**Focus**

**Let your eyes look directly forward,**

**and your gaze be straight before you.
*(Proverbs 4:25)***

 **Thou dost keep him in perfect peace,**

**whose mindis stayed on thee.**

***(Isaiah 26:3)***

**The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single,**

**thy whole body shall be full of light.**

**But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.**

**If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness,**

**how great is the darkness.
*(St. Matthew 6:22-23)***

**Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,**

**whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely,**

**whatsoever things are of good report,**

**think on these things. *(Philippians 4:8)***

 **There is nothing worse than a sharp image of a fuzzy concept. *(Ansel Adams, artist)***

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**Where you aim isn’t always where you hit – but that’s no reason for not aiming. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot Shots)***

**People who have no aim in life cannot miss the mark. *(Roy Eugene Davis)***

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**Never look for a worm in the apple of your eye. *(Langston Hughes, in The Book of Negro Humor)***

**My wife claims I’m a baseball fanatic. She says all I ever think about is baseball. I told her she’s way off base. *(Tidbits)***

**It reportedly has been proven that a bat in flight at night can bounce its sonar signal off just one mosquito. *(L. M. Boyd)***

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**When one door closes another door opens, but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us. *(Alexander Graham Bell)***

**Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus. *(Alexander Graham Bell)***

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**A father promised his small daughter a bicycle if she stood at the head of her class. However, the close of the school year found the girl far from the top. “What's the trouble?” the father asked. “I know you have the ability. I can't understand why you didn't do better. What have you been doing all this time?” “Well, Daddy,” she said, “the fact is I've been learning to ride a bike.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**I love the example portrayed by Jeff Bridges in the film “Tucker the Man and His Dream.” In 1948 Preston Tucker invented an automobile far ahead of its time, including innovations that would become main stream twenty years later. But because he posed a threat to the powers in Detroit, Tucker was squelched by the auto industry, and brought to trial on trumped-up charges. An important scene shows Tucker in court facing accusations that could bring him a long prison sentence. While the lawyers are arguing, Tucker is doodling. After he is acquitted, we see that he was drawing a new kind of refrigerator, one which could revolutionize the industry. Behold the power of a man who trusted himself and his visions. He was not about to waste time on dark appearances. He was committed to his dreams, and in the end emerged triumphant. Nearly all of the hundred cars that Tucker manufactured are still operational. *(Alan Cohen, in Heartlines, Spring, 1995)***

**A bumblebee under attack aims for the attacker's eyes. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Try to stay focused -- but not so intensely that you burn a hole in your mind. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)***

**A consolation, I find, is realizing you can't get lost if you don't know where you're going. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**If everyone in the world sat quietly at the same time, closed their eyes and concentrated as hard as they could on peace and goodwill, all the killing and cruelty in the world would continue. And probably increase. *(George Carlin, in When Will Jesus Bring the Pork Chops?, p. 53)***

**Many a person's downfall comes in trying to change a bad habit by focusing on an undesirable behavior instead of on a new behavior to replace it. *(Sybil Stanton, in Reader's Digest)***

**All cats, except one, stalk their prey. Which one doesn't? The cheetah. No stalking required. It just lights out at about 55 mph after its target. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Every man is dangerous who only cares for one thing. *(G. K. Chesterton)***

**If one sticks too rigidly to one’s principles, one would hardly see anybody. *(Agatha Christie)***

**A fanatic is one who can’t change his mind and won’t change the subject. *(Winston Churchill)***

**You can buy a cup of coffee in a Turkish coffee house, but nothing else. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**If you concentrate on the blues of your past, you will find it difficult to have rosy thoughts of the future. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**“Consider” is thought to be originally an astrologer's word, derived from “sidus,” a star. If a man is to watch the stars effectively and to understand their motions, he must be prepared to give his undivided attention to this task. He must have great patience, keeping his attention on a particular star or constellation as it makes its seemingly slow way across the heavens. So when Jesus says, “Consider,” He means for us to give our minds wholly and to reflect until what we see reveals its inner meaning. *(A. Victor Diamond, in Unity magazine)***

**Once a male bird with an elaborate courtship ritual gets started, he loses himself in his own performance, evidently. Take the female away and he doesn’t even notice her absence until he’s finished the whole show. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**I looked both ways before crossing the street, and then I stepped into a manhole! *(Tom Wilson, in Ziggy comic strip)***

**The teaching that bids us formulate and concentrate until we get what we desire is a dangerous doctrine. *(Nona L. Brooks, in In the Light of Healing)***

**The police officer was in the act of ticketing a car which was double-parked when suddenly a woman ran up to him excitedly. “Oh, please, officer,” she pleaded. “You see, I just visited the dentist to have a tooth pulled, and I left my car double-parked so I'd have something to worry about to keep my mind off the pain.” *(Sunshine magazine)***

**In 1695, two scientists obtained a diamond from a rich patron and heated it by using a lens to focus light on it. The diamond disappeared. Diamond is made of carbon, and it burns just as coal will when it is heated strongly enough. *(Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 424)***

**If we don’t change our direction, we’re likely to end up where we’re headed. *(Chinese proverb*)**

**Hagar: “Dr. Zook, what is the most important thing you've learned since becoming a doctor?” Dr. Zook: “I'd say it's to keep my head down, take the club back slowly and hit through the ball!” Hagar: “Why do I keep coming back to this guy?” *(Chris Browne, in Hagar The Horrible comic strip)***

**If you want to improve your concentration, you could lean on internet-blocking apps, compile a productivity-boosting playlist or study up on the science of how to get “in the zone.” Or, new neuroscience research says, you could just take a quick break and play with your dog. There must be plenty of pet lovers among the world’s scientists, because a steady stream of research over the years has looked into the psychological effects of spending time with dogs. In study after study, participants tell scientists they feel calmer, more friendly and more relaxed after petting or playing with an adorable pooch. That will hardly come as a huge surprise to pet owners, but what is going on in our brains when we spend time with our furry friends? To find out, a new study out of Konkuk University in South Korea recruited 30 volunteers for the not-too-arduous assignment of walking, brushing and playing with a fluffy 4-year-old poodle named Aro. Rather than asking participants how their time with Aro affected them, as in previous studies, the researchers actively monitored participants’ brain waves throughout. The results were recently published in the journal PLOS One. What did the researchers find? Some dog-related activities, like walking together through a park, causes participants’ alpha brain waves to strengthen, which indicates a state of relaxation. Others, like playing with a squeaky toy or brushing, were associated with increased beta waves, indicating greater calm concentration. As in previous studies, participants also told the researchers they felt calmer and happier after interacting with the dog. *(Jessica Stillman, in The North Platte Telegraph, May 21, 2024)***

**Having a big success with one set of assumptions can easily create a dogmatic outlook. Edison founded the electricity supply industry using direct current (DC). This prevented him from seeing both the benefits of alternating current (AC) and that the future of the industry lay with that type of current. *(Roger van Oech, in A Kick in the Seat of the Pants)***

**It is believed that an elephant’s trunk contains between 40,000 and 100,000 individual muscles. An elephant is able to pick up a single blade of grass with its trunk. *(Don Voorhees, in The Perfectly Useless Book of Useless Information, p. 153)***

**Ninety-five percent of everything you buy, if you're typical, you buy within two miles of home. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The eye at rest focuses on infinity, and close work requires a change in the shape and thickness of the lens so that the light rays from a near object will come into focus. *(Wellness Letter, University of California at Berkeley)***

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**Federal Express went after air delivery for small parcels. Their competitors, Emery and Airborne, collected freight in different sizes, shipped them by regular airlines, and then delivered them to the addressee. Federal Express found success by limiting itself to small packages and by flying them on company-owned planes. *(Joe Griffith, in Speaker's Library of Business, p. 211)***

**Federal Express used the bank's method of clearing checks overnight to the movement of packages. Fred Smith, the founder developed the hub-and-spoke concept, where every single package goes to Memphis, Tennessee, and then is flown to its final destination. *(Joe Griffith, in Speaker's Library of Business, p. 237)***

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**Visiting my wife in the hospital after she gave birth to our third child, I couldn't help notice the exuberant couple next to us. About to leave with their first baby, the father was busily taking the kind of photographs of his son that develop instantly. When he saw that my camera used only lab-processed film, he generously offered to take a photo for us. Delighted, I quickly positioned my daughter in her crib while the new papa snapped his last picture -- and proudly handed me a photograph of his infant son. *(Paul Coleman, in Reader's Digest)***

**In life, as in football, you won’t go far unless you know where the goalposts are. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Focus can get us in trouble if we are not flexible enough in our thinking: Henry Ford had been successful making cars available in only one color (“Any color you want as long as it's black”). He believed that he had a formula that worked, and he didn't want to change it. This prevented him from seeing the rise of a post World War I consumer class that wanted a variety of styles and colors from which to choose. As a result, Ford lost market share to General Motors. In order to make good decisions, your judge should avoid falling in love with ideas -- especially those that have brought him success in the past. *(Roger van Oech, A Kick in the Seat of Your Pants)***

**No horse gets anywhere until he is harnessed. No steam or gas drives anything until it is confined. No Niagara turns into light and power until it is tunneled. No life ever grows great until it is focused, dedicated, disciplined. *(Harry Emerson Fosdick)***

**If you fixate on the worst-case scenario, and it actually happens, you’ve lived it twice. *(Michael J. Fox, in Vanity Fair)***

**FOCUS = Freedom Of Choice Used Scientifically or Spiritually. *(J. Sig Paulson, Unity Minister)***

**The ability to focus on one goal and organize all efforts to reach it is said to be what the big money makers have in common. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**To know God, in nature or anywhere else, we must be intensely interested in God; we must wait on Him, be alert for the signs of His presence, be ready for the flash of illumination that will reward our search, and be obedient to the vision given to us. *(A. Victor Diamond, in Unity magazine)***

**The only reason I keep going forward is that I can’t find any place to turn around. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)***

**The fellow had spent his entire life studying goldfish. At a meeting of the Goldfish Lovers of America, he was asked how one could tell the difference between a male goldfish and a female goldfish. “That's simple,” said the man of knowledge. “Male goldfish will eat only male worms.” “But how,” persisted the questioner, “can you tell the difference between male worms and female worms?” “Haven't the slightest idea,” he replied. “I'm not an expert on worms, just goldfish.” *(Jacob M. Braude and Glenn Van Ekeren, in Braud's Treasury of Wit & Humor)***

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**It was Saturday morning and while they were having breakfast, Mr. Smith suddenly announced that he didn't have to go to the office that morning. “Well, don't think,” said his wife, “that you're going to run off to play golf today and leave me alone with all this work to do.” “Why golf is the furthest thing from my mind,” replied the husband, gnawing at his breakfast, “and please pass me the putter.” *(The Wall Street Journal)***

**t is almost impossible to remember how tragic a place the world is when one is playing golf. *(Robert Lynd)***

**After I waited patiently while my husband played a round of golf on our 18th wedding anniversary, he and I went out to dinner at a lovely restaurant. We discussed many happy memories we've shared during the years. Then I said, “Want to go for another 18?” “No,” he replied. “I think it's too dark now.” *(Mary Leach, in Reader's Digest)***

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**The men who served as guards along the Great Wall of China in the Middle Ages were often born on the wall, grew up there, married there, died there, and were buried within it. Many of these guards never left the wall in their entire lives. *(David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 31)*
On the bill of a herring gull is a red patch. When the gull brings food to its chick, the chick sees the patch, pecks at it, and thus finds out where the food is. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Only he who keeps his eye fixed on the far horizon will find his right road. *(Dag Hammarskjold)***

**Psychologists agree that our minds are capable of thinking only one thought at a time. Any hobby which requires single-pointed concentration can be used as a substitute for thoughts of pain. I often lost myself in knitting, watching the design of an afghan grow. Medical science substantiates the theory that absorbing activities like knitting cause the brain to release natural painkillers, called endorphins. (Incidentally, so does laughing.) *(Evelyne Lein, in The Healing Process)***

**Too often we are inclined to look at the things we do have with a sigh, thinking: “Oh yes, I am thankful for these things but just look at what I don't have!” The attention is then focused on the want instead of the blessing. *(Jack E. Addington)***

**My definition of an intellectual is someone who can listen to the William Tell Overture without thinking of the Lone Ranger. *(Billy Connolly, actor)***

**The way you overcome shyness is to become so wrapped up in something that you forget to be afraid. *(Lady Bird Johnson)***

**Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadows. *(Helen Keller)***

**My interest is in the future . . . because I'm going to spend the rest of my life there. *(Charles Kettering)***

**The koala, of Australia, is perfectly adapted to one specific tree, the eucalyptus, and doesn't need anything else, not even water. It is one of the few land animals that do not need water to supplement their food. (*Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 45)***

**Some lasers can focus light to a fine point bright enough to vaporize iron or any other earthly material, concentrating energy on it a million times faster and more intensely than a nuclear blast. Point to the sun at noon on a clear summer day, and about one-tenth of a watt of solar power falls on your fingertip. Upon a piece of steel no bigger, an industrial laser can easily concentrate ten billion watts. *(Allen A. Boraiko, in Reader's Digest)***

**“How did you discover the law of gravitation?” somebody once asked Newton. “By thinking about it all the time,” was the answer. *(Ernest Dimnet, in The Art of Thinking)***

**Mirrors were used in early lighthouses to concentrate the light into a single beam. In the 1820s, Agustin Fresnel created an even more powerful beam using prisms. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**In Vince, the biography of Vince Lombardi, author Michael O'Brien notes that the legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers football team recognized the importance of not allowing his players to focus on their weaknesses. Before a game with Green Bay's archrival, the Detroit Lions, Lombardi showed films of only the successful running plays previously used against the Lions. That way, his team would be more likely to take the field with confidence. *(Donald O. Clifton & Paula Nelson, in Reader’s Digest)***

**The young woman really thought she’d been very patient through a protracted period of dating with no talk of marriage. One night her steady boyfriend took her to a Chinese restaurant. As he perused the menu, he casually asked her, “So, how do you like your rice? Steamed or fried?” Without missing a beat, she looked over her menu at him and replied clearly, “Thrown.” *(The PassTime Paper)***

**Does mental focus develop the part of the brain used in the task, just as physical exercise builds up the muscles? Psychology professor Michael Posner of the University of Oregon used PET scans and electroencephalograms to trace the brain activity of people focused on given tasks. Trying a task for the first time increased blood flow and electrical activity in the brain. But as the subjects became accomplished, brain blood flow and electrical discharges decreased. The more we practice concentration, Posner believes, the less brain activity is necessary. And mental skills perfected in one area can be transferred to others. *(Edwin Kiester, Jr., and Sally Valente Kiester, in Reader's Digest)***

**Those who band birds now say they've learned that many migratory birds each season go back not only to the same tree they left the previous year, but to the same branch. *(Boyd's Curiosity Shop, p. 120)
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**Keep your mind focused on where you're going -- but never forget where you came from. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)***

**Too often, our minds are locked on one track. We are looking for red -- so we overlook blue. Many Nobel Prizes have been washed down the drain because someone did not expect the unexpected. *(John D. Turner, in Textile Chemist & Colorist)***

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**I'm very loyal in relationships. Even when I go out with my mom, I don’t look at other moms. *(Garry Shandling, in Catholic Digest)***

**We focus in our lives and in public affairs more on what’s wrong, bad, corrupt and unfinished than on what’s accomplished, good, noble, alleviating, and progressing. More than 200 years ago. Edward Gibbon wrote that there is a strong propensity in human nature “to exalt the past and depreciate the present.” It is still so. The end of the world is not at hand. *(Theodore Levitt, in Marketing Imagination)***

**Where do these birds build their nests? Bald eagles usually create homes in the highest branches of trees. They often use the same nest year after year, adding more twigs to it. One nest was used 34 years in a row and weighed 2 tons -- as much as a truck! *(Jessica Mueller, in Frontier magazine)***

**Never be so focused on what you're looking for that you overlook the thing you actually find. *(Ann Patchett, author)***

**Niagara Falls is an example of raw and unrestrained power. Tremendous forces are involved as the Niagara River dashes madly over the Falls. This vast energy was wasted for millions of years until we built several large power plants to harness the power of electricity. Today the Falls have been “tamed” as the water turns great turbines to generate electricity for many Eastern cities. *(Eric Butterworth, in Discover the Power Within You, p. 62)***

**When you focus on the goodness in your life, you create more of it. *(Oprah Winfrey)***

**Concentration comes out of a combination of confidence and hunger. *(Arnold Palmer)***

**A thought to remember: “Don’t pet your pet peeve too much.” *(Reminisce magazine)***

**It's little wonder physicians specialize. No way can they keep up with it all. The National Library of Medicine near Washington, D. C., subscribes to 24,000 medical periodicals. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**A baby porcupine can spend a couple of months checking out just one tree. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**No one can maintain more than three priorities. If you have a job you care about, that’s a priority. If you have a family, that’s is priority. Which leaves one more. Maybe it’s staying in shape, maybe it’s volunteering at your church. Most people understand this intuitively. But they keep over-committing themselves and over-complicating their lives. So my advice is simple: figure out what your priorities are, and say no to everything else. *(Elaine St. James)***

**A true intellectual is someone who can listen to the William Tell Overture and not think of the Lone Ranger. *(Dan Rather)***

**When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.” *(Mister Fred Rogers, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**Owen Wister, an old college friend of Theodore Roosevelt, was visiting him at the White House. Roosevelt’s daughter Alice kept running in and out of the room until Wister finally asked if there wasn’t something Roosevelt could do to control her. “Well,” said the President. “I can do one of two things. I can be President of the United States or I can control Alice. I cannot possibly do both.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Do not think of your faults; still less of others' faults. Look for what is good and strong and try to imitate it. Your faults will drop off like dead leaves when their time comes. *(John Ruskin)***

**The rise of self-checkout lines has cut purchases of snacks, soda, and magazines in participating grocery stores by about 45 percent, according to a survey by IHL Consulting Group. Customers are so focused on the scanning process that they are less apt to make last-minute impulse buys. *(BusinessWeek, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 8, 2006)***

**A woman once told Dr. Samuel Johnson when he was preparing his dictionary, “I am so glad there are no impure words in your dictionary!” Dr. Johnson answered, “How do you know? Did you look for them?” *(Bishop Fulton J. Sheen)***

**Policeman giving directions to Ziggy: “Sure, take a left at the second Starbucks, then a right at the next Starbucks, then you …” *(Tom Wilson, in Ziggy comic strip)***

**Nothing contributes so much to tranquilizing the mind as a steady purpose -- a point on which the soul may fix its intellectual eye. *(Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley)***

**It’s argued you can stare down a tiger. Claim is the tiger always kills from behind. And won’t attack you, if it sees you staring at it. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**If the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. *(Abraham Maslow, psychologist)***

**Most trips taken in the U.S. by car are less than five miles. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 93)***

**Troubles are like babies – they only grow if you nurse them. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Put all your eggs in one basket -- and watch that basket. *(Mark Twain, in Pudd'nhead Wilson)***

**Although for ten years no further buildings were erected on Unity Farm, the Fillmore’s held steadfast to their vision of the Farm as the center of the work. In 1940, they began to build again. *(James Dillet Freeman, in The Story of Unity, p. 136)***

**The Buddhist master Thich Nhat Hanh explains in his book The Miracle of Mindfulness: “While washing the dishes one should only be washing the dishes, which means that while washing the dishes one should be completely aware of the fact that one is washing the dishes.” Why? If we are thinking about the past or the future, “we are not alive during the time we are washing the dishes.” *(Arthur C. Brooks, in Atlantic magazine)***

**We're living in a time of rapidly changing values. For lunch I went into a restaurant that had a sign saying: WATCH YOUR HAT AND COAT. So I watched my hat and coat -- and somebody stole my peanut butter sandwich. *(Robert Orben)***

**In 1921 Lewis M. Terman, a Stanford University psychologist, began studying 1440 genius-level children throughout their lifetimes. When Terman retired, others continued his work. Eventually the data showed that exceptional intelligence doesn't guarantee extraordinary accomplishment. Instead, it seemed clear that what distinguished spectacular achievement from low achievers was that the former were focused on what they wanted to do in life. *(Donald O. Clifton and Paula Nelson, in Reader's Digest)***

**While we are focusing on fear, worry, or hate, it is not possible for us to be experiencing happiness, enthusiasm or love. *(Bo Bennett)***

**Which U.S. president spent the most time in the White House while in office? Abraham Lincoln. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Office layouts have a large impact on how well workers focus. Researchers say the most effective workplaces include both quiet space and collaborative areas. Yet even among workers with private offices, only 54 percent said their space was ideal for focusing, while 38 percent said co-workers often disrupted their concentration. *(The Wall Street Journal, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 5-12, 2013)***

**If you aim at something, you will hit it every time, *(Zig Ziglar)***

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