

The Destruction of Distraction

Jesus' presence powerfully attracted the twelve men who became his closest friends. These apostles were like all of us—caught up in caring for careers, jobs and multitudes of responsibilities. But when Jesus called them into a relationship with him, his person pulled them toward him. They didn't hesitate a moment. *"At once they left their nets and followed him."* ⁽¹⁾ Later, two other fishermen *"immediately...left their boat and their father and followed him."* ⁽²⁾

Something about Jesus draws all of us toward him. His loveliness, his faithfulness, his glorious power tugs at our hearts and fills us with a desire to run into his arms!

After the apostles began following Jesus, distractions soon drew their attention away from him. The twelve apostles argued incessantly among themselves about their position in Jesus' coming kingdom. Everyone wanted to be number one. This distraction continued to the very night of Jesus' betrayal. *"A dispute arose among them as to which one of them was considered to be the greatest."* ⁽³⁾

When wicked men arrested Jesus, not one of the eleven apostles stood their ground. A desire for self-preservation tore them away from him. During Jesus' trial Peter shamelessly denied knowing him. Distraction threw Peter into confusion, and he failed to boldly proclaim his love for the Lord.

A Lifetime of Resisting Distraction

Life on earth presents all of us with innumerable distractions that attempt to turn our attention from Jesus. The distractions that fall across our path may be very different from those encountered by the apostles. Nevertheless, all distractions are very real and very ruthless. Sometimes they are subtle, sometimes overt. All distractions must be steadfastly and consistently resisted.

Our inner selves, our human spirits, long to stay focused on the wonderful Jesus. We sometimes inwardly groan as our bodies and our thoughts try to blur our vision of him. We want him, but grow weary with the fight against distractions.

But there's good news!

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Most humans avoid talking about the end of our life on earth. Death is not a subject we enjoy discussing, but it's inevitable. But for the Christian, death is not

an ending, but a beginning.

The event we call death actually brings us into a glorious liberty from all that distracts us from Jesus! When our spirit steps out of our body, angels welcome us and escort us into Heavenly Father's presence. In his presence we are never again distracted from our attachment to his loving person. For eternity we live totally enthralled with our indescribably wonderful God.

Eternal life means there's never another physical pain, sickness or ailment that demands our attention. We remain completely free to concentrate on God.

In eternity there's no Satan or sin to battle. We stand in God's presence and absorb his love, joy and peace. We live eternally in a universe uncontaminated by anything that diverts our attention from the Lord. Everything and everyone in the new heavens and new earth keep us mindful of the God for whom we hunger.

Truly, physical death is a beginning and not an ending. Death is the destruction of distraction and the beginning of an unending life of intimate fellowship with the God for whom we yearn. *"Whoever...believes in me will never die,"* ⁽⁴⁾ Jesus promised. Yes, our bodies lie down in death, but our spirits never perish. The human spirit merely moves from an earth intent on distracting us from God, to a heaven intent on uniting our hearts with the heart of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Until the Destruction of Distraction

Life on earth must end so God can rescue us from the ravages of distraction from him. We were made for him and him alone.

Until the destruction of distraction, may we vigorously run toward the Lord. May his Spirit write the words of Isaiah 26:8 and 9 on our hearts. *"Yes, Lord, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts. My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you."*

Footnotes:

1. Matthew 4:20
2. Matthew 4:22
3. Luke 22:24
4. John 11:26