

How to Live Free From the Enemy's Distracting Influence

One of the best lessons I've learned about distractions happened one sunny December day in New York City. My friend Eva Marie Everson and I were in town, ready for a day of exploring as we researched a novel we were writing. I'd come prepared with my huge, blue tote bag that I'd slung over my shoulder after stuffing it with everything I might need; an umbrella, my coat, snacks, bottles of water, all piled high on top of my wallet.

Eva and I caught the subway from our hotel so we could walk down Canal Street to take in the sights. We browsed through the faux designer purses, fingered the bright wool scarves and smirked at the fake Rolexes on display. As we strolled, we were caught in a throng of tourists who flowed down the street like a slow-moving river.

As I walked along, gawking at the sights around me, a pretty, young woman appeared beside me. She turned to face me and with her arms opened wide, she side-skipped to my steps as if she were trying to block me from turning right and walking past her. *What in the world is she doing?* I wondered. I craned my neck for a better look, and she seemed to disappear. *Where'd she go?*

Suddenly I snapped my head to the left, and there she was, her arm rammed deep into my tote bag as her fingers groped for my pocketbook.

I instinctively jerked my tote away from her, and instantly she disappeared into the crowd.

It seemed I'd been preyed upon, unsuccessfully, by a New York City pickpocket. But what struck me about the experience was the pickpocket's maneuver to distract me—to cause me to not

only take my attention away from my tote, but to place my focus in the opposite direction so she would be free to snatch my wallet, something I'd wanted to hang onto throughout my New York adventure.

As I thought about it, I could see the enemy uses distraction to steal from me and to keep me from my most important work; living my life with joy, peace and the presence of God.

However, distractions, like fiery arrows, often zing me with worry, stress, offenses and frustrations.

I find that the real work of living distraction-free involves guarding my heart, letting go of offenses and opening my soul to more of God's peace.

When I can do that, I am left with peace—peace to follow the joy of the Lord.

If you're ready to bypass your distractions and focus on what's really important, pray the following:

Dear Lord,

Shine Your light of truth over my distractions; my worries, stresses, offenses and frustrations as I yield them all to You. I choose to forgive anyone whom I've blame for these distractions, including myself for lowing my shield to peek at my adversary instead of focusing on You. I declare Psalm 119:114 over me, "You are my hiding place and my shield, I hope in Your word."

Thank You that I can trust in You, my refuge, shield and hope.

In Jesus' name,

Amen {eo}

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president of Right to the Heart Ministries, founder of the Advanced Writers and Speakers Association (AWSA) and the founder of . Her latest book is Winning Your Daily Spiritual Battles.

This article originally appeared at , an e-magazine for women who lead at home, work, church and community.