

in distracting you from what is most important. Instead, you must live every day like you are fighting another battle in a life-long war and be spiritually minded so you will conduct yourself according to God's desires (2 Timothy 2:3-4)!

Remember that Jesus is the Way. If you want to be truly successful by living for God, you must remember that Jesus is the Way (John 14:6). Jesus is the way to truth; Satan is the way to deception. Jesus is the way to victory over sin and death; Satan is the way to defeat. Jesus is the way to God; Satan is the way to separation from God. Jesus is the way to Heaven; Satan is the way to Hell. Jesus is the way to a better life; Satan is the way to an unfulfilling life. And, Jesus is the way out of religious confusion; Satan is the way to religious error and division.

Remember that earthly things won't last. If you want to be truly successful by living for God, you must remember that earthly things won't last (Matthew 6:19-21). While Satan wants you to think earthly things are more appealing, immediate, and necessary, Jesus reminds you they are not going to last! In fact, they are all very temporary and will not benefit you when you die (Ecclesiastes 2:11; 1 Timothy 6:7).

Remember that you will reap what you sow. If you want to be truly successful by living for God, you must remember that you will reap what you sow (Galatians 6:7-8). Therefore, your detours away from following Jesus matter a great deal! Although there is forgiveness from such distracting detours, He only forgives those who follow Him. Those who follow Him will be rewarded with eternal life in Heaven. But, those who pursue something or someone else will be sentenced to eternal punishment in Hell. Therefore, the only thing that really matters is whether you fear God and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

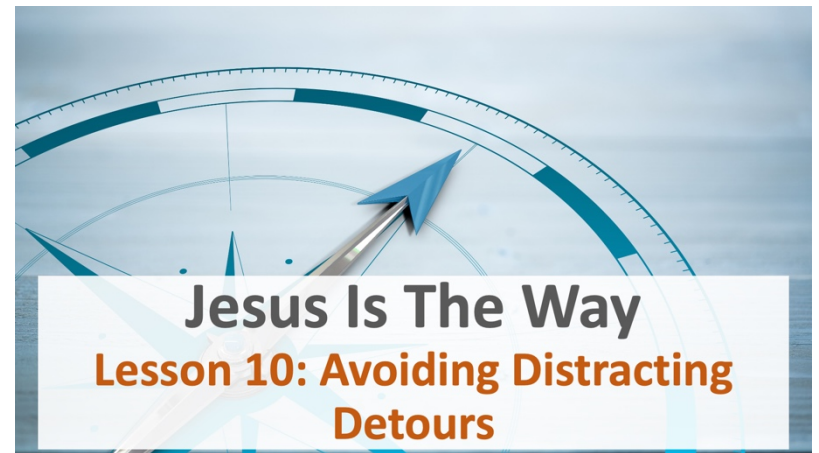
Conclusion

Jesus is the way to everything that truly matters! But, Satan is crafty and deceptive. He is trying to distract you with many earthly things. However, you do not have to be distracted by him. It is possible to stay focused on Jesus and refuse to take any of Satan's distracting detours!

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

Written by Eric Krieg

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Jesus is the way to everything that is important and worthwhile. As we have already seen, Jesus is the way to truth, the way to victory over sin and death, the way to God, the way to Heaven, the way to a better life, the way to a joyful life, and the way out of religious confusion (John 14:6). Now, after considering what Jesus leads us to if we follow Him, we need to recognize that there are many detours we may choose to take. For, Satan is trying to lure us with things along the road that look more appealing than following Jesus. Then, if he can get us to take one detour, he may be able to get us lost or caught up on a different journey. In fact, many who begin to follow Jesus get caught up in such distracting detours – and some of them don't even realize it (Mark 4:18-19)!

The purpose of this lesson is to learn why we get distracted as we try to follow Jesus, some things that work to distract us, and some things we must remember to stay on course.

Why We Get Distracted

We are dual-natured beings. We have been created with physical and spiritual elements to our existence (Genesis 1:26-27; John 4:24). So, as we live in a world of physical things, we are able to seek God and anticipate a future spiritual home. And, the Bible shows that these two parts of our natures fight against each other (Galatians 5:17). While Satan is trying to appeal to these physical desires as we try to follow Jesus (James 1:14-15), we cannot allow our physical desires to dictate our actions (Galatians 5:24). But, staying focused on spiritual things is not easy (Romans 7:14-25)! Thankfully, Jesus Christ provides the solution to the problem of sin (Romans 8:1-4). Still, we must actively fight this war

between the desires of the flesh and the spirit (Romans 8:5-8). Therefore, the choice is ours.

Physical things can seem more appealing, immediate, and necessary. Many consider the physical things in a way so they seem more relevant than spiritual things at a given moment. First, Satan wants to distract us by making physical things seem more appealing than spiritual things that come from following Jesus so people choose to fulfill their physical desires. Second, Satan wants to distract us by making physical things offer more immediate gratification than the spiritual things Jesus offers so people do not want to wait for what God offers. Third, Satan wants to distract us by making physical things seem more necessary than spiritual things by creating anxiety in us to pursue after the physical things that either lead to our survival or earthly happiness. But, through all of this, Satan often is successful in snuffing out God's word from being fruitful in our lives (Mark 4:18-19).

Spiritual things often get ignored or procrastinated. When people focus on physical things above the spiritual things (as previously discussed), they must still do something with their spiritual nature. Typically, they do one of two things. First, people often try to ignore spiritual things because they either do not understand the spiritual nature God has created them to possess or they do not want to acknowledge this spiritual nature since it will take them away from what they are focused on physically (like the man in Luke 12:16-20). Second, people often procrastinate with spiritual things with the intention to live for Jesus later and provide a false sense of comfort to them (as most never do make this change to truly live for Jesus, Acts 24:25). Therefore, you must not let Satan get you so distracted by physical things that you ignore or procrastinate with the spiritual things!

Satan's Distracting Attractions

Success. Satan wants to distract people with physically-focused ideas about what "success" in life looks like, painting all kinds of pretty pictures about the successful man, woman, or family that focuses on physical things. Take a moment to consider the picture Satan has tried to give you about what success on earth looks like (i.e. house, job, money, family, location, hobbies, impact, etc.). King Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes concerning his experience with this detour. However, he found that none of the earthly things actually resulted in being successful and happy. Only fearing God and keeping His commandments will accomplish this (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). Yet, we should notice some of the things he tried and failed to find success through.

Wealth. Satan succeeded in distracting Solomon with earthly wealth (Ecclesiastes 2:4-9). Satan tries to do the same today by getting people to value their money and possessions more than spiritual things (i.e. advancing up the corporate ladder, unnecessary overtime to support a high standard of living, retirement savings, accumulating more possessions, etc.).

Pleasures. Satan succeeded in distracting Solomon with earthly pleasures (Ecclesiastes 2:1-3, 10; 1 Kings 11:3). Satan tries to do the same today by getting people to live in search of the next worldly pleasure (i.e. sinful sexual relationships, alcohol, drugs, or even things that are not wrong of themselves – hobbies, entertainment, food, traveling, etc.).

Relationships. Satan succeeded in distracting Solomon with earthly relationships (1 Kings 11:1-8). Satan tries to do the same today by getting people to live for their families and friends and put these relationships above serving God (i.e. to pursue these relationships and what pleases other people at the expense of living how God desires).

Knowledge. Satan succeeded in distracting Solomon with earthly knowledge (Ecclesiastes 1:16; Ecclesiastes 12:12; though he also sought wisdom from God, 1 Kings 3:4-14). Satan tries to do the same today by getting people to value the wisdom and knowledge of the world above the wisdom and knowledge from God (i.e. worldly education, collegiate degrees, philosophies, etc.).

Prominence. Satan succeeded in distracting Solomon with earthly prominence (Ecclesiastes 2:9). Satan tries to do the same today by getting people to think they are nobody until society recognizes them as somebody important (i.e. which often comes by getting or achieving the things we have been discussing).

False religion. Satan succeeded in distracting Solomon with false religion (1 Kings 11:4-8). Satan tries to do the same today by getting people to reject the truth God has revealed and follow a different form of religion (i.e. Atheism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Satanism, Humanism, Islam, Judaism, a false form of "Christianity," etc.).

Staying On Course

Remember that you are at war. If you want to be truly successful by living for God, you must remember there is a war between your fleshly and spiritual natures (Galatians 5:16-17). So, you cannot just live every day however you feel like living and doing whatever you feel like doing. If you do live in this way, the flesh is sure to win out and Satan will be successful