

ARE YOU PAYING ATTENTION? Part 1

We are working our way through our 2026 Focus. As you now, our 2026 Focus was taken from a dream we received earlier this year. In that dream were several important messages. First, there was message to the church as a whole. It was a message reminding us to get ready (prepare) to be a member of the Bride of Christ. Next, there was a message to the men of our church. That message invited men to be involved in “preparing the way” for Christ. Finally, we come now to the third message in our dream. This message is for the women of our church.

“In the dream, the Woman’s Department was almost completely absent from the planning of the wedding. Most of them (women) were in the fellowship hall ABSORBED in conversation.”

If you remember, in the dream all the men were in the sanctuary making plans for the wedding. However, the women were in the fellowship hall absorbed in conversation. The words (“absorbed in conversation”) made me think of [Luke 10](#).

Luke 10:38–40

38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word. 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 therefore that she help me.

Notice how Martha is described in this verse 40—“cumbered with much serving”. Again, this sounds very similar to how the women were “absorbed in conversation”. Cumbered and absorbed have similar meanings.

“Cumbered” means to become distracted by something. “Absorbed” means to occupy something’s attention. Both words mean to be distracted to the point that you neglect other important things.

Therefore, Martha wasn’t merely busy. She was ‘cumbered’ or distracted! But, from what?

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.

Martha was distracted from listening to Jesus! We could say that she was guilty of not “paying attention”.

ARE YOU PAYING ATTENTION?

When we talk about “paying attention” we’re talking about giving your mental and emotional energy to something. Understand, there are many things competing for our attention. If you try to give your attention to all of them at once, you’ll become distracted.

Luke 10:41

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

While it’s possible to “care” about many things, you can only attend to one thing at a time! Therefore, when we pay attention to something we are saying, “Of all the things I care about, this is the ONE thing I’m giving my focus to right now.” This gives paying attention a whole new meaning. It’s like we’re choosing to dedicate all of our mental and emotional currency to ONE thing!

There are several things that can THREATEN our attention. The first is...

DISTRACTIONS

Distraction occurs when too many things are in view. We saw this in the case of Martha. There were many things she was careful about (i.e. fighting for her attention) and she became distracted.

Luke 8:14

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

Notice, the “cares of life” are doing the SAME thing to the seed as they were doing to Martha—causing a distraction. Only Jesus does not use the word distraction. He uses the word “choked”.

In agriculture, “choking” occurs when multiple plants compete for the same sunlight, water and space. Now, because thorny plants grow much faster than regular plants, thorny plants are able to outcompete them pretty easily!

So, the cares of this life are competing for our ATTENTION. Moreover, when we don’t bring forth fruit unto perfection, the reason is often because we’re too distracted!

I believe this was the reason why in our dream no one was dressed (ready). They were all DISTRACTED. However, they were distracted *differently*. The men, for example, were distracted because they were sitting (not taking responsibility). On the other hand, the women were distracted because they absorbed in activity in the fellowship hall.

And we see this same distinction throughout the Bible. For example, as long as David was engaged in war and establishing the kingdom, he was focused. However, when he stayed away from war he got distracted and committed adultery with Bathsheba!

1 Corinthians 16:13

13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Paul is not just telling the Corinthians to *watch* (be attentive). He's telling them to be attentive LIKE MEN. A man does not watch (be attentive) the same way that a woman does.

We're all familiar with the "fight or flight" response. Women sometimes take the flight response (disengage) as a way of focusing (removing distractions). This may be why in our dream the women were absorbed in conversation in the fellowship hall. On the other hand, men will take the fight approach. In other words, they will confront or engage the situation as a way to focus.

Understanding the difference between the way men and women to become distracted or attentive can be helpful in learning to avoid distractions. If you know that as a woman I can be distracted by activity, when it's time to focus I may want to *disengage*. On the other hand, if I know that as a man I can be distracted by inactivity, when it's time to focus I may want to *engage*.

Another thing that THREATENS our attention (keeps us from paying attention) is...

FORGETTING

We said to you that distraction occurs when too many things are in view. Well, forgetting occurs when we don't know what's in view!

Revelation 3:1–2

1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Sardis once had a “name” (reputation) for being ‘alive.’ However, they were now in a state of spiritual decline. Their works weren’t *perfect* or complete before God. And the reason wasn’t because they were distracted. The reason was because they had FORGOTTEN.

Revelation 3:3

³ Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Not only must we keep from becoming distracted, but we must also keep from forgetting. If we don’t constantly refresh our attention, it will fade.

Notice, what the remedy is—

- **REMEMBER** (how you received)

Notice, the emphasis is not on “what” you received, but “how” you received.

Luke 8:18

¹⁸ Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

Are you hearing with an expectation to do it?

- **HOLD FAST**

If you want to avoid ‘forgetting’, we must rehearse and even do the word.

Joshua 1:8

⁸ This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

- **REPENT**

This suggests that paying attention sometimes requires an attitude shift. Sometimes distractions happen because we’re overloaded. However, sometimes we’re distracted because we’ve forgotten what’s most important.