

# Turn Away, Look Up

By Steve Alley

As a child, I'm sure your mom did all she could to protect you. She bundled you up when it was cold, fed you well, and filtered the reading material and music that you were exposed to. You may remember times when, at the movies, or while watching a TV show at home, that something "bad" was shown on the screen. She, out of desperation, may have turned to you and said, "Turn away, dear, don't look. Look up at me."



Your mom knew the power of your thoughts. She understood the effects that the outside environment could have on your life. She knew that she could not stop "bad things" from happening in the world, but she was determined to do all she could to keep you from being exposed to it. If she could just get you to "turn away, and look up" at her, you wouldn't "see" things that could bother you.

We somehow think that, as adults, we don't need to turn away, and look up anymore. We somehow think that we, as adults, can "handle" seeing all that life throws at us. We let our eyes take it all in, then we go away and think about it. Sometimes those thoughts invade our lives for weeks. Sometimes we even dream about the things we see. Believe it or not, your mom is still saying, "turn away, and look up."

God has created you with an amazing mind. You are gifted in your senses. God wants you to feel the feelings of others, especially children, so you can come alongside them, hold their arm, and lead them to Him. You see, hear, and feel everything, but now He wants you to control your gifts. Now He wants to teach you how to limit and block unnecessary exposure to unnecessary things. The enemy is saying, "look, and feel," but God is saying, "turn away, look up."

How do you know when to turn away, and when to look? How can you limit the input into your Godly, sensitive, pure soul? Doesn't God want you to do all you can in every situation? These are the deep, sometimes unanswerable, thoughts that challenge all of us in children's ministry.

You have been called to be many "people" in your life. Perhaps you are a wife/husband, a mother/father, a leader, a friend, a mentor, or an employee. Your first responsibility is to your family. There are so many scriptures that clarify the fact that God will bless and use you in ministry **ONLY** if your family, and personal life are in order (I Timothy 3, Ephesians 5, etc.). You have also been called to be a leader of adults, and an overseer of children. The concept of "taking every thought captive" (2 Cor. 10: 5) applies directly to these significant responsibilities. If anything harms your calling, turn away from it.

Knowing what you know about yourself, you have to ask yourself, "Is this going to 'fester' in my mind and spirit?" or "Will this help me be a better mom/dad, wife/husband, or leader?" If the answer is "no" or "I don't know" turn away and look up.

**When you are in a meeting, and the “issues” of other ministries are exposed...**

Turn away and look up! (Pray for them, thank the Lord for what you have, then block further thought on the matter.)

**When a person comes to you with “information” about another ministry...**

Turn away and look up! (Pray for the person and the ministry, thank the Lord for what you have, then block further thought on the matter.)

**When you are exposed to some unfairness in another person or ministry...**

Turn away and look up! (Pray for them, consider your own ministry, ask God to reveal to you any similar unfairness, thank the Lord for what you have, then block further thought on the matter.)

The critical “protection grid” that you must build around you and your mind is something that God will not build for you, but He will help you build it. Paul encourages you, in Philippians, to “think on” those things that are pure, praiseworthy, of good reputation, and honorable (Phil. 4:8). It isn’t “evil” or unchristian to turn away and look up. It isn’t weakness that would make you stop thinking or praying or dwelling on the “issues” of other ministries. To do this is an act of strength on your part. You do this for yourself, your family, and those who look up to you for direction and vision.

You have an awesome calling, an awesome vision, an awesome position, and an awesome family. Do all you can to protect that. Turn away and look up!

*“Let him who means to love life and see good days refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile. Let him **turn away** from evil and do good. Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears attend to their prayer; but, the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

Psalm 34: 12-16

*“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith...”*

I Peter 5: 8,9