

The Way of the Cross

Fix Your Eyes

Radical focus on God gives strength for the battles of life (John 16:33). Without question, life can be crushingly hard and unfair. That is why the victory of Jesus on the cross over death, hell, and the grave is so powerful. He has overcome the world and promises us strength to overcome its difficulties. We receive that strength and hope when we look to God as *Yahweh Nissi* - I AM your Banner. In the Old Testament, banners were for battle. They gave guidance and would show soldiers which direction to proceed. Banners gave hope and encouragement to armies when they could see it advancing. When we fix our eyes on God as our banner, He empowers us to persevere and to overcome discouragement. When we fix our gaze upon Him, He imparts peace. Knowing the supernatural impact of hearts and minds set on God, the enemy works overtime to *distract* us. That distraction leads to self-reliance, which is often our first step towards destruction. God made us to have a radical focus on Him, to live dependent on Him. On our own, we cannot win the battles of life.

VISION FOR THIS WEEK

To have a radical focus on God and to receive strength from Him to overcome in the battles of life.

GET THINGS STARTED

Modern advertising often promises products or services that will give us what we desire in life with great ease and convenience. What are some of the latest commercials or advertisements that have grabbed your attention? What are they promising through their product or service that seems compelling, at least on the surface? What is the lie or partial truth of these advertisements?

GO DEEPER WITH SCRIPTURE

1. In John 16:33, what does Jesus declare and offer to His followers? What does He *not* declare or promise?
2. From Exodus 17:8-16, why does Moses give God the name *Yahweh Nissi* – I AM your Banner? What was the situation that led to this name? What was the meaning and purpose of a banner culturally and historically, and what significance does that have for us as followers of Jesus today?
3. What do we receive from God when we fix our eyes on Him, according to Hebrews 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, and Isaiah 26:3?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. How dependent are you on God in this season? What is your level of independence, self-reliance, and distraction? What are your primary distractors right now that are grabbing your attention?
2. What would it look like to fully fix your eyes on God, to give Him your attention and affection? What would need to change or shift for this to happen? What is one step you can take this week towards having a radical God-focus?

PRAYER AS A GROUP

As a group, take time together in prayer to ask God for a radical focus on Him. Ask Him to remove anything that is distracting you from giving Him all your focus. Surrender to God any measure of self-reliance, and verbally declare your need of and dependence on Him. Thank Him that through the cross – through His death, burial, and resurrection – He has overcome the world (John 16:33).