

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

FOCUS!

By Pastor Brian De Jong

There are some books that are so poorly titled that they remain unread, only gathering dust on some forgotten shelf. But then there are books that possess a title so inviting that you want to immediately procure the volume and begin devouring it.

Such is the case of Richard Steele's excellent volume entitled *A Remedy for Wandering Thoughts in Worship*. Can't you instantly identify with the problem? Don't you want to discover for yourself the remedy that Steele proposes?

Richard Steele was an English Puritan who lived from May 10, 1629 to November 16, 1692. Not only did he write *A Remedy...*, but he also authored *The Religious Tradesman* and *The Character of an Upright Man*. As a minister, he participated in the ordinations of both Philip and Matthew Henry. Reportedly his last words were, "*Ye cannot make a better choice [than God], and are eternally undone if ye make a worse.*"

Suspecting that some in our congregation may occasionally struggle with wandering thoughts in worship, we are going to run excerpts from this book in the coming issues of Reflections. To whet your appetite, let me give you an outline of the table of contents.

Steele bases his book on the text of I Corinthians 7:35, which says, "*This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted*

devotion to the Lord." It is particularly that last phrase that Steele is interested in – undistracted devotion to the Lord – serving the Lord without distraction!

He begins with a description of various kinds of distractions, and their sources. He then proves the fact that we are called to worship God without distractions. This is followed by a chapter on reasons why we ought to attend on the Lord without distractions.



In typical Puritan fashion, he devotes chapter five to answering objections. Then he delves into the causes of distractions. For each cause

he proposes a remedy. Chapter 7 addresses the evil of distractions and chapter 8 gives cures for distractions.

With a pastoral touch, Steele provides encouragements for those under a burden of distractions, and concludes by drawing out inferences from this doctrine.

So why do we include these excerpts from this very old book (published in 1673)? To help you to gain victory over those distractions that steal blessings from you in worship. God has great goodness in store for those who will attend upon Him in worship. If your mind is wandering far afield, you will miss the blessings your Heavenly Father has prepared for you. Being present in body is simply not enough – you should engage with the Lord, which means you must focus your mind upon the Lord during worship.

May God bless this to our congregation in the months ahead!

Volume 7, Issue 6

June 2012

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Mnemonics...

- *Session Meeting, 12th*
- *Prayer Meeting begins summer break on 6/13 and will resume near the end of summer*

A Remedy for Wandering Thoughts

Chapter 1

by Richard Steele

THE TEXT EXPLAINED.—THE DOCTRINE PROPOSED, AND A DISTRACTION DESCRIBED.

Section 1

The Explanation of the Text.

“That ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.” *I Cor. 7:35.*

The words of the text present us with a design that believers as often aim at, and yet miss, as any in the world; and which is so excellent and rare an attainment, that the Holy Ghost even makes two words on purpose to express it by, no where else found in the New Testament; “to attend on the Lord without distraction.”

- I. The matter what —“attend upon the Lord.”
- II. The manner how — “without distraction.”

I. The matter what—“ attend upon the Lord.” The Greek word for “attend,” in our copies, hath a remarkable elegance in it. 1. That you may be *fit and ready* for God’s service, that religion and religious duties may sit fitly on you, that you may be *ready* to serve the Lord in duty or suffering. A most sweet frame of soul to be always bent and strung for the service of God. That man is meet for the master’s use that is prepared unto every good work. *2 Tim. 2:21.* How many choice opportunities for instruction, for reproof, for charity, for prayer, do we hazard, yea, and lose, for want of a soul quick and ready to our duty? 2. That you may be *fixed and settled* in his service. The word intimates such an inseparable cleaving, such a marriage of the mind to the work of God, that we have in hand, as can by no means suffer a divorce. It should be as hard a matter to break off the heart from God in his service, being married to him, and settled in holy duties, as it is to abstract the miser’s soul from the world to which it is glued.

II. The manner how—“without distraction.” The sense hereof is almost prevented, by the *emphasis* of the former word. Yet this word is not without its great

weight: and it speaks a *quiet, unshaken, and immoveable* frame of soul, which cannot be whirled about with vain trifles. The soul is never at that holy quiet, as when it is directly ascending and communing with the Lord, and therefore Satan exceedingly envies this celestial happiness of the saints, and if he cannot distract them *from* duty, be sure he will distract them *in* it; and this he doth very much by the world and the business thereof. And therefore, saith the apostle, guide your condition so, in this suffering season, as that it may not misguide your hearts in your attendance on the Lord; that you may not attend on yourselves, nor on others; but on Him, who is the centre of an ordinance, and your all in all.

Take the sum of all in this assertion, the main doctrine from the *text*,—*It is a Christian’s duty to attend on the Lord without distractions.*

And that I may from this text and doctrine profitably hand the case, and endeavor the cure of distractions, I shall proceed to shew these things. 1. The nature of a distraction. 2. The kinds of distractions. 3. That it is our duty to attend upon the Lord without distractions. 4. The reasons why we must attend on the Lord without distractions. 5. Answer the objections. 6. Describe the causes of distractions. 7. The evil of them. 8. The cure of them. 9. Propound some encouragements under the burden of distractions. 10. Draw some inferences from this doctrine. And, first, of the nature of a distraction.

Section 2

A Distraction Described.

The first head will be to describe a distraction. A distraction is a secret wandering of the heart from God, in some duty in hand.

I. *It is a wandering.* As the remissness of our devotion shoots short, so distraction shoots awry. ‘Tis said, *Prov. 27:8,* “As a bird that wandereth from his nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.” It is commonly known, the ready way to destroy the

Wandering Concluded...

young in the shell is discontinuance of heat; and to wander from our heavenly work produces the dead offspring of unprofitable duties. It would be almost as easy to trace and follow the bird in her vagaries, as the volatile and intricate imaginations of the heart. It is a digression; -you that are curious to observe the minister in his digressions, how much more necessary is it to observe your own ?”*

2. *It is secret* in the heart. And this contracts the guilt and nature of hypocrisy upon a distraction; for we have a short and clear description of hypocrisy, which agrees too well with distractions; Matt. 15:7-8. “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.” To have a bended knee, a craving eye, are choice *expressions* of duty; but without the *impressions* and attendance of the heart, † are double iniquity and flat hypocrisy. How empty would our congregations be sometimes, if no more bodies were present than there are souls? And what abundance of sorry service hath our God, that nobody sees.

Yet how unknown soever these triflings of the mind are to others, or to ourselves, yet are they most palpable to the Lord, who sets our most “secret sins in the light of his countenance,” Psalm 90:8; and though these may seem small trifles, yet they fall under the rebuke of religion; and are as sinful as they are secret: good in secret is the best goodness; and secret sinfulness the worst sinfulness.

3. This wandering of the heart *is from God*, for God is the object of worship. “To pray aright is to pray before the Lord,” Zech. 8:21. “To give thanks aright is to give thanks before God,” Dan. 6:10; not in his sight only, for so you are, when your hearts are worst; but good men looked on God when they spake to him, as we look on men when we speak to them. Melancthon saith, he had heard Luther in his secret prayers so pray, that one would verily think there were somebody in the room with him to whom he spake.

4. This wandering is, while some duty is in hand. That was a good answer of Nehemiah to his false friends, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and come down to you ?” Nehemiah 6:3. He that is in a duty to God is about a very great

work and that work stands, or goes backward, every moment the heart is away; and why should a temporal• vanity set back, and perhaps quite unravel your eternal concernment? How will that Spartan youth rise up in judgment against us, that holding the censer during Alexander’s heathen sacrifices, would not stir his hand from its duty, though the burning coals fell thereon, and made his flesh to fry and smell in the presence of all the spectators?

*“The soul
is never at
that holy
quiet, as
when it is
directly
ascending
& commun-
ing with
the Lord.”*

* The same Greek word signifies the soul, and a butterfly, because our wandering imaginations make our wavering spirits like butterflies, puffed up and down with every blast of vanity.
-Mr. Paget.

† In the sacrifices of the law, the inwards still were offered to God, the skin was for the priest.

• When King Ethelbert was at his devotions, news was brought of the Danish invasion at Essenden, but he neither omitted nor abbreviated his prayers; he would hear no suit on earth till he had made his requests in heaven; and afterwards he bravely vanquished them. -Dr. T. Fuller.



June Birthdays



Men's Fellowship Group

From Rev. Ivan De Master

Thursday morning men's fellowship group has provided an opportunity for some of us older men to get together and discuss relevant issues. There have been eight men involved but not all are able to get there every week. Megan, church secretary, has put the coffee pot on every week and various men bring the goodies. Usually Ivan selects a topic and appropriate scripture verses. We often take time to pray for each other and pray for the ministry of the church.

One Thursday this past month we discovered that Howard and Audrey Voskuil will be celebrating their 50th anniversary in June. The Lord has blessed their years together and provided them with children and grandchildren who also love the Lord. We appreciate their becoming part of Grace Church this year along with their son Tim and his family.

We inquired of the rest of us about the length

of our marriages. We found out that Harlan has been married 53 years, Ivan, 51, Ken and Darrell will celebrate their 50th next year. The 5 of us at the table have marriages totaling 250 years. Surely this is a blessing. The Lord has given us long life and a faithful commitment to our marriage partners.

With 250 years of experience in marriage there should be a lot of wisdom in this group of men. Hopefully we have learned the faithfulness of God and the ability to love and encourage our wives and they us. We did note that communication is something to be continually worked on. It is too easy to take each other for granted and to forget to express thanks to one another.

The men will be suspending their group for the summer at some point soon but are committed to beginning again in the fall. We are always open to others joining us.



Grace OPC

June 2012

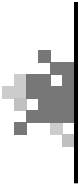
Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	7	8	9
10 Missions Sunday	11 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study,</i> 1:30 p.m.	12 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	13	14	15	16
17	18 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	19	20	21	22	23
24 Lord's Supper (p.m.)	25 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study,</i> 1:30 p.m.	26	27	28	29	30

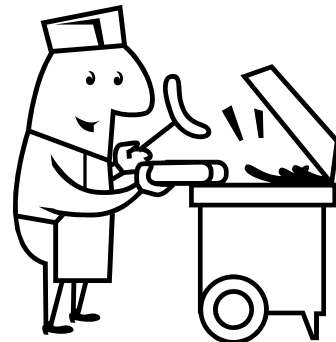


Continued...

Concluded...

Pine Haven Fund Raiser

The Pine Haven Men's Chorus will be holding their annual brat fry to benefit the needs of residents at Pine Haven Christian Communities on Saturday, June 9th from 3:00-6:00 p.m. in the Residential Activity Center at 531 Giddings Avenue Sheboygan Falls. Please join us for great food and fellowship with proceeds going to a wonderful cause!



Library News

**We have purchased some new books and many were also given as gifts to the Library.
You can find these books on the cart in the Narthex. Any Questions please ask Samantha or Phyllis.**

New Children's Books

Falsely Accused in the High Sierras
Trusty meets Bully Blare
Sanji's Seed
How God used a Snowdrift
How God used a Thunderstorm
How God Stopped the Pirates
How God sent a Dog to save a Family
How God used a Drought and an Umbrella
Elsie's Children
Elsie's Widowhood
Grandmother Elsie
The Secret of the Swamp
Scout, The Haunted Castle
The Answers Book for Kids #1-#4
Biography of Athanasius
Biography of Martin Luther

Adults - Family Life

Discipleship in the Home
Training Children in Godliness
Beginnings - Helping Kids Build a
Firm Foundation to their Faith

Devotional -

My Utmost for His Highest
by Oswald Chambers

DVD'S, Audios & TAPES

Courageous
Into the Amazon
The Birds - Our Teachers
Tulip-The Pursuit of God's Glory in Salvation
The Making of the King James Bible
Hebrews - The Radiance of His Glory
Theology
Herman Who?
Drive by Discernment
Drive by Church History
Fathers & Daughters
Resisting the Green Dragon

Biography

Martin Luther - A guided Tour of his
Life and Thought
J. Gresham Machen

Study Guides

The Book of Proverbs
How do we Know the Bible is True
The Body of Divinity
The Genesis Flood
Lessons from a Sheep Dog



Comments on Finance

by Joel Moody

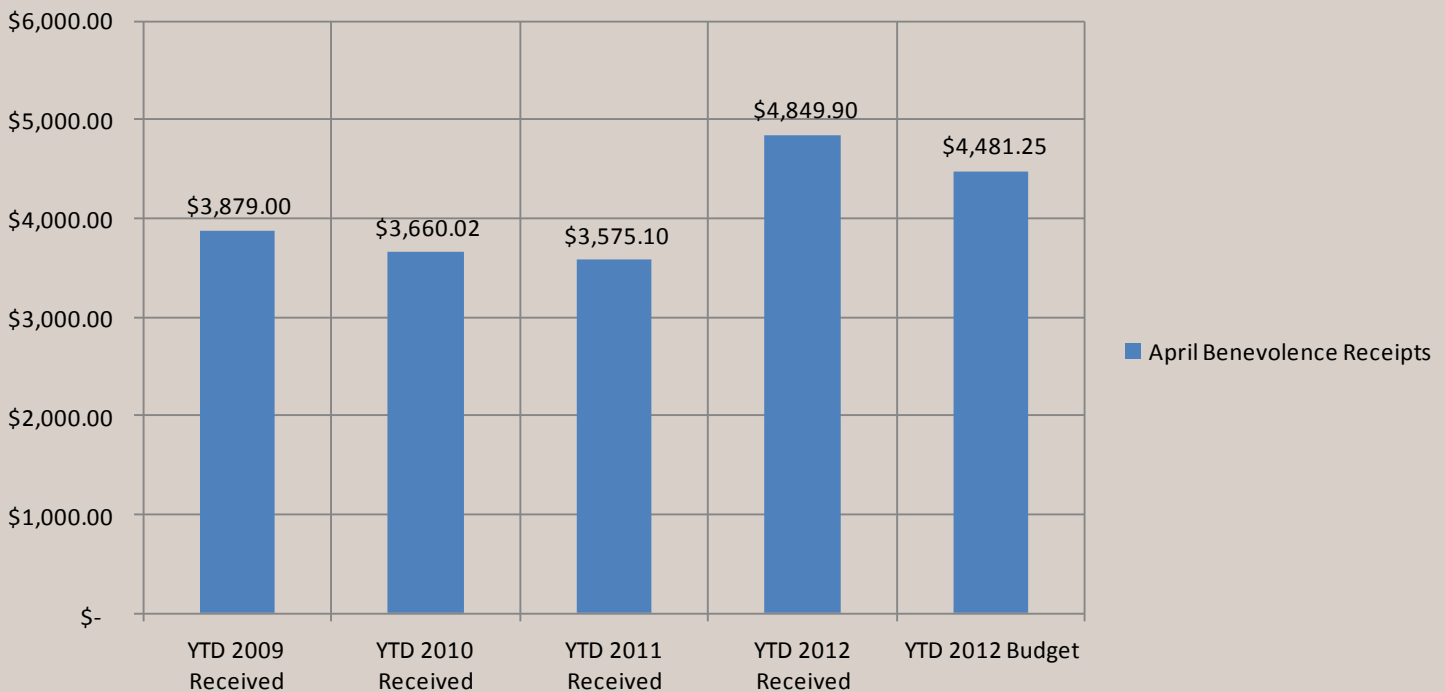
General Fund receipts for April totaled \$14,920.56 as compared to the budget of \$15,672.95, while General Fund disbursements for April totaled \$9,009.09. April year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$55,327.66 as compared to the budget of \$56,422.70 (a shortfall of \$1,095.04), while April year to date disbursements of \$48,606.64 were \$7,816.06 below budget. Through the end of April, the General Fund has increased by \$6,794.67. The increase in the General Fund was due to a shortfall in disbursements as compared to the budget. Year to date General Fund receipts for April were 5.5% above last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 6.0% below the prior year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for April totaled \$1,682.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,493.75

(an excess of \$188.25). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through April totaled \$6,531.90 and exceeded budget by \$556.90. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts. Each month, \$475.00 is sent to Worldwide Outreach for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In addition, \$200.00 is sent each month to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee.

April Year to Date giving for the Capital Expansion Project was \$2,860.00. The outstanding Promissory Notes balance was \$59,000.00 as of the end of April 2012. During the current year, \$53,000.00 is scheduled to mature on these notes.

April Benevolence Receipts





“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You
give them
their food in
due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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**SERMONAUDIO.COM/
GRACESHEBOYGAN**

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE:

GRACEOPCSHEBOYGAN.COM



Spurgeon Corner

*“The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.”
(Psalm 126:3)*

Some Christians are sadly prone to *look* on the *dark* side of everything, and to dwell more upon what they have gone through than upon what God has done for them. Ask for their impression of the Christian life, and they will describe their continual conflicts, their deep afflictions, their sad adversities, and the sinfulness of their hearts, yet with scarcely any allusion to the mercy and help which God has vouchsafed them. But a Christian whose soul is in a *healthy* state, will come forward joyously, and say, “I will speak, not about myself, but to the honour of my God. He hath brought me up out of an horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings: and he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad.” Such an abstract of experience as this is the very best that any child of God can present. It is true that we endure trials, but it is just as true that we are delivered out of them. It is true that we have our corruptions, and mournfully do we know this, but it is quite as true that we have an all-sufficient Saviour, who overcomes these corruptions, and delivers us from their dominion. In looking back, it would be wrong to deny that we have been in the Slough of Despond, and have crept along the Valley of Humiliation, but it would be equally wicked to forget that we have been *through* them safely and profitably; we have not remained in them, thanks to our Almighty Helper and Leader, who has brought us “out into a wealthy place.” The deeper our troubles, the louder our thanks to God, who has led us through all, and preserved us until now. Our griefs cannot mar the melody of our praise, we reckon them to be the bass part of our life’s song, “He hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.”

Evening, June 9, Morning & Evening, by C. H. Spurgeon



Women!

You are invited to the Monday a.m. Bible Study. In September we will be studying Galatians. We are almost finished with Luke. We meet 6:30-8:00 a.m. at the church all Mondays except the first.

