



# Keeping Your Focus

I read a biography when I was in my late teens in a reproduction of *Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary* that has really impacted my life. Rosalie Slater told the history of this Christian founding father of American scholarship and education:

"In 1807 (at age 49) Webster had mastered twelve languages. By 1813 he had learned twenty different languages. 'In the second story of his new home, in a large room, with windows looking to the south and east, Webster set up... the large circular table,' wrote his granddaughter, Emily Ford, '...dictionaries and grammars of all obtainable languages were laid in successive order upon its surface. Webster would take the word under investigation and, standing at the right end...look it up in the first dictionary which lay at that end. He made a note, examined a grammar, considered some kindred word, and then passed to the next dictionary of some other tongue. He took each word through the twenty or thirty dictionaries, making notes of his discoveries, and passing around his table many times in the course of a day's labor of minute and careful study.'"

This was not enough research for Noah. He crossed the Atlantic on ship to study the libraries in France and England. It was in Cambridge, England, (January, 1825) that he wrote, "When I had come to the last word (of 70,000), I was seized with a trembling which made it somewhat difficult to hold my pen steady for writing. The cause seems to have been the thought that I might not live to finish the work, or the thought that I was so near the end of my labors..."

I don't know that we can fully understand the amount of labor and the major portion of one man's life that was dedicated to what we have today... A dictionary! It is something we have often taken for granted, but it is something that has drastically influenced our nation and the entire world for almost two hundred years!

What was impressed on my young mind at the time was a thought best expressed by Noah Webster (in 1821) himself, "*An immense effect may be produced by small powers wisely and steadily directed.*"

As we go about our lives, may we allow God to perform His will and bring us to the same steady focus of performing His will.

There is no need to run to and fro looking for peace, satisfaction, guidance, and hope. It is found in one place...Jesus Christ.

As you prepare to begin home-schooling, remember that if God has called you to this seemingly "little" work for Him, your work will be "wisely and steadily directed" by the hand of an Almighty God as you seek His guidance.

Even though you may not yet see the fruit of your labor, you are having an "immense effect" upon the lives of your children, and thus the world.

I'm sure you have heard the saying "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." Similarly, we can say, "The mother who gives her life to train and teach her children godly and biblical values will influence the world for the glory of God."

Keep your focus. The world is waiting.

-Holly Hageman; Copyright March 2001, January 2004

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