!

One of his main weapons to destroy and stop you are...

Distractions

That is why we are told things, like...

Hebrews 12:1 – “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,”

Philippians 3:13-14

- 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,
- 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

(talk about running the race...don't get distracted...disqualified)

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (NASB)

- 24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.
- 25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.
- 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;
- 27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, ***I myself will not be disqualified.***

TOO MANY Christians are disqualifying themselves from God's blessings because they are getting distracted.

UNDERSTAND: Being distracted is NOT a sin...it is NOT wrong...but being distracted will cause you to lose course...do wrong...be disqualified!

EXAMPLE: *Distacted Driving* (defined AAA website) – distracted driving takes a motorist's attention off driving, which can make a driver miss critical events, objects and cues or abandon control of a vehicle, all potentially leading to a crash. Distracted drivers put not only themselves at risk, but everyone else using the road.

NOTICE: You may get by with distracted driving for years...but if you allow it to continue...it will get you!

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|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Distractions >>> | Media | Chaos |
| | Entertainment | Events in Life |
| | Technology | Trauma |
| | Relationships | Worry/Fears |
| | Recreation | Everyday routine |
| | Work/Jobs | Pleasing Others |
| | Hobbies | Possessions/Money |

UNDERSTAND: When you allow yourself to get distracted...you miss what God is doing and saying...get moving in the wrong direction...leading to destruction!

Distractions going unchecked lead to destruction!

What Happens When Distracted!

We are going to take a look at four accounts in Scripture that you are familiar with and we will see the same pattern of distraction and destruction or near destruction!

ACCOUNT #1 – David and Goliath! Technically the Israeli army and the Philistines! Israel was suppose to be defeating the Philistine army, but they got distracted by Goliath!

ACCOUNT #2 – The Children of Israel in the Wilderness! They had a short journey from amen to there it is or from Egypt to the Promised Land. But they got distracted by so many things...thirst, hunger, fatigue, a golden calf.

ACCOUNT #3 – Abram and Sarai, fresh off a blessing by God (Genesis 12), start off to their new land and get distracted by famine and pharaoh.

ACCOUNT #4 – Mary and Martha! Mary did the right thing...to sit at Jesus' feet, but Mary was distracted by business and was missing the most important thing!

Every one of these account seem so different...seem unrelated, except all four of them show us the dangers of distractions AND what happens when we get distracted.

YOU SEE, what happens when you get distracted is what will end up disqualifying you and what becomes so dangerous.

1.) Distraction will cause you to FORGET how BIG God is!

They will cause you to start drawing limits on God and what He can do.

Shorten His hand and weaken His arm!

You forget HIS promises (Hosea 4:6 and Psalm 103:2).

ACCOUNT #1 – The men stood back and forgot about COVENANT!

They were only imagining a bad outcome.

Not David!

1 Samuel 17:37 – “And David said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”
And Saul said to David, “Go, and may the LORD be with you.”

ACCOUNT #2 – The children of Israel kept seeing themselves dying in the wilderness... They would say, “Was it not good enough for us to die in Egypt, you had drag us out here in the wilderness go die?”

ACCOUNT #3 – Abram was out on a journey, directed by God and ALL HE COULD SEE what that Pharaoh was going to kill him and marry Sarai!

NOTE: The God who called is faithful to complete! (Philippians 1:6).

ACCOUNT #4 – Martha just knew that she wasn't going to get noticed. She just knew her gift wasn't getting noticed.

NOTE: Many feel that their gift is the most important one in the church and that if you are not doing what they are doing, you are being lazy.

2.) Distractions will lead to FEAR and Confusion!

Because of losing sight of God's ability and strength...fear will move in on you!

NOTE: Confusion always come along with fear!

2 Timothy 1:7 – “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

ACCOUNT #1 – We see it time and again!

1 Samuel 17:11 – “When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.”

1 Samuel 17:24 – “When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were greatly afraid.”

NOTE: This wasn't the case with the man who was focused on God and covenant!
“uncircumcised Philistine”

ACCOUNT #2 – Every obstacle that came up God had the same direction for the people and Moses...fear not!

Yet, they were sure they were going to die!

ACCOUNT #3 – Again, fear directed Abram's plan...because he didn't want to die!

NOTICE: The confusion in Egypt...notice the plague in Egypt.

Your distracted driving will risk everyone else on the road!

ACCOUNT #4 – Martha had fear that she wasn't getting noticed!

3.) Distractions will put you at odds with covenant partners!

This is obviously the target of this message today.

AGAIN: This is why distractions will cause you to get disqualified! Disqualified from covenant promises!

ACCOUNT #1 – David's brothers attacked David.

1 Samuel 17:28 – “And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why comest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.”

ACCOUNT #2 – How often did the Children of Israel attack their leadership...each other..etc.

ACCOUNT #3 – Abram used Sarai as bait!

Genesis 12:13 - "Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you."

ACCOUNT #4 – Martha attacked Mary right in front of Jesus.

Luke 10:40 – “But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her there fore that she help me.”

This is where we insert the most important parts of covenant!

Zechariah 2:8 – “For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.”

Romans 12:19 – “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

When you begin attacking and rising up against your covenant partners...you are rising up against God, Himself!

You have chosen to be on the side AGAINST God!

Therefore, you disqualify yourself from covenant blessings...set yourself under the curse of the covenant!

Start at the Beginning

As I was meditating on this, again this week, I wondered how consistent this pattern was...so I set out to find out...

HOW ABOUT start at the beginning! **Adam and Eve!**

- 1.) They listened to the serpent and forgot ALL that God had promised them.
- 2.) They developed fear that God was holding something back from them.
- 3.) Genesis 3:12 – “The man replied, “It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.””

THINK ABOUT Jacob and Esau!

- 1.) Jacob was obviously God’s choice for the birth-right! Remember, God never stuck with social convention regarding birth-rights and the blessing. But those stories from Isaac slipped His mind!
- 2.) Jacob had fear that Esau would get everything and he would get nothing.
- 3.) He lied to his father; used his mother; stole from his brother.

NEW TESTAMENT you ask? How about the disciples.

Luke 9:46 – “Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.”

Luke 22:24 – “And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.”

Other times we see them asking Jesus who would be the greatest!

BELOVED: That was a distraction!

- 1.) They lost fact that who God calls, He will equip! He will empower! He favors!
THINK ABOUT IT: I am the best pastor at this church; Alisa the best assistant pastor... etc.
- 2.) They walked in constant fear that others would be more important than they were!
- 3.) They spent all of their time arguing...James and John set their mom out to talk to Jesus.

WE'VE SEEN THE NEGATIVE SIDE: How about the three Hebrew children!

They were told to bow down before the 90 foot statue of Nebuchadnezzar. Did they get distracted? Nope!

- 1.) They kept sight of how big their God was!

Daniel 3:16-18

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

- 2.) No fear here!

UNDERSTAND: When you know how big God is...fear will stay away!

- 3.) They went in the FIRE together...God went in there with them.

NO DISTRACTION!

OUR ULTIMATE EXAMPLE: Jesus!

We know He was not distracted!

Isaiah 50:7 – “For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

John 5:30 – “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”

- 1.) He was always aware of how big HIS FATHER was!

Mark 14:36 – “And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.”

- 2.) He had no fear!

Hebrews 12:2 – “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.”

- 3.) Therefore, we NEVER see Him attack or act outside of love to any of his covenant partners...or anyone else!

He even forgave those who murdered Him!

THEREFORE: He stayed on track, defeat the cross (death, hell and the grave) and bring victory for all of us!

How to Stay Focused

1.) Recognize distracted behavior!

Be on guard!

When other things are getting you away from the things of God...take notice!

REMEMBER: The first thing the enemy desires to do is to steal, kill and destroy....getting your eyes off of God will do just that!

a.) When you start trying to do it by yourself or try to figure out how “in the world” God could do it now!

God is an expert in weird timing! When everyone else says you can't God says you can! That is His favor!

Getting your eyes off of HOW BIG GOD IS!

b.) When you notice FEAR move in...be on guard!

2 Timothy 1:7 – You have NOT been given the spirit of FEAR...

THEREFORE: When fear or apprehension tries to move in, that is clearly a weapon of the enemy.

You CANNOT do what God has called you to do with fear operating!

Whenever Israel was in position to do something BIG...the Lord would tell them FEAR NOT.... Why? Because that meant they were distracted on things other than the goodness and power of God!

CONFUSION is another thing that you look for to know the enemy is trying to distract you.

1 Corinthians 14:33 – God is NOT the author of confusion!

That comes solely from the enemy for distractions!

YOU ASK: What should I do? Where should I go? Why did this happen? What did I do wrong?

James 1:5 – “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

NOTE: The problem isn't that we don't ask...it is that we don't listen or we ignore His answer (because we don't like it).

James 3:16 – “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.”

Distraction is an evil work! Know that! Identify that!

c.) When you notice yourself attacking others...especially covenant partners!

Maybe what you notice it that they are doing things wrong or acting wrong to you...maybe it is not them at all!

~ Attacking or division with your spouse!

~ With the household of faith!

~ With your pastor! You just get angry at everything he says or does!

~ Other people (co-workers, neighbors)

~ Fault-finding, etc.

The enemy loves division and loves to get you to forsake the assembling of yourself together (Hebrews 10:25).

LET THAT BE A RED LIGHT – a warning sign that you need to

The enemy loves division and loves to get you to forsake the assembling of your self together (Hebrews 10:25).

LET THAT BE A RED LIGHT...a warning sign that you need to change your attention and focus!

Pray...Word...Praise...Love.

2.) **Meditate on the Word. On the things of God!**

Choose what Mary chose!

Luke 10:41,42

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Don't let distractions get you out of CHURCH or the WORD.

Psalm 119:148 (NLT) – "I stay awake through the night, thinking about your promise."

John 8:31-32

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

32 ***And ye shall know the truth***, and the truth shall make you free.

REMEMBER: "Free" – exempt from another's control!

When you don't know the Truth...the enemy has access to control you.

When you KNOW THE TRUTH...you are exempt.

REMEMBER: Forsaking the assembling of yourself together is also forsaking the Word.

God said it...that settles it! Whether you know it or believe it determines if you get to enjoy it!

3.) **Focus on others!**

Don't get inward focused!

Romans 12:10 – "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;"

Philippians 2:3 – "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

Quit allowing the FIRST PLACE you look in life to be inward!

I am NOT saying you don't take care of yourself or that you don't do things that you enjoy...but set your focus on taking care of others.

ILLUSTRATION: Giving money to my kids...if I take care of my kids, God will take care of His (me).

Inward focusing leads to distractions. Depression! Everyone hates me!

Matthew 5:43,44,46

- 43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.
- 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;
- 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

YOU SAY: But what about me?

BELOVED: That is your mistake...that is your distraction! God is taking care of you!

REMEMBER James 1:5 – wisdom! Do what God is telling you to do!