

# Keeping Perspective

by Dr. Dave Gallagher

If you are in the 70+ age that we call The MASTER's Group, you understand that it is becoming increasingly important to "keep perspective." The 70+ season of life can sometimes be a series of mountain top experiences followed by valleys of challenge. During the aging process it is important to keep perspective in order to maintain emotional and spiritual health.

Perspective is a viewpoint, a perception or outlook we assume as we face life's challenges. Our perspectives can vary greatly. Without proper perspective, we may easily develop bad feelings resulting from distorted or negative thinking. Our thoughts determine our feelings, our feelings set our moods, and our moods often lead to our actions. You feel the way you do right now based on thoughts you are thinking right now.

I love to be with happy, positive people. I do not enjoy being around cranky, negative people. You, too? Why? Because the moods of others directly affect our own moods. The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." Healthy perspective helps us navigate the 'roller coaster ride' we're in as members of The MASTER's Group.

Gary McIntosh, in his book, *Finding Them, Keeping Them: Effective Strategies for Evangelism and Assimilation in the Local Church*, gives a good example of perspective. He reminds us that a pigeon walks strangely because the pigeon is focusing so it can see where it's going. A pigeon cannot adjust its focus as it moves, so it actually has to bring its head to a complete stop between steps in order to refocus. It walks head forward, then stops; head back and stops again.\* We can learn something from pigeons; some lessons about focusing and perspective in our later years of life.

Many in the 70+ age become busy with children, grandchildren, trips, golf, hobbies, sports, friends and yes, even the church; so much so that on occasion we lose perspective. That's when we need to slow down or stop altogether and focus on God and His greatness, on where we are in relationship to His will, and where we hope to be in our personal life and ministry. We need to know that day by day and moment by moment we truly are in the center of God's will.

Here are four practical guidelines to help you and those you serve keep the right perspective:

- Remember that thoughts determine feelings, feelings set moods, and moods lead us into action.

- Read a few Bible verses each day for encouragement and guidance. Two excellent resources are “Our Daily Bread” (Radio Bible Class: <http://www.rbc.org> ) and “Today in the Word” (Moody Bible Institute: <http://www.moody.edu/>).
- Express thanksgiving and praise to God every day – even when you do not feel like it, (No matter what the circumstance there is always something to be thankful for).
- Spend some time each day with people who are positive and uplifting. If you do not have someone in your life that fits that description, make that your goal – to find at least one person who will encourage and uplift your spirit.