**Focus on FAITH**

***But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)***

How many times have you heard the phrase ***Focus on the fundamentals***? We hear it almost every day. In fact, if you Google this exact phrase, you get 149,000,000 results. This means one hundred forty nine million times, someone on the internet has said something about getting Focus on the Fundamentals. That's an indication of how common this phrase is.

This phrase is common because it is based on a principle that we all understand, and it applies to every area of life: when we lose our direction, or lose our focus, it's time to get back to doing that which matters most.

And so we find ourselves, from time to time, in a situation in which it is necessary to say: It's time for me to **Focus on the Fundamentals** — to re-evaluate my priorities, re-ignite my passion, and reclaim the purpose that God has placed on my life.

In 1960, the Green Bay Packers' season ended on a disappointing note. They were playing the Eagles for the National Championship. They gave up a lead late in the fourth quarter, causing them to lose in the final moments. During the off-season, Coach Vince Lombardi came to the conclusion that his players, though talented, had failed to **focus on the fundamentals** of the game. Lombardi started the next season by holding up a ball in training camp and saying: "Gentlemen, first things first. *This is a football*."

That is the approach we are taking. (You can hold up your Bible here as you share )“Ladies and Gentlemen, this is a Bible”. A first grader once shared that Bible means Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth. This is the start on how we Focus on the Fundamentals:

**1. YOUR FAITH starts with a walk**

We hear this term often when if comes to our faith. That is why we will start here.

What does the word *walk* tell us? It tells us that it is a daily process. There's nothing once-in-a-while about it. It's not an on-again off-again experience. It's a day-by-day process. It is also a day-by-day progress. Just as we can measure the steps we walk every day, we can measure things in our faith life day by day. How much time did we spend in prayer? How many verses or chapters did we read? What notes or prayers did we journal?

(You can use an entire set of examples here as an illustration...make it personal and relatable!)

*If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* ***(Galatians 5:25)***

The focus on the fundamentals principle that we need to remember is that your faith walk is a daily event, that we need to look at and measure daily. It's a faith walk and is a measurable, growing, ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ.

*The LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (****Micah 6:8)***

This is a primary reason why the early days of your faith walk was so exciting. Things didn’t get in the way. You were on fire. You wanted to learn. And it was a priority.

Somehow, along the way, we lost sight of the fact that...

**2. YOUR FAITH is a Journey.**

*Your life is a journey you must travel with a deep consciousness of God. It cost God plenty to get you out of that dead-end, empty-headed life you grew up in. He paid with Christ’s sacred blood, you know. (****1 Peter 1:17-18 The Message)***

God paid for each of us and there was a price to pay. There is also a price for us to pay personally when it comes to our journey. The good news is, as a believer we know our destination. That doesn’t take away the fact that along the way there will be hardships. Peter shared that when he wrote:

*Dear friends, don’t be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you.* ***(1 Peter 4:12)***

There are setbacks, hurts, struggles, discouragements...the list goes on and on...but these can also be looked at as times that re turn into and lean on God:

*Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.* ***(2 Corinthians 4:16-18 NIV)***

(You can use any example here of a vacation, travels, your life before or after Christ...once again make this personal and relatable!)

Paul is sharing that we are on a journey, and it sometimes may lead to hardship, but the final destination is an eternal glory that outweighs any struggle we are going through or will go through.

The focus on the fundamentals principle that we need to remember is that God is in control of our journey, and he already has the destination of the believer in mind.

Finally...

**3. YOUR FAITH is a Race.**

*Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! (****1 Corinthians 9:24)***

Later in this same passage Paul wrote...

*So I run with purpose in every step.* ***(1 Corinthians 9:26)***

In 1912, marathon runner Shizo Kanakuri was chosen to represent Japan in the Summer Olympics at Stockholm.

He began the race with the rest of the runners, but along the way was overcome with heat. He stopped at a garden party for some refreshment, but he stayed a little too long — more than an hour.

Shizo thought it was too late to get back in the race. He took a train to his hotel and caught a boat back home, too ashamed to tell anyone he was leaving.

For more than 50 years Shizo was listed as a missing person in Sweden. He was found by a journalist who had heard this story. Shizo had spent the decades living a quiet life in Japan.

54 years later, in 1966 the Swedish Public Television network called him with an offer: “Would you like to finish the marathon?”

The 85 year old Kanakuri accepted, and he traveled to Stockholm to finish the race he had started so many years before. This time he crossed the finish line; his final time was 54 years, 8 months, 6 days, 8 hours, 32 minutes and 20.3 seconds.

Our goal in our faith walk is not to just start the race. Our goal is to finish it. If you've stopped training daily, been taken off track, or feel you have lost your way, then it's time to make the decision to get back to finishing *your* race.

Paul said it this way:

*“I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me…”* ***(Acts 20:24 NIV)***

And...

*The time of my death is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me... (****2 Timothy 4:6-8)***

The FOCUS ON THE FUNDAMENTALS principle that we need to remember is that you are in this race to *win* this race. Who are you competing with every day? Yourself! Your focus is to start the day with God and to grow every day with Him!

**CHALLENGE**

The best part about YOUR FAITH is there is a biblical promise that goes with it:

*But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. (****Isaiah 40:31)***

***They will soar high*** ... there is an adventure in your faith journey.

***They will run and not grow weary*** ... we run the race to win the race...the race only you can run in your faith.

***They will walk and not faint*** ... this is your daily walk of faith.

How do we get there?

***By trusting in the Lord...and finding new strength.***

**Remember...Focus on the fundamentals...because this is your faith!**