Identity (4): Focused

The Scriptures Reveal Jesus
Every book has a central theme. The central theme of the Bible is Jesus Christ. It is the story of the perfect world He created, sin’s rebellion, the consequences of disobedience, and the efforts of a loving God desperate to save His lost children. The Bible is the story of Jesus plunging into the arena of human affairs to save a people who could not save themselves. In a world of self-centeredness, Jesus revealed the selfless love of God. In a world that did not love Him, Jesus loved unconditionally. “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8, NKJV).
I have seen this incredible love story touch the lives of millions around the world in our It Is Written meetings. During our meetings in Madras, India, one of the local Bible instructors asked to be assigned to the worst area in town—a barrio known for its gangs, thieves, drugs, and drunkenness. One day while she was visiting people in that area, Jesus came face to face with the local gang leader. The gang leader confronted her and said, “Old woman, get out of here with your Jesus.”
“Young man,” she replied, “tell me why you don’t love Him as I do.” The gang leader began to curse and yell. She patiently listened. When he calmed down, she told him about the Jesus who had changed her life. The Jesus who had filled her heart with love and joy and peace. The tough, hardened gang leader began to weep. “Old woman, please come with me to all the gang members in this barrio to tell them about the love of Jesus too.”
The Christ of Scripture transformed this doubter’s heart. There is a love that flows from the pages of Scripture that changes our lives also. There is nothing we can do to change God’s love for us. All of our sins will not keep Him from loving us. The Bible speaks to us of a love so amazing, so incredible, so unparalleled, so matchless, so awesome that, if we let it, that love will change our lives.—Mark Finley, Solid Ground, p. 16.
As you read the Bible you will see, time after time, that God’s focus was on saving humanity. You will see in the way Jesus lived that love flowed out in how He dealt with men, women, and children. Jesus did not leave us alone to struggle through life: He sent the Holy Spirit to walk with us and help us to be ready when He comes to take us to live with Him in heaven. This love, this focus, is amazing and is all-encompassing. It will fill our very being and change us to become the people God wants us to be. Are you ready to experience a life-changing event? Are you ready to become all God wants you to be and to live a life full of adventures? Say yes to God today!

Sabbath
FOR STUDY
Memory Text: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23, NKJV).
Our Beliefs, no. 4, The Son: “God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged . . . . He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf.”
Ellen G. White, Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 14

Sunday
RESPONDING
Read Colossians 1:1-3.
Julio is in grade 8. He is a tremendous athlete. Julio participates in all the sports programs he can because it seems as if the only thing he is really good at is sports. As a Christian, however, he wants to be about more than just what he is good at.
It’s difficult to figure out a different purpose for his life, because every- one expects him to play ball.
He is very confused about what his life should be about. If you were his friend, what questions would you ask him? How could you encourage him in his search for something that would bring real joy and purpose into his life?

Monday
BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE SON
Read 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 5:17-19; Philippians 2:5-11.
God’s focus is on us—He loves us. God sent His Son, Jesus, to pay the price of our sin. And Jesus gave His all—for us!
Do I fully understand and recognize what has been done for me to have eternal life?
What can I do today to show that Jesus is everything to me?
“Christ by His human relationship to men drew them close to God. He clothed His divine nature with the garb of humanity, and demonstrated before the heavenly universe, before the unfallen worlds, how much God loves the children of men” (Ellen G. White, “How God’s Love Is Manifested, Part 1,” Australasian Union Conference Record, June 1, 1900).
Unscramble the following verse.
Image the Lord transformed but mirror 18 glory being the just by we of as same unveiled Corinthians all from as with 3: glory Lord face into the beholding Spirit of are the glory NKJV to a 2 in the

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Tuesday
REFLECTING
Read 1 Peter 4:7-11.

What’s remarkable about Jesus is not only what He did for us but also what He didn’t do. He didn’t compromise. He didn’t flounder. He didn’t get confused. He didn’t Discount the cost. He didn’t cave in to peer pressure. He didn’t love Himself more than us. He stayed the course—the course that had been set even before the world began. Even as God the Father knew that Adam and Eve would fail, He trusted that His only Son would not. This was the only way to restore God’s kingdom again in the universe. One way. One Jesus.

Jesus’ goal was saving humanity. One of the most treasured qualities of Christ is His preoccupation with people. Even when believers worship Him on Sabbath and forget Him on Sunday, He still keeps urging us to grow a better relationship with Him. Even when we can’t keep our attention on Him when we are praying, He doesn’t forget a word we say. Is there any chance we might someday be able to see with the same kind of focus He sees with?

Maybe not the same, but similar. We might be able to see clearly enough. Clearly enough to make Him first in our lives. Clearly enough to put others before ourselves. Clearly enough to know what should come first, best, and most in our lives. Maybe we will not focus with 20/20 clarity, but by His grace we can love Him back with a deliberate, focused faith that mirrors to the world what a great Father we have in heaven.

Wednesday
BIBLE INSIGHTS
Match each text with the corresponding phrase. All texts are from the New International Version.

1. John 10:14-18
2. 1 John 3:16
3. 1 Peter 3:18
4. Romans 5:6-8
5. Mark 14:32-36

A. “You see, at just the right time . . .” ________
B. “Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them . . .” ________
C. “They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said . . .” ________
D. “I am the good shepherd . . .” ________
E. “This is how we know what love is . . .” ________
F. “For Christ also suffered once for sins . . .” ________

Thursday
CONNECTING
Read Mark 14:32-36.

Imagine how this world would be like if God’s kingdom of grace would be realized in our lives. Think about the day when there will be no more death and God’s children will be restored to His family forever. It is thanks to Jesus that we have been given a second chance to eternal life.

You are a precious child of God! He was willing to die for you! It was His thoughts of you that drove Him to say to His Father, “Your will be done.” You can’t go wrong with a King who is willing to give up everything just for the chance that you might one day want to be in His family. It says something about what, or rather who, is always on His mind.

Friday
APPLYING
Read Colossians 3:12-17.

When you are using a bull’s-eye target, the idea is to hit the target right in the center. You want your focus to be on the bull’s-eye. If you get distracted, you likely won’t hit the bull’s-eye. This happens in real life too. It is imperative that we don’t let the things of this life distract us from getting ready for Jesus’ coming.

Write what you want to be the very central focus of your life. Then on the outside, write some of the things that tend to distract you and challenge your focus. Pray that you can find tangible ways to remind yourself to focus on Jesus.