

LINKS PLAYERS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR AUGUST 24, 2012

EYES IN PLACE

...for they had not gained insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened. (Mark 6:52, NASB)

MANY EXPRESSIONS ARE EMPLOYED TO HELP GOLFERS achieve success with their swing. Maybe none is as well-known as “keep your eye on the ball.” It’s a reminder used to help golfers stay in the shot until the swing is completed.

This little devotion is not intended to be an exhaustive dissertation on the mechanics of the golf swing, but it sure is amazing how a motionless ball causes so much consternation with the slightest of miscues. Simply taking your eye off the ball, for whatever reason, leads to inconsistency in your swing and disastrous results on your scorecard.

This principle doesn’t just apply to your swing. I am reminded of an occasion when a friend was distracted while driving a rented golf cart. Taking his eye off what he was doing caused him to miss the bridge and plunge headlong into an irrigation stream. He fared well, but that poor cart had seen better days!

As Christians, when we take our eyes off Jesus, disaster also awaits. Life gets complicated. Something that was meant to be simple, like following Jesus, all of a sudden becomes a series of major dramas. Lives, families, churches are all affected. The whole advancement of the kingdom of God in our lives can be set back by not adhering to the discipline of keeping our eyes on the Lord.

We all know what happened to Peter when Jesus beckoned him to step out of the boat. He was distracted by the wind and waves around him and he began to sink.

Thankfully, there is redemption when we suffer a miscue. Yet Mark’s account of this incident offers a deeper lesson, for we see where the disciples’ faithlessness came from. They had “not gained insight from the incident of the loaves.” Their spiritual sensitivity to truth hardened their hearts in such a way that when Peter stepped onto the water—even though Jesus was right there in front of him—he was easily distracted by his circumstances.

Keeping our eyes on Jesus is a simple discipline that will be tested over and over. We must be trained and ready, so that our faith holds fast.

Faith in Jesus

Read the two accounts of Jesus on the water in Matthew 14:22-36 and Mark 6:45-56. What insights do you gather about faith from these passages? What specific challenge comes your way as you read these accounts?

How do the added lines about Jesus’ healing of the sick add to our understanding of the way our faith is built by the work of Jesus (consult *Acts 2:22-24*)?

At the same time, what do we learn from *John 20:24-29* about believing Jesus even without seeing him?

Finally, read *John 20:30-31*. What is the most important step of faith we all must take if we are going to gain life in Christ? Have you taken this step?
