

Step Six: Decide Your Priorities!

Sooner or later your goals and objectives must fit into your schedule or you won't accomplish them. At this point it is essential that you plan your time around your life priorities instead of pressure from others.

How clear is your focus? Do you know your purpose? Have you evaluated what you want to be true of your life when you look back someday? Is your life being directed by goals and objectives that are reflected in your calendar?

STAYING FOCUSED

Having a plan to focus your life is one thing, staying there is another. The key to staying focused is having periodic checkups. As you begin living by the six-step plan for focusing your life, you will need to build into your plan times to evaluate your progress. To make these checkups productive it is important that you remember five key principles for staying focused.

1) Fix Your Eyes on Eternity! In 2 Corinthians 4:18, Paul says, "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." When your life is in focus, it means you are living your life from an eternal perspective and not a temporal view. Someone said it like this, "Life is short and will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last." Anything you do in life that is not affecting eternity is really a waste of time. On the other hand, anything you do for eternity is investing your life in something that will out last it.

2) Obey the Owner! Psalm 39:5 says, "You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before You. Each man's life is but a breath." If God has created our lives then He is the owner and we are the managers. Our lives are simply a gift on loan to us for a very short time. Our life span is "nothing" the Psalmist says, so how we use it is important. We should live our lives in focus because they belong to God and our goal in life is to praise Him. If you belong to God, but don't have time for the things of God you are not obeying the owner.

3) Choose Wisely! Psalm 90:12 says, "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." It is a very wise thing to plan and evaluate how you will manage your life. Life is filled with millions of options and choices for how you can spend your time. It is impossible to do everything so it is imperative that you choose the best things in life and not simply the good things. Satan would love to see you spend your days on "good" things if he could just keep you too busy for the "best" things.

4) Understand Your Uniqueness! In Psalm 139:16, the Psalmist says, "Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be." God created you uniquely to accomplish His purposes in your life. That means you have been wired by God with certain gifts, abilities, personality, and passions which are to be taken into account while focusing your life. Plan according to your strengths not your weaknesses.

5) Say NO! John 17:4 says, "I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do." Jesus did exactly what the Father expected; nothing more and nothing less. Why? Because Jesus knew how to say "no." The key to focusing your life and staying there is to understand what to say "yes" to and what to say "no" to.

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FINDING YOUR LIFE'S FOCUS by Ken Adams

Do you ever feel like life is one big blur? If so, you probably feel that way because you've got more things to do than you've got time to do them in. But have you ever thought about where your time goes? How? Well someone calculated how the typical life span of 70 years is spent. Here is the breakdown...

Sleep	23 years	32.9%
Work	16 years	22.8%
T.V.	8 years	11.4%
Eating	6 years	8.6%
Travel	6 years	8.6%
Leisure	4.5 years	6.5%
Illness	4 years	5.7%
Dressing	2 years	2.8%
Religion	.5 years	0.7%

Amazing isn't it? You actually have more time than you thought you did. For most of us, the real problem in our lives is not the lack of time, but rather the lack of wisdom to

use the time we've been given most effectively. The truth is we all have the exact same amount of time. Each of us has 168 hours in a week. That's just the amount of time God knew you would need. Our problem is figuring out how we should use it.

More and more people these days seem to be living "out of control." They lack focus in their lives and it makes life seem like one big blur. This blur in life is usually the result of trying to do too many things and trying to do them for all the wrong reasons. The only way to beat the blur is to find your focus in life. A focused person knows where God wants him to go and has a plan to get there. The focused life simply means God is in control — and as one person put it — "Until God is in control of your life, you are out of control."

SYMPTOMS OF UN-FOCUSED LIVING

Most people know if their life is in focus or not. However, there are four very classic symptoms which identify when an individual is living in the blur associated with an un-focused life.

First, when your life is un-focused you might be "**burned out**" physically. In other words, one of the first places an un-focused life is revealed is in your physical body. An example of physical burnout from Scripture is found in the life of Moses. In Exodus 18:17-18, Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, warns him about wearing out physically.

A second symptom of an un-focused life is that you might be "**stressed-out**" emotionally. The un-focused life not only affects your body, but it also affects your mind and emotions. In Luke 10:40-42, Jesus tells His friend, Martha, that she is "*upset and worried about many things.*" Martha's life was out of focus and that produced stress.

The third symptom of an un-focused life is that you "**cop-out**" relationally. Relationships in life require maintenance to be healthy and growing. In fact, every relationship in your life requires time and energy in order to be maintained. Satan would want nothing more than to prevent this maintenance from happening. If Satan can keep you from building your relationships, you will cop-out on the Great Commandment — "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And*

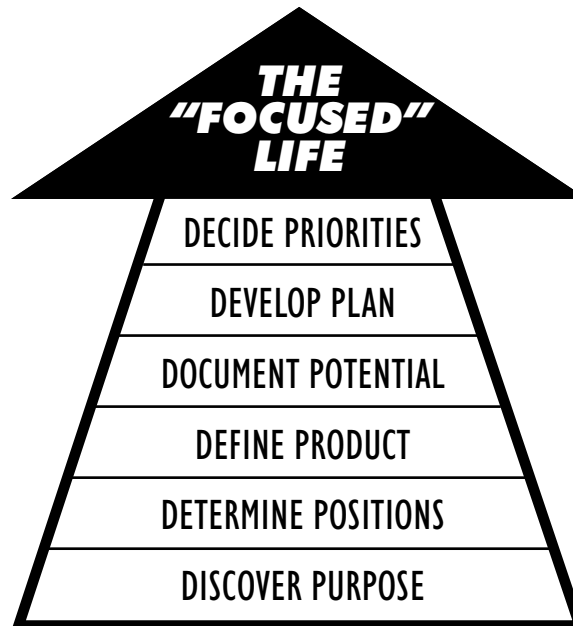
the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."

Finally, an un-focused life is characterized by being "**dropped-out**" spiritually. When a person is un-focused God takes a back seat in their life. They may love Him, but it doesn't show in their actions. Dropping out spiritually causes us to neglect the spiritual disciplines we desperately need which prevents us from receiving the spiritual direction we can't live without. In Mark 1:35-39, we see how Jesus got His direction in life from the spiritual discipline of prayer. Jesus could say "no" to outside pressure because He had already said "yes" to His heavenly Father.

Is your life in focus or out of focus? If it feels like a blur, it is probably characterized by one or several of these symptoms. So, if you're burned-out, stressed-out, copped-out, or dropped-out, you need a plan to get your life in focus.

DEVELOPING A LIFE FOCUS

Developing a life that is focused involves a six-step plan. This six-step plan will help you guide your life in the direction God wants and help you figure out how to reach your destination.



Step One: Discover Your Purpose!

The very first step to focusing your life is to discover your purpose. Your purpose answers the question — "Why do I exist?" If you have a life purpose statement, it helps you clarify the direction your life will take. For the Christian, a life purpose statement is defined by God, not you! God's purpose for our lives can be summed up in five major relationships. The purpose of every believer is to be rightly related to God, to yourself, to your family, to your spiritual family, and to your human family — the world.



Step Two: Determine Your Positions!

Since our purpose in life is to live in right relationships, we must identify the roles we fill in accomplishing our purpose. Your positions might include a Christ follower, a family member, a church member, and an employee.

Step Three: Define the End Product!

Once you've identified your roles it is time to clarify where you want your life to go within each area. In other words, begin with the end in mind. You might ask yourself, "At the end of my life what do I want to be true about my role in my family?"

Step Four: Document the Potential!

Documenting the potential means setting goals in your life. These goals are simply tools to help you reach your end result. If my end result is to be a "good father" I might set a goal to spend time with my child.

Step Five: Develop a Plan!

Developing a plan simply means establishing objectives to help you reach your goals. These objectives are action steps which help you measure the progress you are making. If my goal is to spend time with my child, I might have a weekly date as an objective to help me reach it.