

Sunday, October 1, 2017

The Starting Line

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Gen. 1:1

The story of creation starts with the words, "In the beginning, God created." God is the subject of the sentence. He is the actor, the one who initiates. The writer of Genesis does not offer a detailed description of the creation process or of the objects created. Instead, the story focuses on God and his acts of creation.

The writer of Genesis obviously knew the importance of focus. The things at the center of our focus influence our thoughts and our actions, often with circular effect. We focus on the things that are important to us, and by focusing on them, these things become even more important. They become the things that occupy our attention.

Colonel George W. Goethals was responsible for building the Panama Canal. The construction presented numerous complicated engineering problems that had to be solved. There also were constant problems created by the need to transport supplies and men to the construction sites. Further complications resulted from the need to combat the threat of malaria and address other safety concerns. As if this were not enough, the difficulties and delays in the construction gave rise to still another problem. Colonel Goethals faced growing criticism in the United States from people who predicted he would never finish the project. The critics were quick to volunteer their opinions about why the project was doomed to failure and how the construction could be managed better.

One day a colleague met with Colonel Goethals and asked, "Aren't you going to answer all these critics?"

"In time," answered Colonel Goethals.

"When?" his colleague pressed.

"When the canal is finished."

Jesus affirmed the importance of focus when he warned against focusing on the things of this world. *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* Matt. 6:19-21. The writer of Hebrews also stressed focus when he encouraged his fellow Christians to *"fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."* Heb.12:2.

What are the things that monopolize your focus?

As we begin these three weeks of devotionals, we encourage you to focus on God, the things God has done for you, and the things that are important to God.