

“While I was Busy Here and There”

1Kings 20:38-43

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“Then the prophet departed and waited for the king by the road, and disguised himself with a bandage over his eyes. 39 Now as the king passed by, he cried out to the king and said, ‘Your servant went out into the midst of the battle; and there, a man came over and brought a man to me, and said, Guard this man; if by any means he is missing, your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver. 40 *While your servant was busy here and there*, he was gone.’ Then the king of Israel said to him, ‘So shall your judgment be; *you yourself have decided it.*’ 41 And he hastened to take the bandage away from his eyes; and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. 42 Then he said to him, ‘Thus says the LORD: Because you have let slip out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people.’ 43 So the king of Israel went to his house sullen and displeased, and came to Samaria.”

“While I was Busy Here and There”

- We are not too busy; we have chosen to be busy with other things.
- “It’s not a priority for me.”
- “When someone tells you they are too ‘busy,’ it’s not a reflection of their schedule; it’s a reflection of your place in their schedule.”

(Steve Maraboli)

“While I was Busy Here and There”

- Americans have a dangerous vice today: over-commitment, the tendency to commit to too many responsibilities and activities.
- This problem afflicts far too many Christians. If the Adversary cannot get us to do evil, he will get us to be too busy to do good.
 - Luke 10:40-42 - “But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me. 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”
- We equate being busy with doing good; they are not the same.

Perspective On The Problem

- Two main factors in over-commitment are materialism and fixation on fun.
- We comfort ourselves with the excuse that our over-commitment is “only a temporary condition.”

Perspective On The Problem

- While we tell ourselves we are doing just fine, the cares of this world are choking God's word within us.
 - Matt. 13:22 - "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful."

Perspective On The Problem

- Realize, rather than rationalize about, what is going on in your life.
 - Rom. 13:11-12 - “And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”

Perspective On The Problem

- The same thing is true with our recreation as with our material things; we have trouble saying NO.
- We make two mistaken assumptions:
 - We believe we have a right to do anything we want to do.
 - We believe there is a way to do everything we want to do without any of our God given priorities suffering.

Perspective On The Problem

- We end up giving the Lord our leftover time and money.
 - Mal. 1:8, 13 - “And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably? Says the LORD of hosts... 13 You also say, Oh, what a weariness! And you sneer at it, Says the LORD of hosts. And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand? Says the LORD.”

Identifying The Injuries

- It diminishes our spiritual mindedness.
 - Luke 8:14 - “Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.”

Identifying The Injuries

- “Busyness, including busyness with religion and church activities, has been called the ‘archenemy of spiritual maturity.’ Busy lives have little time for reflection. Never-ending waves of activity keep us from thinking carefully about the important issues in our lives: God, relationships, goals, service. Busyness can destroy our relationships. It can stifle spiritual growth and keep us from becoming effective difference makers.” *(Gary R. Collins, You Can Make a Difference Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992, p. 49).*

Identifying The Injuries

- It diminishes our spiritual effectiveness.
 - Ecc. 5:1-6 - “Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil. 2 Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few. 3 For a dream comes through much activity, And a fool's voice is known by his many words. 4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed- 5 Better not to vow than to vow and not pay. 6 Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands?”

Identifying The Injuries

- It diminishes our spiritual influence.
 - Eph. 6:4 - “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

Building Balance

- Get our priorities into focus.
 - Luke 15:12-14 - “And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. So he divided to them his livelihood. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. 14 But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.”
 - Matt. 23:23 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.”

Building Balance

- Take control of our commitments.
 - Eph. 5:15-16 - “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

Building Balance

- Take a close look at how we budget your time.
 - “The unexamined life is not worth living.” (*Socrates*)
 - “We need to learn to distinguish between the important and the urgent and to spend more time on the important.” (*Charles Hummel, Tyranny of the Urgent, Grand Rapids: Meridian, 1991*).

Building Balance

- Don't make promises we should not keep.
 - Jephthah -- Judges 11:30-31 - “And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, ‘If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, 31 then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering.’”

Building Balance

- Learn to submit our schedule to the Lord for His approval.
 - Col. 3:17 - “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”
- Much of what we choose to think is important is not really all that necessary, and it is not necessarily a priority with God.

Savoring The Scriptures

- Jesus was busy, but He did not allow His priorities get out of balance; He never became so preoccupied with one concern that He forgot about other matters. As important as His work was, He made time to pray for hours.
 - Mark 1:35 - “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”

Savoring The Scriptures

- Luke 5:16 - “So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”
- Luke 6:12 - “Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.”

Savoring The Scriptures

- Paul instructed Timothy to make time for meditation that would lead to spiritual growth.
 - 1Tim. 4:15 - “Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.”

Savoring The Scriptures

- Christians are taught to live orderly, peaceful lives.
 - 1Tim. 2:2 - “For kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”
 - 1Thes. 4:11 - “That you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands...”
 - 2Thes. 3:12 - “Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.”

Savoring The Scriptures

- Quietness of lifestyle does not demand absolute inactivity; any more than quietness of spirit demands absolute silence.
 - 1Peter 3:4 - “...the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”

Savoring The Scriptures

- Christians are taught to avoid obligations that will take them away from the more important spiritual matters.
 - 2Tim. 2:3-4 - “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.”
 - Heb. 12:1 - “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

Savoring The Scriptures

- Christians are taught to avoid internal division from conflicting priorities, theirs versus God's.
 - James 1:8 - “He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”
 - James 4:8 - “...Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

Savoring The Scriptures

- Phil 3:13 - “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.”
- Matt. 6:24 - “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

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- 1Thes. 4:11-12 - “That you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.”
- “We need quiet time to examine our lives openly and honestly, spending quiet time alone gives your mind an opportunity to renew itself and create order. In quiet moments when you think about it, you recognize what is critically important in life and what isn't. Be wise and don't let good things crowd out those that are essential.” *(Richard Scott)*