

How To Focus Body and Soul on God



“Jane,” my husband said in a tone that got my attention. “Are you even listening to what I just said, because your answer didn’t make sense at all.”

I looked up guiltily knowing that I was caught trying to do two things at once – and not doing well at either of them. Too often I try to listen with one ear to my husband while my attention is wandering to something else.

A few days later, I read this verse in my Bible:

“I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts of the LORD. With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God.” Psalm 84:2 NLT

Thinking about that verse and my inattention to my husband, I realized that I often do the same thing to God. "Do I ever do anything *with my whole being*?" I wondered.

Multitasking = Multifailures

I've fallen for the lie that multitasking is a good thing, when in reality it doesn't play out that way in my life. Multitasking means that my focus is split between multiple things at the same time, so rarely do I ever give my best to any one thing – God, my family, my work, or myself. In Psalm 84, we see that the writer is solely focused on worshiping God: his *whole being*, body and soul, is consumed with joyfully praising God.

A complete package is what God wants us from us, fully engaged and focused on him. What that involves probably looks a little different for each one of us. For me, that means that I do the following:

- Shut off the notifications on my phone during devotions so I am not distracted by a new message waiting impatiently for me to read it
- Show up at my volunteer job prepared and ready to work every Tuesday evening
- Look at my husband when he is talking to me
- Don't check my email when I'm talking on the phone with family and friends so I can focus on what they're saying

Healthy Body and Soul

With my whole being also requires taking care of my body and soul because if they're not as healthy as I can make them, then I won't be able to give my whole being.

Body

A strong body makes a healthy place for the Holy Spirit to reside. It gives me energy and vitality to do the work God

gives me. Believe me, I know how it is to feel weak and helpless.

- **Food** – Following a gluten-free diet is important to my health. It was one of the things that allowed me to recover from a several-year illness that had me sidelined and afraid to leave my house. I also avoid most sugary foods and try to eat greens and other vegetables. The further away a food is from the state God made it in, the farther away I try to stay from it.
- **Exercise** – It has taken me most of my life to get some discipline where exercise is concerned. I still struggle with it, but now love walking, riding my bike, and paddle boarding when I get the chance. I feel better when I am active on a regular basis. It certainly makes it easier that I have a fit family, but you could be the one that starts this habit in your family.
- **Sleep** – I am alert and energized when I keep a consistent sleep schedule, and for me that means not staying up late.

Soul

- **Devotion** – Spending time with God keeps me connected and grounded. It gives me the strength, stamina, and joy to live a balanced life and to be a witness for Him. I'm not perfect at this, but I do aim for several days a week.
- **Gifts** – God has given each one of us gifts to use in His kingdom, so I need to budget and invest time and resources into developing and using those gifts. I've learned not to feel guilty about taking a class, attending a seminar, joining a group, or working on a certification. Granted, I take the time to pray about and seek what God has for me to do before just jumping in. Lest you feel like you're too old and your best years are behind you, I've found that God bestows new gifts on us during different phases of our lives. So, no

excuses! Seek what He has for you now, whether you're 18 or 88.

- **Work** – Whatever work God has given me to do, I need to make it a priority. Focusing and concentrating on the tasks at hand and organizing my time wisely help me to be more productive.
- **Rest** – We all need times of rest and relaxation where we pull back to regroup and take a break. Schedule small breaks throughout the day. Get up and walk around. Take a 10-minute cat nap. Jog in place for a few minutes. Stretch. Go look out the window and take a short walk outside. As the budget allows, plan for longer times of rest, like a weekend retreat. A new perspective makes for a healthy body and soul.

Start Where You Are

Even if you are in a busy time of life, such as a parent of young children, a caregiver, or in a demanding career, look for small segments of time where you are solely focused on the task at hand. Connect with God by snatching 15 minutes of concentrated prayer before the kids get up; take a prayer walk on your lunch hour at work (phone off); arrange for a family member to give you a break from caregiving and do something that refreshes you. Start small and as the ebb and flow of your life changes, learn how to grab those times of focus in other areas too.

Practical Tip: Instead of trying to change everything at once, **choose one new area of focus**. Actually write it in your calendar or put a sticky note on your desk that says: **Get up at 5:45 for devotions** or whatever it is and then do it. Once you have established this habit, start another one.

I'm finding out that "with your whole being" is really a habit and a choice. Being aware of the tendency to be fragmented is the first step toward offering a focused body and soul to God, a spouse, and others.

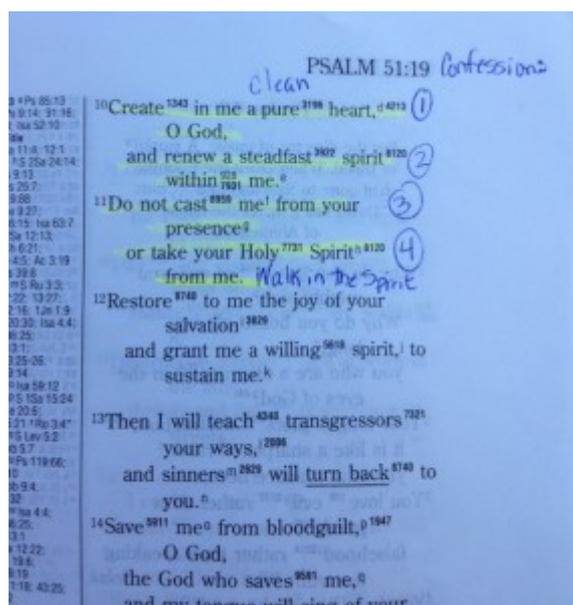
How about you? Please share any tips that enable you to be a “with my whole being” person.

Pray on!

Jane

My Failure, God’s Forgiveness

Last week was not a week that I am proud of.



My attitude was weighing me down, becoming progressively worse as the week went on. If I am totally honest about it, I have to admit that I was mired in anger, frustration, and stress and really didn't want to listen to what God wanted me to do about it.

The result being that by the time I was willing to listen, I was pretty much a mess.

Had I just listened to God from the start, it wouldn't have been such a painful process to fix things, but my stubbornness got in the way, so I had to do things the hard way. As a result, I spent some time in Psalm 51, which is a panacea for sin. King David penned this prayer of despair and hope after he made a mess of his relationship with a married woman, Bathsheba.

As I read through his heartfelt plea, I added my own regrets to the Psalm and felt the refreshing words of forgiveness wash over my soul. I decided to write a **prayer** of forgiveness based on **Psalm 51** to help me truly remember this lesson. I share it with you in the hope that it will encourage another struggling soul. Feel free to share your thoughts and feelings in the comment section. Remember, forgiveness is just a prayer away~

(If you'd like to download a free Bible study on forgiveness, just click on [The Sinner](#) for a study by Mary Kane.)

Pray on!

Jane

O merciful God,

Once again I come to you humbly, asking for your forgiveness, that You will remember my sins no more.

You love me with a depth of love that is difficult for me to fathom. It is not based on me living up to my part of the bargain, because I can't do that. It is based on who you are and your unfailing love.

I know my sin all too well. Just when I think I have finally mastered it, it masters me. And I sin against you. From my earliest days, my soul has been marred by sin, yet you never give up on me. You continue to instill Truth deep into my soul

and dangle tidbits of Wisdom for me to grasp until I am hooked by the absolute rightness of your way and the futility of mine.

I am sorry. Forgive me.

You scrub my soul with the hyssop of the blood of Jesus, making me whiter than freshly fallen snow. I draw a deep, life-giving breath and offer you my undivided attention, ready to learn from my mistakes, welcoming the joy and light back into my parched soul.

I ask to serve you with a clean heart and a spirit that is determined to cling to you. I need your presence with me and the Holy Spirit to guide my steps. Otherwise, I wander my own paths that lead to destruction and destinations far from you.

A broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart are the incense of my sacrifice to you. Released from guilt, my praises pour forth, and I am set free to proclaim all you are. You take my offering and heal me, one step closer to the person you made me to be.

Amen.

By Jane VanOsdol June 2013

OnlyByPrayer.com

If you would like a nice, printable copy of this prayer, click on this link [My Failure, God's Forgiveness](#) for a pdf.

Easter Contest

***“My soul waits silently for God alone,
for my expectation is from Him.” Psalm
62:5.***



As we prepare for Easter, we thought we'd start another contest. The rules are simple:

In a few words, tell us what God is doing in your life right now. It's always encouraging to hear what God is doing in each others' lives. It may be small, it may be big. How is He at work? Anyone who answers this by commenting below will be entered into a drawing to receive a prize. We'll post the winner on the home page at the end of the month. So, check back because if you're the winner, we'll need to get your address to send you your prize.

Happy Easter and pray on!

Jue