

Oh, The Things We May Do

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Every normal person has responsibilities in his life. He is; and so he can. We all have duties; they are part of who and what we are. 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 every man. His primary purpose is to “fear God and keep His commandments” (Eccles. 12:13).

Your purposes and responsibilities are measured by several things: things like your native personality, your own personal abilities, your station in life, your opportunities, etc. In fact, all responsibility is ultimately measured in terms of two things: 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 both are present, you become responsible.

Here are some things each of us can do.

I can pray often. There seems to be a dearth of prayer in the lives of many Christians. We know we ought to pray more. We admit it, but we get involved with other things and forget to pray. Would we forget to stay in touch with our children or grandchildren? Would we let our friendships deteriorate because of a lack of attention? It indicates a lack of interest when we don't pray like we ought. “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17) may not be saying we ought to pray continually, but it does say we should pray regularly.

I can be present. Attendance is a measurement of interest and it's something that is important for our own spiritual development, as well as helping our brethren to grow in their spiritual development (Heb. 10:23-25). Being present regularly at the worship services is 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 refreshed, and you are pleased with your decision to attend. That's what being together in the local assembly is all about. It stimulates, it refreshes, it edifies, it encourages.

I can make a contribution. “Oh, no—now we have to talk about money,” you say. No, instead of talking about money, let's talk about time. How much time do you 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 your personal capabilities 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 a host of things you can give—and most of them will cost you something.

I can watch my tongue. How many problems could be prevented if people could just learn to watch what they say, how they say what they say, where they say, what they say, and to whom they say it? "What they say" is the operative phrase. All of us would do well to make sure that whatever we say 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. And don't forget the dangers of silent speech—a raised eyebrow, a shoulder shrug or a little shake of the head.

I can do better. He is something everybody can do. What is my best? Do I really know? Many of us don't, methinks. We've need to stop and ask the question, "can I do better?" That's hard, isn't it? But it needs to be done. Will your Father be satisfied with half-hearted, part-time service, with less than you are capable of giving? Read Amos 5:21-ff. You can't give God your left-overs. We best think about it, folks. God deserves the best we have to offer and we dare not give Him partial participation, part time service, what is of little value. "Give diligence to show thyself approved to God," Paul said (I Tim. 2:15). If I can do better, I must.

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 resolve to do what we can!