

# How to Focus Your Life for Maximum Impact

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*Exodus*

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Maybe some of you have heard the following. It has floated around, but let me give you a disclaimer first of all that the views expressed by the writer of this statement are not necessarily those of this reader, ok?

Now some of you may be wondering why it is that you feel so burned out and why you feel so over stressed and [?] suggested that they have come up with a solution because the population of this country is 237 million. Out of that 237 million, 104 million are retired. That leaves 133 million to do the work. There are 85 million in school which leaves 48 million to do the work. Of these there are 29 million employed by the federal government—sorry, disclaimer—leaving 19 million to do the work. Out of that 2.8 million are involved in the armed forces and serving overseas which leaves 16.2 million to do the work. Take from the total of 14,000,800 people who work with the state, city governments—sorry, again—that leaves 1.4 million to do the work. At any given time there are 188,000 people in the hospital which leaves 1,212,000 to do the work. Now there are 1,211,998 people in prison that leaves just two people to do the work and you are just sitting there.

A term that is becoming to be used quite frequently in our world and in our culture is that of burn out and we also use the term stress. Now those two are related though they are not synonymous. And sometimes we talk about individuals who are burning out as individuals who are burning both ends of the candle at the same time. And we hear about individuals that are doing those kinds of things.

Some of you are saying, “Yes, I know that some individuals are doing that.”

But there are some people that I know that it appears can't even get their candle lit. And so as a result of that, that is why it makes it more stressful.

I heard this past week of an individual who was trying something new and a new philosophy that he had developed was earn more by doing less. And as he was talking on the phone with his new philosophy of earn more by doing less, he was sitting without electricity because his electric had been turned off because he hadn't paid the bill. And he was also sitting in his apartment burning his fireplace with the extra scraps of paper in

order to try and keep himself warm. And I am thinking maybe he hasn't gotten his candle lit.

As you pick up a number of the best selling books today we read of such titles as *Focusing Your Life* or *The Purpose Driven Life*. It has sold hundreds of thousands of copies as the author of that particular book is challenging individuals that we live in a world where there are so many different choices of what we might do with our time that it becomes very difficult to understand how we are to live.

So there are other books that have been written. Charles Hummel, I believe, was the name of the author of a book entitled *The Tyranny of the Urgent*. It was written quite a number of years ago and his thesis was this. That too often in our lives we respond to the tyranny of the urgent and the most important things are sort of put on the back burner, that we take those things that so often are tyrannical, that force us and we don't take the time then to think through what really is the most important thing for us in our life and in our living before God.

Stephen Coby's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* has taken that concept and he has made four quadrants where he would call one that which is important and that which is urgent. And then he has another quadrant which that which is urgent and not important. And he goes through that system and trying to help people understand that not everything that is urgent in your life is necessarily important, that too often those most important things we sort of say, "Well, I know it is important. I know it is very important, but I am going to put it aside for awhile because there are other things that are more urgent."

There is another individual who wrote a book entitled *Ordering Your Private World*. And he referred to an event that happened a number of years down in Florida. Maybe some of you remember it how there were a number of sink holes that were opening up around individuals houses and they were swallowing swimming pools and cars and houses And the way that those things happened was that the underground water had dried up and as a result of that the dirt was caving in to fill that vacuum.

And he went on to think, Gordon MacDonald who wrote the book *Ordering Your Private World*, went on to say that too often in our lives that is often what happens, that that inner part of us, that inner self, that private part of us, that private world of us so often gets dried up and as a result of that it begins to suck the stuff around us down into that.

I want to suggest to you this morning there are some principles in Scripture that help us to understand how to focus our life. And it really doesn't make any difference what age level you find yourself in. If you are in high school or middle school or college you will find that it is absolutely important that you determine in life what are the important things for you. What is it that God has called you to do? What are those things that you must do in order to focus your life that God has instructed? Because you can't do everything.

Some of you on the other end of the spectrum who are maybe retired. You are finding that out, I am sure, that the energy level isn't as great as it used to be and maybe there are

some physical health issues and so you must really make some choices about how you are going to invest your life for the cause of Christ.

In fact, the person that we are going to look at this morning, by way of illustration, is over 80 years of age. So all of us in any dimension of our life, in any segment of our life need to understand what it is that God has for us in regards to using our time effectively and focusing our life on those things that have eternal value that are truly important so that when we stand before Jesus Christ as a steward of the time that he has allotted to us, the days that he has numbered for us, we can be a good steward of what God has given to us.

I invite you to open up your Bibles once again to the book of Exodus chapter 18. And we have been studying through this particular book. You might call it the journey of a lifetime as we look at some principles that God teaches us out of the life of his people. The Israelites are the Hebrew people. They have been freed from slavery in Egypt. There are two major events in this particular chapter and verses one through 12 is Jethro's arrival. And the second major event is that of Jethro's advice which we read in verses 13 through 27. So Jethro's arrival and then Jethro's advice.

First Jethro's arrival in verses one through 12. And, again, it breaks itself into two minor subsets of that. First of all we deal with family matters in verses one through six. In that portion that was read to you this morning we find that somehow, someway, Moses' wife Zipporah and their two children, Moses had sent them back home to his father-in-law Jethro. We don't know when that happened. We are not sure when that event took place and Scripture doesn't tell us. But for some reason Moses had sent home his family and I am... possibly it was because of this great call that God had upon him as God had challenged him to lead two million Hebrews out of slavery and into the Promised Land. And it was very possible that Moses was concerned for their safety or it might be the fact that Moses was concerned for his ability to provide for them. It is possible that Moses was concerned that he was going to be so wrapped up in this call of God that he was not going to feel that he was going to have the time to do what he needed to do as a husband and as a father. We really don't know.

But there are family matters and so we read that this father-in-law Jethro, very wise individual, had heard that the Hebrews were close to Midian, that area in which he had lived. And so he brought Zipporah, Moses' wife, along with Moses' two sons and in a great reunion that they had and we read about that in verses one through six.

And then we have some state matters in verses seven through 12.

“Then Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and he bowed down and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare, and went into the tent.”<sup>1</sup>

It was a great family reunion. It was a great time to hear what God had done. And we pick that up in verse eight.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 18:7.

“And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel’s sake, all the hardship that had befallen them on the journey...”<sup>2</sup>

You recall some of those things, how God brought them and took them by way of detour and [?] and then right up against the Red Sea and they are being pursued by the Egyptians and they were precisely where God wanted them.

They couldn’t go south. There was a wilderness. They couldn’t go east. There was the water. And behind them was the Egyptian army. And they were precisely where God wanted them.

And, folks, sometimes in our lives God puts us in the detours and dead ends as he leads us there.

And then we read how they went to a spring and it was bitter water and marah and all of the issues there and God provided sweet water for them and then they didn’t have any food and God provided manna from heaven, God’s delivery service, kind of a neat way to do things. [?] had to be involved. And how they went, Max, and there was no water and God, again, instructed Moses to strike the rock and God provided water even through the grumbling of the people.

Moses apparently sat down and went through these things, the difficulties that they had faced, the struggles that they had faced. But don’t miss that last phrase.

“...and how the LORD had delivered them.”<sup>3</sup>

I find that absolutely critical.

Dear friends, we can get into that process of grumbling and complaining to the people around us of the things that are taking place in our life. And I am not suggesting that we put on a plastic mask when we come to church and pretend everything is fine and everything is going just well. There may be times in which we truly hurt and we need to share that with others so that we can bear one another’s burdens. That is part of the requirement of Scripture is to encourage one another. But we ought not to fail to miss to share with individuals that this is what God has done.

He has provided strength for the journey. He has given me enough hope. It has not been extra. It has not been for tomorrow. Remember, that was the manna. Just enough for today. Don’t try and hoard it. Don’t try and store it. It will go bad. Obey what God has done. But share with individuals the good thing that God has done.

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<sup>2</sup> Exodus 18:8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Too often, dear friends, the world around us doesn't catch a very good glimpse of what our God is like because we grumble too much about what he has done. We can share the difficulties, but don't fail to tell them about what our great God has done.

You see, it made an impact on Jethro. Look at verse nine.

And Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, in delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians. So Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods."<sup>4</sup>

Was this Jethro's conversion experience? Perhaps. It was by the fact that Moses shared with Jethro the good things that God had done even through the struggles and difficulties that apparently Jethro came to the conclusion that it wasn't just the fact that there were a lot of other gods, but there was only one true God who was able to deliver.

That is called a testimony, folks. And that we share with individuals around us, yes, some of the struggles, yes, some of the difficulties. But let's not miss sharing the good things that God has done. It might be part of the reason that God has led you through those wilderness experiences. It is so that you might praise him among your friends, among your family, among your neighbors, among your coworkers.

We are not immune from struggles. We are not immune from difficulty. We are not immune from hardship. But there is a God who has promised to walk with us.

Keep your place here. It reminds me of a passage found in 2 Corinthians and I encourage you to turn there. 2 Corinthians chapter two. Look at verse 14 starting there. And if you know the apostle Paul's history and some of his biography and autobiography you realize that he had some pretty severe trials. In fact he wrote how he was to the point where he feared even of his life and the struggles were so deep and even put this phrase, "But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus."<sup>5</sup>

Now don't you find that interesting? God who comforts the distressed, comforted me by the coming of Titus.

And yet Paul writes, look at verse 14 of 2 Corinthians chapter two.

"But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Exodus 18:9-11.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Corinthians 7:6.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Corinthians 2:14.

You see that even through those difficulties through which we walk, Christ is still leading us in victory. We know the end of the story, dear friends. Jesus Christ will get us safely home. That is the promise.

There may be some difficulties along the way. There may be some hardships.... Oh, not maybe. There will be. None of us are exempt. That is part of God's schooling process, times in the wilderness and times in the desert.

And yet Jesus has gone on record that he always leads us in triumph and shows in us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of him in every place. You see, I think that is what Moses did to Jethro. It was sweet aroma. Here is what God has done through these difficulties. Here is how God has provided.

And remember, at a point in time Moses thought he was going to lose his life. He was going to be stoned. They were ready for a mutiny.

“We don't want you anymore. We want to go back to Egypt.”

Verse 15.

For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?<sup>7</sup>

Folks, in our lives as we face the struggles and as we face the difficulties and as we face the challenges, do people around us have a sweet fragrance, the aroma of Jesus Christ that flows through us? It might be part of the reason why God has allowed those things and so that it might be honored.

The sweet aroma and, I suspect, if we are honest, there are some times in our lives where we weren't a sweet aroma at all. In fact, people wanted to run us.

But yet we are reminded that through Jesus Christ who gives to us the victory—it is a done deal, folks—there are battles to be fought, but the victory is ours not because of who we are, but because of what Jesus Christ has done. And as a result of that we might lead other people to Jesus Christ. Not in just generic terms.

I heard this past week of someone who was talking and said, “You know, I shared Jesus Christ or I gave a testimony for the Lord because I handed somebody some money who was down and out and I told them there as hope.”

That is not enough. We can't just tell them there is hope. We need to tell them the person of the hope. We need to tell them that Jesus Christ came to offer to them the opportunity

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<sup>7</sup> 2 Corinthians 7:15-16.

to be born again, to have a fresh start in life. That is where the hope comes from, not by somehow positive thinking.

There is hope, but we need to tell them the person of hope.

So Jethro's arrival in verses one through 12 and an encouragement to us that as we go through some of those struggles and as we go through some of the difficulties of life that we permeate those around us with that sweet fragrance of what Jesus is doing in us through those wilderness experiences.

Then is a second major event. We find it in verses 13 through 27. And I find it rather interesting as Jethro begins to observe that there is a problem. And do you notice what Jethro observes in verses 13 and 14?

And it came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening. Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?"<sup>8</sup>

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, he got out the next day maybe to watch what his son-in-law was doing and how he was leading and he observed that Moses sat down and people began to form a line. They had a problem You weren't sure what to do. Maybe you were concerned about a relationship with a neighbor. You were having some difficulties. You didn't know what to do in regards to that.

Remember, there is two million people and one man. And behind the first guy in line is this horrendous line.

You know, we get in a tizzy, don't we, if we go into the supermarket and there is five or six people in line or we look around and figure out where is the shortest line. And just about the time you head there, you know, trying to walk somewhat inconspicuously, looking over your shoulder, you know, you pick up your pace as you see someone else moving toward there because you have got to get in front.

No, you wouldn't do that.

We get up. You know, we get concerned with five or six people in line. Goodness, gracious. There were probably a few thousand in line. I don't know how he did it, if you picked your number or whatever you did, but, man, you sure wouldn't want to lose your place and have to start over the next day, would you?

And Jethro looks and says, "Moses, you are not focused. You are trying to serve the people. You are trying to do the right thing."

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<sup>8</sup> Exodus 18:13-14.

And Moses thought that every request for his help made it a matter of his responsibility in verses 15 and 16. He thought in order to lead this nation he had to lead each individual person. And as Jethro observed he said, "This is never going to work. You are going to wear out yourself and you are certainly going to wear out the people. You know, they may put up for it for a few days, but I can imagine probably in that line there was going to be a few fights before too long. Somebody is going to try and cut."

And so Moses was instructed by his father-in-law. He had lost sight of his unique capabilities. You see, each of us are given some abilities for God that God designed us just the way we are for a reason. He gives to us the abilities that we have for a reason. And not every opportunity is necessarily something that God wants us to do and Moses hadn't... didn't understand that. He was a godly man, but he was a little out of focus.

And so Jethro offer to him a solution in verses 17 through 23. He says, "What you need to do is you need to find some men and instruct them, teach them. Don't just turn them loose, but teach them. You know, get 10 who will... get one man who will rule over 10 and judge there and then you can move up, as it were, the ladder, the chain. And the big issues that they don't have the ability to deal with, then let those be brought to you."

And he said, "By the way, check this out with God, first, to make sure that this is of the Lord."

And so he said, "Teach them." Secondly he says, "Look at the qualifications. They are great."

In verse 21, those who fear God; secondly, men of truth; thirdly, those who hate covetousness. Well, you would want those for judges, wouldn't you? A man who fears God that his highest priority is living for God, a man who loves the truth, who can't be bought. You know, we use such terms as oiling the palms, you know, bribery. If we pay this guy then he will rule in my favor. And God is interested in truth and righteousness and says, "Look for these characteristics."

I find it interesting that in Acts six you recall in the early Church, you know, God was blessing the Church and the Church was growing and in Acts six there was a problem because there were certain individuals that were being neglected, that apparently there were meals that were being provided for widows and there was a certain class of people, the Greek widows who were not being provided for. And they came to the apostles and said, "You know, we have got a problem here. They are being neglected. They are being overlooked."

And the apostles said, "You know, you are right. That is not correct. We don't want to do that. So let's appoint seven men."

And whether they were proto deacons, the first deacons, they were ministers, they were individuals to serve and they needed to be individuals who were full of the Holy Spirit.



The first criteria is not great business minds. It is not an individual who has great organizational skills. It is an individual who loves Christ.

You can teach those other things. But they have to have a heart for God, because Paul said... this is the apostles, I should say. So this... your observation is correct. There is a problem here. But we don't want to neglect the teaching of the Word and prayer. That is what God has required of us. That is what God has trained us to do. That is where our focus is to be. And these other things are critical and they are absolutely necessary. But if we start doing all the things that are necessary we won't be able to focus in on that thing that God has called us to do which is the ministry of the Word and prayer.

And so there were other who were raised up to serve. And, you see, folks, in the Church as you serve in various capacities individuals, whether they have an official office of trustees or deacons or whoever, they are servants. They are helping. They can't do it alone. Those who are involved in children's church and those ... there are a lot of individuals behind the scenes who do so much in order that we might have the privilege to come and to worship God and to learn together.

Why do they do it? Because they need something else to do? No. They have a heart for God.

That was a criteria. And if you look at the conclusion of that particular chapter in verses 24 through 27 Moses applies that solution.

Let me give to you, I think four principles that are important for us as we derive from this particular passage. The first principle is you need to cultivate, I need to cultivate a personal life.

Turn to Proverbs chapter four. Right after the book of Psalms, Proverbs chapter four. Cultivate your personal life.

Now how is it that we go about this business of focusing our lives, these four principles of which number one is: cultivate your personal life?

Look at verse 23. Proverbs chapter four verse 23.

“Watch over your heart.”<sup>9</sup>

Or I like the translation that says, “Guard your heart.”<sup>10</sup>

Why?

“For from it flow the springs of life.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Proverbs 4:23.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Focus that personal walk with god. It is that love for God. It is that inner person of which Gordon MacDonald wrote when he writes about ordering your private world. It is that inner part of us that we have got to guard. It means taking some time with God on a daily basis to get some instruction from him.

But, you see, this guarding of the heart too often doesn't fall under the category of the urgent. It falls under the category of the important. And so when we have a lot to do on a particular day one of the first things that we sort of postpone to the next day is our personal time with God, that time when we check in with our Savior and say, "What is it that you want me to do today?" And we push that to the next day and we think, well, tomorrow or maybe this evening when I get home. Then I will get a little bit more focused. And it is out of that inner part that all of the rest of our areas of responsibility are affected. It is out of that personal time with God where we go through and say, "God, what is it you want me to do today? How do you want me to order my time?"

And please understand. We can get so time management conscience that what we call times of, you know, unplanned interruptions, somebody stops by and I don't have time for you.

You know, someone observed that most of Jesus' ministry was done by interruption. Very interesting isn't it? In getting our lives focused before God, we need to think that those people that God places in our path during the day are not interruptions. They are opportunities for ministry.

You think about it with Jesus. The woman who tugs on his coat as he is walking through the crowd and Jesus turns to her and has a discussion.

A man climbs a tree, Zacchaeus, and Jesus says, "Hey, by the way, I am coming to your house for supper tonight."

He observed a funeral procession going by and you know how it goes. Don't look at the people that God puts in your path. And some of you have caught me on this.

On Sunday mornings I am on a mission someplace. I forgot something and got to find it and you will say, "Oh, pastor..." And I am off and I am sorry, all right? And some of you have said, you know, look like you were a little distracted. And It was enough. It is kind of like, "Thanks. I needed that."

People. It is about people.

You see, sometimes I am afraid if you touch me I might forget what I have been working on. You know, it is... it might get a leak and it is all gone, but the important part, friends, is we need to guard our heart and it needs to be a daily experience. You may go one or two days, maybe you will fake it. You may be able to draw on that for a few days. But

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

after a few weeks of no time with God it is going to be like that sink hole. You will experience spiritual burnout. You begin to look around and it is like the warning lights on the dash board of your car coming on and saying, "Check engine."

What are some of the, you know, when you respond quickly and sharply to individuals that have absolutely nothing to do with your particular issue, but maybe you are too quick at home and the anger is right there on the surface. It might be time to say, you know, I have got to guard my heart.

But a second principle that is important for us if we are going to focus our lives for maximum impact and that is to evaluate your areas of responsibility. What is it that God has called you to do?

Let me suggest to you four. Number one is—and, by the way these aren't particularly in a hierarchy. God, yes, is the center, but there are four, I think, a better approach is more like a spoke or a pie shape rather than when it comes to these four certain hierarchy.

Family is important. Deuteronomy 6:6-7. You understand that dads are called upon to lead their homes and to provide devotional time and to provide instruction. Teach the truths of God, Deuteronomy says, when you walk in the way and when you stand and when you sit and when you lie down.

We want to help at the church, but the primary responsibility, dads, is yours before God.

And we move through these different stages of life and that is your priority. Your home situation, moms and dads, the relationship that you have together is a priority.

Ephesians five and six talks about the importance of family.

The second area of responsibility that is critical and that is your work or your professional life. And many of you are in different segments here this morning of that particular life. Some of you are called to be students. That is what God has called you to do right now and so your focus is to be doing the best you can before God. And I know. Some of you are coming down. We are coming down to finals and there are two or three weeks left and it is tough to focus in. It is not so hard, maybe, when it is raining. But when it really gets nice outside and it is sunny, you know, go outside and play or study, you know, those are tough. But God is calling you to focus. You are called to be student for him.

In our professional lives as we work before God, God, you know, work is not an area in which it is not part of the fall. It is something that God has called us to do. We are to provide. We are to work.

There is third area. It is the area of ministry. Ephesians four and many other passages in the New Testament say that God has given to you some gifts to be used for the body of Jesus Christ.

Again, this is one of those areas that we often cut out. It is very important, but it is urgent. I will let somebody else do it.

Dear friends, as we study Scripture, each part of the body is important. It isn't just, well, I will show up on a Sunday morning. That is great. And we can interact and we can encourage, but there are so many opportunities of ministry. The Church of Jesus Christ, you are called to be a minister in that church and so how are you going to use your time?

Somebody suggested just as we tithe our money we need to tithe our time to serving Jesus Christ.

But too often because of the tyranny of the urgent we will put family and we will put personal time and we will put ministry time aside because we have got these certain other things.

There is a fourth area and that is the physical or the intellectual, that part of our body that we need to take care of. Folks, this is the only one we get. And we are so grateful that the doctors are able to do a whole lot and in a sense we go in and they seem to be able to overhaul certain parts and try and fix this and fix that. And yet as we read the studies, we understand.

I just saw an article this week. I don't know if it is true or not, but the statistic that is being thrown out there is that 90 percent of the illnesses that doctors see are a result of burn out and stress.

We need to take care. We talk about taking care of this body. It might be three or four times a week getting [?] getting away, getting some recreation, getting some time to study, that personal time.

So the four principles. Number one, cultivate your personal life; number two, evaluate those four areas of ministry; number three, learn to set limits. Learn to set limits in spending and other activities that come.

Just because it is out there doesn't mean we need to buy it, because if we buy it then we have got to figure out how to pay for it which normally means I have got to work extra time of this and that and other and I don't carry and I don't focus.

And as Paul shared with us this morning what his experience in France and what we experience in the United States that a lot of the younger generation are looking and saying, you know, that older generation, that the baby boomer generation sold their soul to stuff.

And it is empty.

Good night.

You look at our celebrities and they ought to be some of the happiest people if it is all built on stuff, money and wealth and prestige and a name. And yet they are some of the most miserable people. Why? Because they haven't focused their life on eternal things.

Spending, how we spend it. Sports, sports are great, but it can take over our life if we are not careful.

There is a fourth principle. We need to see wise counsel. You may feel, you know, I am a little bit... I am out of balance.

Go to someone who you know cares about you. Maybe you need to talk to your spouse and say, "I am out of balance in some areas and what can we do to fix it?"

Maybe go to a close friend and say, "What can I do to fix it? What do you see? Can you help me?"

Go to someone who has experience.

I saw a billboard some time ago, score, and it was something about a retired executive. You know, if you need help in your business and you need some advice and you need some counseling, go to these individuals who have great wisdom, who have life experience and say, "I am a little...how did you make it work? How do I make it work?"

Interrupting it was Moses' in law who came to him and said, "Moses, something is out of whack. Something is out of perspective."

We hear a lot of the in law jokes and those are unfortunate. I am grateful for in laws who love the Lord and who have given wise counsel and we still will go at times and say, you know, what do you think? Or your parents, you know, what do you think? We need some godly wisdom. Not that they are meddling, but we are asking. You have walked the journey. Tell me what you think.

You see, when we are young we think we have all the answers and we are afraid to ask and we are not teachable. And then we get to the point where we are tired of making the mistakes and so we go to others and we say, "Tell us what you learned."

Go to some of the godly men and women in this audience, in this congregation and say, "Tell us, tell me. How did you balance it? How did you not balance it and what did you learn out of not balancing it?"

Conclusion, three things. Three questions.

Number one. Have you come to know Jesus Christ as your Savior? You know, Jethro was a religious man and he worshipped gods. He was a very religious man and yet he came to understand that there was only one true God. And, friend, if you are here this

morning and you might be a religious person. You might show up to church on Sunday and that is great. And maybe you have been baptized. That is good. Maybe you have been a member of a church. That is helpful. But none of that will get us into heaven.

It is coming to a point in our life where we realize there is only one way into God's heaven. It is through the person of Jesus Christ who helps us to organize and to order and to focus our life on him. It means coming to that point where we say, "God, I am not good enough. I have tried it on my own. I have run my life on my own. I am willing to yield it you. I am turning my life over to you trusting that what Jesus did on the cross is sufficient to cover my sin. I want to be part of your family. I want you to be the Lord of my life. I want to follow you.

Very simple. You can do it in church. You can do it at home. Maybe you came with a friend and they can share with you. I would be delighted. We have other individuals in this church who would be happy to share with you how you can know Jesus Christ.

Second question. Are you driven or are you called? We live in a society that is driven, don't we? Talk about driven people and type A personalities. God has called us to be called people. We have a mission in this life that God has given to us to accomplish for him. And, yes, there are times when maybe we need to put a little more emphasis on family. There will be times when maybe work calls a little bit more. There are some deadlines that have to be met, but overall are we learning to lead a focused life for maximum impact? We can't do it all.

Thirdly. Is our life a sweet fragrance to Jesus Christ? Are we living in such a way that we are going to take somebody else to heaven with us? That they will change their destination and their destiny because they come up alongside of us.

That was the neat thing about Moses. He didn't have it all together. We don't wait till we get it all together to share Jesus Christ with somebody else. Yet he shared with his father-in-law and as a result of that his father-in-law came to know the one true God.

We only have one life, folks. We need to focus it.

Would you pray with me, please?

*Father, I thank you for the wisdom that we get from a man who loved you, Moses, and what we see as evidenced in life. And yet at 80 years of age he needed to reprioritize. He needed to focus. He was involved in doing too many things, good things. They are not sinful things. They were not harmful things in and of themselves. They were good things. But they kept him from doing what he was called to do. Father, that means in our lives, too, no matter what segment of life we are in that we need to find from you as we spend some personal time, as we guard our hearts, what are the priorities that you have for me? Where do I need to focus in order to have a maximum impact on our world and on our families and those around us?*

*Father, thank you so much for Christ. He died on the cross to give us a fresh start, that our sins might be wiped away, that death might be marked, 'Paid in full' and we can start new. In the name of Jesus I pray. Amen.*