

Keeping Perspective In Life

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Have you ever lost perspective in life? I mean where you are spending your time on what is relatively unimportant only to neglect or avoid what is most important? I want to share with you an experience I had recently that seems to really drive home an important lesson on proper perspective in life.

Recently I was on a leadership challenge weekend where we backpacked, rock climbed, hiked, and spent time doing things that definitely take us outside of the day-to-day. Everything that was needed was carried in our packs. We worked jointly wherever possible and tried to stay together, help one another, and build trust; one team, one goal. As we ascended the mountainside with these heavy loads on our backs, there began to surface differences amongst the team in terms of attitude, experience, physical aptitude, and approach. Keep in mind that these were a bunch of really great people; just very different.

As we traversed the rocks, streams, and hillside trail, some were happily conversing with one another, others were quietly contemplating the majestic natural beauty around us, others were singing songs, and a few simply carrying forward enduring the pain. It is this final group I want to talk about. It seems that we have all been there in life. You know what I mean. I am talking about that place where you just want to get through a busy or difficult season of your life and you are more focused on survival than enjoying the beauty, deep thoughts, making melodies, or developing relationships with the people around you. That is where the temptation hits. The inner prompting that says just look at your shoe laces and take one step at a time, don't look at the mountain ahead, don't look at how far you still have to go, just look at your shoe laces and keep walking. It seems to make so much logical sense. The reason it seems right is because it works at first. For now, I will diagnose this as Shoelace Syndrome.

Many people are approaching large blocks of their lives this way; just get through it, don't look up, don't look around, just keep going. Then what happens is you find one day that you have lost perspective in life. Imagine the hiker who has been staring at his shoelaces for the past two hours only to look up and find himself alone. Where is everyone? Where is my leader? Where is the mountaintop that we are headed toward? Where is the goal? All I can see is trees. You realize that you are on a meandering trail headed through a forest of trees and you don't know which way is North. You have lost your way. This is the situation many people are in today in their lives.

You see, although it seems to make sense for a while to just get through life, that wasn't how it was intended by God to be. Life

is a beautiful creation of God to be lived, not squandered or trivialized. Life has purpose. In order to keep perspective, it is always best to keep the mountaintop in sight. But sometimes life's turns do hide your view of the goal. It is at times like this that you look to your leader and the others on the trail with you. Jesus is our shepherd-leader and He has put others on this path to walk with us. We are not called to travel alone. Then in those times when you can neither see the goal, nor anyone else who might be leading or walking with you, and I think you know what I mean here, it is then when you determine to simply stay on the trail and go forward. The difference is that you do not gaze at your shoelaces and miss the adventure, but instead you look full ahead and experience life. Remember what Jesus said I am the way. He then told us to walk in His truth.

Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. This article was published in 2006. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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Sunday Worship:

9:00 & 10:30am
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Mid-Week Study:

7:00pm Thursday
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
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