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Focusing On God's Word

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Proverbs 16:3 "Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established

Proverbs 4:20-21 "My son, give attention to my words, incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes, keep them in the midst of your heart".

Proverbs 18:21 "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit".

I'm an avid sports fan- and writer. Combine those two, and you've got a guy who loves writing- about sports. While I've been here at USP Tucson (as of Oct 15th, 2017) I've written over 100 essays, and at least 1000 pages of my journal, which I mail out to churches, organizations, friends and others. I love to write.

And I've noticed that with writing, you have to have a focus, or an interest, to encourage one to write. If you asked me to write on the importance of plumbing, I can't do it very well. Sure, I can look up the subject, put an essay together and write it, but my heart wouldn't be in it, because plumbing isn't my interest. But if you asked me to write on sports, or prison, or something Christian, I could.

But even when I write on Christian themes, it takes a

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more concerted effort for me than say, sports. I'll show you what I mean:

Here at USP Tucson, in an attempt to focus more on God's Word than my current tribulations, I created for myself some "spiritual exercises" to do. Each day I have certain scriptures to read, articles out of Christian magazines, and I have to pray for a specific thing and quote- without using the Bible, a certain number of scriptures. These exercises allow me to focus more on God than the circumstances.

Today (as I write this) is October 15th, a Sunday. My spiritual exercises are to read Romans 8th chapter and I Corinthians 13th chapter in the morning. In the afternoon I have to read Psalm 34, and an article "Where's Your Focus", out of the "Word of Life" magazine, from Kenneth Hagin Ministries. This evening, I have to write an essay of my choice on anything Christian- which I'm doing now. And anytime throughout the day, I need to pray for venues for support or to send my writings. I also have to quote, in a sitting, 90 scriptures without help.

Lots of work, isn't it?

But it's necessary, if I want to focus on God rather than my circumstances. Yet, I've found that I focus more on the things I like more. Like sports. During college football, to keep myself busy, I analyze the games and write down my predictions. I used to call sports; worked in radio and wrote

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for a newspaper, so I'm used to this, and it's fun. Guys here at the prison are amazed at how I can break down games using very little information. For example:

Coastal Carolina vs Arkansas State: I'm saying this could be a blowout; a new FBS team, currently 1-4, vs a high-scoring Arkansas State. Coastal Carolina scores 134 to 188; a 27-37 average loss. Arkansas State scores 148-115 in 4 games, or a 37-28 win. After Arkansas State's 16 point win, I think this can get ugly. Losing to Georgia State by 6, to LA-Monroe by 8, and a loss to Western Illinois by 42, Coastal Carolina is in trouble. Arkansas State lost to Nebraska 43-36 and SMU 44-21, but beat Georgia Southern 43-25. I just think that this Arkansas State team-though losing 30+ players and the QB (to graduation)... hmm, 35 is possibly too high. Let's go half, about 17, but I gotta stick with my initial spread. +35
Arkansas State. 51-16 predicted score.

That's how I wrote each game. Considering there were over 50 games, you can see how much time it takes. I don't think there's another inmate here that would write ONE game-much less 50. But I love writing, and it helps me pass the time.

Oh, by the way, Arkansas State won 51-17!

Why did I write those short synopsis on those games? Because I enjoyed it, and it was/is the focus of my day. As an avid football fan, and writer, it's rational for me to combine

those two hobbies to do something constructive. In the spiritual, I had to find ways to create a focus, a way to keep my eyes on God. Certainly, there's no sin in liking football, or writing, but you don't want it to be your idol. You can't have a more important than seeking and worshipping God- I wonder who God's favorite team is... Saints? (smile)

So I pull in the scriptures: Proverbs 16:3 tells me that if I focus on God's Word, my thoughts will be established. This essay is possibly proof of that. Proverbs 4:20-21 instructs me to pay attention- more attention- to God's Word than my love of football; to focus MORE on that than my desire to talk and write football. Proverbs 18:21 says we choose what we desire. I write a lot more on football than Christian themes because I need a release from day-to-day prison life. But God desires me to focus on Him. He's not opposed to me writing about football, but He does want me to keep Him first- which is why I write this essay.

My talents of writing is extremely rare in prison, but it's what gives me a positive focus on life. The key to succeeding, living positive and having God move in my life is by seeking Him first, and focusing my life and talents on Him. As I do, God will see to it that I prosper. He doesn't mind me writing of the Texas A&M vs Florida game (of which I had Texas A&M by 3- they won by 2), as long as my true focus remains on serving and trusting in Him.