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## Swatting Flies

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I often (usually every day) like to practice martial arts in the backyard. Nice open space, fresh-air, and sunlight; it is a very nice atmosphere. Lately however, I have been noticing an increasing number of flies gather around me when I appear in the yard.

Now at this point I feel that it is necessary to point out two things... First, that my backyard is clean, no garbage or other items which would be attracting these flies, and second, *I am clean as well!* While I'm sure a potent stench would make for a very interesting and effective self-defense maneuver, I can assure you that I do not possess such an odor... and so the presence of these flies was quite puzzling to me.

Now as I stated, the number of flies has been slowly but steadily increasing over the last few weeks. I usually try to ignore them and practice anyway and most of the time I do (but always still notice them). Today they were especially troublesome however, buzzing all around and causing me to lose focus and stealing my attention, and wherever I moved in the yard they would follow me -- again I assure you nothing on me was attracting them.

As I pondered why these flies were present, it suddenly occurred to me that the situation I was facing has many similarities to spiritual life. Just as the flies in the backyard were distracting me and interfering with my purpose for being there, the enemy uses tactics of distraction to thwart our God-given spiritual purposes on this earth.

### Identifying distractions in our lives

Without over-simplifying things, not all of the spiritual flies are so readily apparent... indeed some distracting flies we might actually enjoy, be it television, or video games, or any number of things; and I am not condemning any of those things... but when they distract us enough and monopolize our lives to the point where God is no longer first, then the enemy has succeeded in his mission to thwart our purpose.

According to A.C. Nielsen Co., the average person watches more than four hours of television each day... and I have spoken to computer gamers who readily admit over eight hours of game playing each day.

Again, I say that there is nothing wrong with television or computer gaming, as long as wise choices are made; and I firmly believe that one of the questions we as Christians should be asking is "is this a simple pleasure, or has it become a distraction?" only you can truly and honestly answer that question in your life.

Another good self-evaluation question is, “What would I enjoy more? Spending time with God, or [insert thing here]?”.

Without sounding preachy or self-righteous, God has said that if you value anything above Him, then that thing is your God, and you are committing idolatry.

If your main source of joy in a day is not spending time with God, then something else has control of you, and the flies of distraction are buzzing around you, distracting you from the purpose God has for your life.

### **Perspective**

Now to be clear, I am not advocating that you live a completely secluded life with no worldly possessions or anything like that, so please do not misunderstand me. What I am saying is that we as Christians must be careful to not let anything take our focus off of the Lord God and His purpose for our life. When I was in the backyard today, even though it as quite difficult, I still had to push passed the distractions around me and focus in on my purpose for being out there, and eventually, I did.

We as Christians must do the same thing in our spiritual lives, ignore the flies and concentrate on our true purpose in life.

Part of the reason that many people today have unfulfilling lives is because they have never discovered their God-given purpose, and part of the reason that so many Christians feel the same way is because that their lives are completely dominated by distractions.

Most Christians that I have talked to, upon questioning, admit to reading their Bible once per week or less, and even then, mostly out of a sense of religious obligation rather than actually desiring to spend time studying God’s Word; and it’s the exact same with prayer.

### **Conclusion and final words**

The plague of spiritual flies is very hard to ignore in our technology saturated culture. Everywhere we look, we can see all sorts of media vying for our attention, and in comparison, God seems far off, but it is possible to use technology to help spend time with God, schedule time with Him on your calendar or PDA if you must, He’s worth it.

It’s time that we Rise to the Challenge and start swatting the spiritual flies of distraction and focus on the purpose that God has given us.

James

