

## *Practice #4: Single-Mindedness*

**Key Idea:** I focus on God and his priorities for my life.

**Key Scripture:** **“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”** —Matthew 6:33

### **Introduction**

*Because of our sinful nature and self-centeredness, we often start an endeavor with the mind-set of what we want and then ask God to bless it—treating him like a sort of cosmic Santa Claus and expecting our wishes to be fulfilled.* This makes life about us, not him—about our will, not his.

**Matthew 6:33** *inspires a fully submitted relationship in which God, his ways, and his plan are put first on a daily basis, trusting he will do the absolute best for us in any circumstance.* While what he does is always right for us, we will certainly not always agree with how he allows life to play out. This is where faith makes all the difference. Keeping our focus on **“his kingdom and his righteousness”** is what we mean by being single-minded.

It is vital to understand what the phrase **“these things”** means in the second half of **verse 33**. We must look at **verses 25-32** to gain context.

*Jesus is letting us know he is well aware of what we need, if we will simply depend on him to provide.* Dependence

on him is a precursor to single-mindedness—which leads us to **verse 34**.

*Jesus knows that a single-minded person will live each day yielded to God’s will and direction, just as he modeled for us in his three years of ministry.* Jesus placed God’s will first, and he was provided for; so we can also trust he will do the same for us, his children.

Ever heard the old saying, **“You can’t have your cake and eat it too”**? *Well, this may well be one of the only situations in life where this statement is incorrect, because once we surrender to God, we receive an abundant life here and the gift of eternal life in heaven.*

**Key Question:** *How do I keep my focus on Jesus amid distractions?*

*Single-mindedness points to and permeates all the key beliefs to think like Jesus. Let me cite just a few examples:*

1. **He is God, and I am not.** The focus of my life is on him. (BELIEF: God)
2. **The authority of the Bible has my attention and outlines my priorities.** (BELIEF: Bible)
3. **My priorities come from the Owner of life.** (BELIEF: Stewardship)

Jesus is the ultimate model of what single-mindedness looks like. John records this statement of Jesus: **(John 4:34)**. *If you are to act like him, we must increasingly surrender our minds and hearts to his will.*

**Key Idea:** *I focus on God and his priorities for my life.*

*A good place to start in putting God first is to evaluate and target areas where we may be seeking him.* Here's an exercise to help you do this. At the end of the day, take a few minutes to think back through your activities. Try to recall your thought processes as well. *If someone had shadowed you all day, what might they say you were seeking? What would a stranger see you place first in your life?* What were you focused on? Exactly what were your priorities?

*Here is the startling great news about a relationship with God: He will never say to any of us, "Well, I met someone else..." or "I just don't think this is working out." He is all-in, 24/7/365, and is constantly pursuing us. He seeks us all the time—forever.*

*The great challenge for us is to remain faithful to him. Yet when we fail, and we will, we can seek forgiveness and move right back into relationship with him.*

*As we mature in our belief, an ever-growing desire should be to simply love and seek the One who promises to never leave or forsake us—not because we want more blessings or favor, but solely because he is worthy of our full focus and attention.* This is another strong indicator of single-mindedness.

Pursuing God as the very first thing—before anything else—is a clear mission statement. When we get to that frequent questioning point of “What is God’s will for my life?”

**Matthew 6:33** provides a steady answer to this question. Single-mindedness is the answer in our search.

Unlike an earthly king’s physical realm, God’s kingdom is only visible in the lives of his followers who are doing the very thing we are talking about—seeking him first. Earthly kings have borders and boundaries; God does not. His kingdom is found in his people and his activity. As his temples, wherever we move, his kingdom is represented.

**Key Application:** *What difference does this make in the way I live?*

- *We set goals informed by God’s agenda and will.*
- *We don’t ask God to bless our plan but to bless our alignment to his plan.*
- *We trust God to meet our needs and desires.*

God makes a profound promise to us in **Matthew 6:33** and offers a great blessing for being single-minded. *He promises that if we will take care of his business here on earth, he will take care of us both here and in eternity.* In short—we take care of his kingdom, and he’ll take care of ours.

Who else could offer you such an amazing deal?

In December 2006, eighteen-year-old **Katie Davis** of **Brentwood, Tennessee**, traveled to **Uganda** for the first time. She had no idea that the very course of her life would be changed on the trip and that her life would take on a razor-sharp focus in one small corner of the world. In 2007, Katie returned to Uganda to **teach kindergarten** at an orphanage. She was

surprised by the number of children sitting on the side of the road or working in the fields. There were no government-run public schools in the area of Uganda where she was living. Most schools are privately operated and required fees for attendance, making it unaffordable for children to get an education.

Katie began a child sponsorship program that matched orphaned children with sponsors to provide education funding, school supplies, daily hot meals, spiritual discipleship, and medical care. By January 2008, Katie had brought 150 kids into the program. To date, over 600 children are now in her care. She also started a program in the **Karimojong community** that feeds more than 1,200 children. They also receive schooling, medical care, Bible study, and health training.

Katie established a nonprofit organization call **Amazima Ministries International** to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of orphaned children in Uganda. In the **Lugandan language, amazima means truth.**

In January 2008, Katie became the mother of three orphaned girls. Today, the mother of thirteen adopted daughters, she says, *“People tell me I am brave. People tell me I am strong. People tell me ‘good job.’ Well, here is the truth of it. I am really not that brave, I am not really that strong, and I am not doing anything spectacular. I am just doing what God called me to do as a follower of him. Feed his sheep, do unto the least of his people.”*

Young Katie Davis’s life is a bright example of single-mindedness and the amazing blessing God can bring through its practice. She has no doubt when her feet hit the floor every morning that her life has divine purpose and meaning. She knows the truth of Jesus’ teaching: **“If you cling to your life, you will lose it, and if you let your life go, you will save it” (Luke 17:33, NLT).**

As you practice single-mindedness, something begins to change within you. The words of the psalmist in **Psalms 37:4** become true in your life.

The decision to follow God is difficult at first because his plan often conflicts with your plan. But when you first focus on God, he promises to give you the desires of your heart. Here’s how it works. *As you go through the process of focusing on God, he changes the desires of your heart so that, over time, what you want for yourself mirrors what he wants for you.*

*No one can deny that our lifestyles today are chaotic and complex. Single-mindedness actually offers simplicity. Our lives can be uncluttered by the Creator and set on a path toward purpose and peace by his grace and mercy.*