

Greetings Sisters and Brothers,

Softball and T-ball dominate our evenings and many of our conversations in our house lately. Why is that? Because the kids are interested and two of the three of our kiddos have some natural gifting, I stress the “some” part of my statement. They get that from their mother, not me! I love my kids and because of that love I partake in the craziness of our ball schedule. I don’t really know much about ball games (whether it be football, golf, volleyball, basketball, or softball/ t-ball), but what I do know is that you want to focus on that ball and stay in control of the ball as much as possible.

In the midst of summer, in the midst of the distractions of life, how can we take the focus that we have honed in on during sports games and other activities of life and use that kind of laser focus to our benefit, to increase our relationship with Christ? The Bible says that we are to focus our eyes on Jesus. Hebrews 12:1-2 (ESV) says, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

The author of Hebrews says, that the game plan for our lives here on Earth is that we get rid of the weights (those things which slow us down, keep us from flying down the baseline), that could be good things that just consume our attention, energy, or devotion (social media, volunteering for every last thing possible, etc.). He also writes that we are to get rid of the sin that prohibits us from really growing close to Christ. We are called to “lay aside...every sin which clings so closely” meaning cast it down, refusing to carry it any longer, but we drop it and keep on running farther and farther away. The more distance you place between you and it, the less power the weights and sin will have over you. This lessened power will help you endure the long path you have ahead of you.

What is to be our compass guiding us on this path? We don’t have to look for the northern star, we simply must focus on Jesus. It is after all because of Jesus that we have our faith, since our faith is based on the saving work of Jesus on the cross. It is as we run towards Jesus in this life, that our faith will become deeper and wider, as we experience His love and leading. We need a little less of what this world has to offer and a whole lot more of Jesus. Let us make Summer 2019, a summer of renewal, a summer of putting Jesus in the crosshairs of our attention, our conduct, and our devotion, Amen. Try these 3 B’s: Be in the Word daily, be in church weekly, be in prayer constantly. A closer walk with Jesus is guaranteed. *Summer Café (held at the UMC of Minneapolis) Every Friday from 6/7-8/9 the Baptist Churches are responsible for the cooking, serving, and clean up of the meal. We need 4-5 volunteers from 10:30am- 1:30pm. Please see Brittany or me to volunteer.*

Sunday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>- Camp Meeting at 4:30 PM at Fellowship House in Minn.

Sundays, June 2, 23, 30<sup>th</sup>- Sunday Evening Bible Study from 6:30-7:30 PM in Minneapolis at the Fellowship House

June 9<sup>th</sup>- Movie Night from 6-8 pm at the Fellowship House

June 9<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>- Pastor will be a Bible Camp at Camp Christy teaching.

June 16<sup>th</sup>- No Bible Study- Father’s Day

June 22<sup>nd</sup>- Youth Group (7<sup>th</sup> Grade & Up) Fun Night at the Parsonage in Ada, from 7-9:30 PM

*Men’s Group will presumably continue each Tuesday morning from 6:30-7:15 am, in Minneapolis.*

May the God who holds our yesterday, today, and tomorrow in His mighty hands bless and keep you until He comes again! And remember Sisters and Brothers set your focus on the Lord!

Pastor James