

Re-Focus

October 30, 2011, 1 Peter 2:1-9

Part of the struggle of life is the struggle to maintain our focus.

Some things that cause us to lose focus

Lack of meaning, too many balls in the air, too many interruptions and distractions, stress, emotionally drained and physically tired.

- All of these things are a consequence of the pressure of modern living.
- 1 Peter 2:1-9 – helping believers re-focus after being knocked around by life's pressure – *grief in all kinds of trials* (1 Peter 1:6)

1. WHAT WE DO

a. Re-focus on community (1 Peter 1:1)

- When the pressure comes on, this sometimes brings out the worst in us. Instead of rallying around we end up squabbling and backbiting. In response to this, Peter was calling his people to refocus on the importance and integrity of community by highlighting the kind of behaviour that damages community
- This was Jesus big concern – Matthew 20:24-28
- Think team ... we are not alone in this!

b. Re-focus on character (1 Peter 2:2-3)

- When the pressure comes on, we often stop doing the little things that keep our lives on track; reading the word, prayerfully reflecting on our life, and seeking God. In response to this Peter was calling his people to desire – to crave – good spiritual nourishment.
- Spiritual milk – a metaphor for the word of God – God's character becoming the mirror to our character.
- Paul makes the same point in Philippians 2:12-13.
- *Tasted the goodness of God?* – the importance of personally experiencing the character of God in refocusing.

2. WHAT WE BELIEVE

a. Re-focus on Christ (1 Peter 2:4)

- When the pressure comes on, our beliefs sometimes begin to rock, we become more vulnerable to other voices messing with us. Have you ever noticed, as you become more stressed, that the voice of criticism becomes so much louder? Peter's people were constantly being verbally harassed and bullied about being Christians. The Jews called them traitors and blasphemers and the Gentiles thought they were mad following a crucified God (1 Corinthians 1:23). In response to this Peter needed them to turn away from those distractions and focus again on Christ.
- The one who brings life, even to stone (Ezekiel 36:26).
- The one who knows what we are going through (Hebrews 3:15).
- Focus on Christ – he is our great captain, even greater than Darren Lockyer!
- Remember the song – *Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace.* Helen Howarth Lemmel (who was blind) Hebrews 12:2-3.



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b. Re-focus on the cause (1 Peter 2:5)

- When the pressure comes on, often other urgent needs cause us to lose focus on the important. In response to this Peter needed his people to refocus on the incredible importance and privilege of being a follower of Jesus Christ.
- They are the new temple – the spiritual heart of the community.
- Poignant, at this time the physical temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed.

3. OUR ATTITUDE**a. Re-focus on confidence** (1 Peter 2:6-8)

- When the pressure comes on, we often lose confidence and our attitude starts to slip and we find ourselves in a downward spiral. In response to this Peter needs his people to re-focus on what gives people the confidence to proclaim without fear or favour the good news of our great and loving God.
- In verse 6, Peter is quoting from Isaiah 28:16, Psalms 118:22 and Isaiah 8:14 – the deep planning of God is revealed.
- *Confidence is contagious. So is lack of confidence.* Vince Lombardi

b. Re-focus on calling (1 Peter 2:9)

- When the pressure comes on, we sometimes forget who we really are. Often pressure makes us feel small, powerless and insignificant. In response to this Peter needs his people to believe in themselves.
- Believe in yourself – the pivotal moment in all sport movies, the moment that makes the difference between prevailing and giving in. Great football coaches know this secret.
- Believe in yourself – you are specially chosen, specially set aside, you are God's people – his very own, you are a people of destiny – called out of darkness – never forget who you are!

Discussion questions

1. What do you like to focus on in life?
2. What are the kinds of things that mess with your focus?
3. Read 1 Peter 2:1-9 and consider where Peter is drawing his metaphors and images from?
4. Why is Peter using so many metaphors and images? What part of our being is engaged by metaphors and images? Is it our mind, emotion, body or soul?
5. If this is a pastoral letter designed to help people who are struggling, what does this suggest about what is helpful for people when they are struggling? Is this the usual way we try to help people who are struggling? What might this tell us about some differences between Peter's culture and ours?
6. Which of the metaphors and images 1 Peter 2:1-9 are you particularly drawn to?
7. Consider the areas of Community, Character, Christ, Cause, Confidence and Calling. In which areas do you currently feel the need to re-focus?
8. How might you bring re-focus to your life in the next seven days?