

# View

## Oh, The Things We May Do

Responsibility is the lot of every normal person. Things that have no purpose have no right to exist. When Jesus came across the fig tree that bore no fruit, he cursed it and it died. It was not performing according to its purpose. Just as “to everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven” (Eccles. 3:1), there is a purpose for man. His primary purpose is to “fear God and keep His commandments” (Eccles. 12:13).

You have individual purpose and, thereby, personal responsibility. Your purpose and responsibility are measured by several things: your native personality, your peculiar abilities, your station in life, your opportunities. In fact, all responsibility is ultimately measured by ability and opportunity. Obviously, you can't do what you have no ability to do, nor can you do what there is no opportunity to do. But when you can, you must.

Here are some things all of us can do. And since we can, we must.

**I can pray often.** There is a dearth of prayer in the lives of many Christians. We know we ought to pray more. We admit it. We get involved with other things and forget. Would we forget to stay in touch with our children or grandchildren? Would we let our friendships deteriorate because of a lack of attention? See what I mean? It indicates a lack of interest when we don't pray like we ought. “Pray without ceasing” (I Thess. 5:17) may not be saying we ought to pray continually, but it does say we should do it regularly.

**I can be present.** I seriously doubt there is one person who actually can't do more than be present at every service possible, but I have no doubt at all that it's one thing we all can do. Sometimes you feel tired on Wednesday night and you say to yourself, “I just don't think I can make it tonight,” but instead of giving in to the temptation to say home, you force yourself and get up and go. After the stimulating Bible study, after the refreshment of spirited singing and praying with those who love God you feel great. I've had it happen lots of times. That's what being together in the local assembly is all about. It stimulates, it refreshes, it edifies.

**I can make a contribution.** “Oh, now we have to talk about money,” you say. No, let's talk about time. How much can a person give to the Lord? Can you give Him more than the three or four hours you spend each week at the building? And let's talk about talent. How much of that have you given to Him? And let's talk about sacrificial giving, giving where you actually have to make an extra expenditure of time, effort, ability to help someone. There's lots of giving to be done that has little to do with money.

**I can do my best.** Now there's something everybody can do, his best. What is my best? Do I really know? Many of us don't. We've never stopped and asked the question, “can I do better?” That's hard, isn't it? But it must be done. Can you give God less than your best? Will He be satisfied with paltry service,

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#### Services

Sunday Morning Assembly  
9:30am  
Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM  
Wednesday Bible Study  
7:30 pm  
Classes for all ages.  
Private classes arranged  
at your convenience.

For more information,  
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with abbreviated time, with less than you can give? We best think about that. God deserves the best we have to offer and we dare not give Him second place in anything we do. “Give diligence to show thyself approved to God,” Paul said (I Tim. 2:15). If I can do better, I must. Can you?

**I can watch my tongue.** How many problems could be prevented if people would learn to watch what they say, how they say what they say, where they say what they say, and to whom they say what they say. “What they say” is the operative phrase. Every person should make sure that whatever he says about anything, is true. Not hearsay, not what someone said someone said, but truth. James says, “the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity (Jas. 3:6), and “behold how great a forest a little fire kindles!” (Jas. 3:5). Huge conflagrations are started by little, uncontrolled sparks. We best be careful that our one little remark doesn’t start a huge rumor that eventually spreads out of control.

Well, those are some things each of us can do. Isn’t it good we can be together, together to warn and admonish one another, together to enjoy our common faith in Jesus, together to benefit from each other’s warmth and friendliness? Let’s do what we can, OK?

—Dee Bowman

## Why Are You Waiting?

That’s what the preacher asked Saul of Tarsus just moments before he arose and was baptized. He had already seen the resurrected Christ, learning that he was persecuting the Son of God and His church. He spent three days and nights praying and fasting, thinking about what he had done. He heard what plans God had in store for him, to be His special instrument and vessel. That was all Saul needed to see. “And now why do you delay? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). “And he arose and was baptized” (Acts 9:18).

The real question is: why are you waiting? We use excuses all the time to try and explain our way out of various kinds of predicaments—why we’re late, why we don’t have our homework done, and why we can’t pay our bills on time. Excuses are awfully convenient, because they allow us to take the blame off ourselves and place it on circumstances that are seemingly beyond our control. People buy them everyday. The Lord doesn’t.

Just because you’ve come up with some excuse doesn’t mean you are excused. What are you planning to tell the Lord at the judgment in hopes that He will ignore your disobedience to the gospel? Perhaps, something like this...

“I planned to do it later.” Tomorrow has got to be the busiest day of the year. So many plans, so many diets to start, so many habits to quit. But never enough resolution or commitment to no longer put off until tomorrow what can be done

today.

After Paul spoke to Felix about “righteousness, self control, and the judgment to come”, the ruler became frightened and responded, “go away for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you” (Acts 24:24-25). Guess what? He never found the time.

I often wonder how many people have died outside of Christ with good intentions of obeying the gospel at a more opportune time. They kept saying, “I’ll get around to that” and they never did. They thought, “I’ll have plenty of opportunities,” and they ran out. Remember, death doesn’t always come at a convenient or opportune time. Judgment will come “like a thief in the night.” There is no better time than now.

“I was afraid of what my family would think.” The Lord expects us to have strong family ties. Parents who bend over backwards for their children; brothers and sisters who defend and stick up for one another. But He also expects to have a greater loyalty to Him than we do for even our own flesh and blood.

Jesus said, “he that loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:37). There comes a time when it no longer matters what your grandfather believes or what conviction your parents hold to. You will stand in judgment based on what you believed and what you did (2 Cor. 5:10). Working out your own salvation is between you and the Lord and has nothing to do with your family.

And how do you know how your decision to become a Christian will influence your spouse or parents or children? They may be influenced by your determination to do right and want to become your spiritual family as well.

“I couldn’t be as good a Christian as everyone else.” The fear of failure has caused many to drop out of the race before they even began. But everyone has to start somewhere. You can’t expect to be some mature Christian until you first become a babe in Christ.

Besides that, the Lord doesn’t measure people the way we do. He looks at the heart. He knows when a person is trying the best they can to serve Him with all their ability. He doesn’t expect you to do what everyone else can do. He expects you to do what you can do.

Christianity is an ongoing, life-growing experience. You can’t run until you learn how to walk. But you have to get started. Or you won’t get anywhere. So, why are you waiting? “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” You’re out of excuses.

Bubba Garner