

Holding a magnifying glass, you can focus the sun's rays and burn a hole in paper. This is a simple illustration of concentration. The same power to burn is present during all the hours of sunlight, but only when focused is that power effective. In like manner, we can do little without proper concentration.

All forces in our nature, organic and inorganic, amount to nothing unless they are concentrated; diffusion brings disintegration and death. Concentration is effective life, and the greater the concentration, the more abundant the life. All failure is traceable to scattered forces, and all achievement is the result of the concentration of forces. For man, concentration is certainly not the only essential; it must be pure, or failure is inevitable no matter what other elements are employed.

Man is potentially the most powerful concentrator of energy in the world, spiritually and mentally speaking, that is, and when that energy is rightly concentrated and used, man becomes, veritably, God in action! Charles Fillmore says, "Man is not the limited thing he appears but the focus of an infinite idea." Just what is the limit of the potential of man? To what unimagined ends could this power be put if man could concentrate this spiritual force? Well, Jesus is the answer; he did what he did because he concentrated the human potential energies he possessed as an expression of God.

The key to the teachings of Jesus is that no matter what you want and need to do, there is always enough power within you to accomplish it, provided that you apply it constructively and in perfect concentration. But people tend to dissipate it in diversions, in negative thoughts, in procrastination, in self-doubt. You can effectively apply this in only one direction at a time.

Concentration actually may be thought of as thought in harness. No one has ever measured the power of thought and no one ever will in all probability because it apparently is infinite. This is why when some persons tackle what appears impossible, they accomplish it; they know that there is no limit to the accomplishing power of controlled thought. You may have been thinking that because you do not have as much education as some others, you will always have to muddle through as best as you can, and that there is little use in trying to improve your mind. This is nonsense, for you have as good a mind as anyone else on earth; your own mind is a center of consciousness within the infinite mind of God, and all the infinite sources are yours to use by simply concentrating your attention on them. Some of the world's greatest creative geniuses were self-educated men and women, who visualized success and gained it through a grasp of their inner resources and a knowledge of when and how to draw on them. You may feel that your mind wanders, that you cannot concentrate; however, we all concentrate more than we realize on what we particularly enjoy, be it professional baseball, chess, gossip, self-pity, our appearance, or on just plain excessive worrying. Here is a checklist of four aspects to consider about concentration.

1. Do you try to force yourself to concentrate? This might be your problem, in which you need to relax and let go. Jesus advises, "Take my yoke upon you; enter in and close the door and pray to the Father in secret." Jesus wants us to take his awareness of unity, of oneness, and to get into the inner consciousness and close the door, knowing oneness with the infinite process, relaxing and resting with God. Then, with this oneness we give thanks for the wisdom and talent and power and self-discipline to do whatever needs to be done.

2. Count the projects and responsibilities and intentions you have going on at one time in your life. How many are unfinished? Many of us are swamped by having so much to do that we are pulled back and forth and never really do any of them well. Make a list and set up priorities. As Jesus said, "This one thing I do." There is a need for us all to practice applying our total mental powers at a time to whatever we are doing. Whatever the task, large or small, think of nothing else while you are

performing it. When you have done with it, then put it out of your mind entirely while you turn in full concentration to that which comes next.

3. Just how many goals have you set for yourself? By this I am referring to real goals, not just transitory projects. Much of our restlessness that results in failure to concentrate comes because we are surrounded by stimuli and hence want to do just about everything. We try to assume so many roles all because of not really believing that we can be that which in our heart of hearts we want to be, which is a radiant child of God, to be ourselves. In a forest can be seen a great and clear example of concentration of a life purpose. An acorn can be only just that and then an oak tree; hence its energy and force are focused on its potential. When the acorn is dropped in the crevice of a huge rock it can and often does split the boulder asunder in the process of becoming a mature tree. In like manner, nothing can hold you back if you will only concentrate on being just who you are.

4. Is your existence focused on getting or giving? Answer this honestly. In your occupation, are you just making a living or are you giving your talents and abilities to the rest of the world? Thinking of gain while working, or making any donation, is sure to scatter your forces and corrupt the creative process by putting those unattractive dollar signs in your eyes. One who concentrates on giving instead of getting, on being instead of having, harnesses undreamed of power.

A simple but effective technique for you to use in concentrating, in prayer, in treatment, or in working for a demonstration through right thinking, through imagination and vision, is stated in this exercise. Since the mind tends to think in images pretend that you own some motion picture films and want to screen one of them. Having selected one, just one, turn your thoughts inward and envision a white, blank motion picture screen stretched across the inner field of your consciousness. Now, hold this screen in your mind's eye quite blank for just a moment. Concentrate totally on it; this focuses attention and tends to build confidence in your ability to concentrate. Now, what more than anything else do you desire to demonstrate in your life? Throw a picture of that one thing, and I mean one thing, on the screen, seeing yourself as you would like to be or your life as you would prefer it to be expressed. The picture of your desire, your intention, has now been fixed in your subconscious mind. From time to time visualize that blank screen again, and let this same image appear upon it. Do this enough, and you will find it flowing into your life's experiences; it will come about as a result of this prayer in concentration.

Whenever you have important work before you requiring full concentration, get still and know that you possess the intelligence, the intuition, the insight necessary beyond your conscious comprehension. This superior intelligence might be called the Christ-mind. Concentration is the key to power and success, and keeping your mind centered and poised in the Christ-mind is the key to perfect concentration. Here is a statement I use often: "I am poised and centered in the Christ-mind, and nothing can disturb the calm peace of my soul. I am the power of perfect concentration." This sums up for us the art of concentration.