

Pastor's Blog No. 26 for Monday, June 24, 2024

Running Late

I'm sitting here on a Tuesday morning writing my Monday Blog. I just got in a rush yesterday and even though I had it on my mind all day, I never sat down to write it. It was the same as my prayer time yesterday, that I never got to. As for excuses, I don't have any. It was just a matter of choices.

I'm sure you know what it's like, putting things off until later. I think we are actually waiting for a moment of inspiration that never comes or looking for some internal motivation to rise up and propel us to accomplish the task before us. Whatever the case, if you live depending on those moments, they rarely come and more and more things pile up on your list.

The Apostle Paul discusses this in the book of Romans.

*"I have the desire to do what is good,
but I cannot carry it out."*

Romans 7:18b (NIV)

There are many things we know we ought to be doing, but the internal motivation fails us, and that quite often. One of the early things you have to learn as a pastor is self-motivation. This attribute comes simply from self-discipline. Something I've struggled with in my personal prayer life for years. Much of my discipline revolves around writing daily task lists and scheduling items so they don't fall through the cracks. A list can be either a great aid or a great condemnation at the end of the day.

Constant Push

The problem with this approach is that you constantly feel pushed and begin to resist the very schedule you have imposed upon yourself. Then there are the times when you measure the distance from where you are to where you think you ought to be and you become discouraged—or even depressed!

I ran across this verse (which I have posted in the Prayer Tower) that has helped me greatly. That is, as far as knowing the direction I should be moving in, but not yet in the "how-to-get-there" phase.

*"The end of all things is near.
Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled
so that you can pray."*

1st Peter 4:7 (NIV 1984)

Oh, how I miss the 1984 publication of the New International Version. Nevertheless, again I believe it all begins in your mind—your mindset—your frame of mind—whatever you want to call it. It seems

harder for me now. I used to stay on task and pursue goals with great fervor. I used to know what the next step was and walk through highly defined stages of progress.

Now however I seem to lose focus, even in prayer! Not only do I lose track of the steps I should take, sometimes I lose track of the goal and why I was pursuing it in the first place. That's probably why God gave me the above verse to help keep me focused.

Constant Distractions

In view of all this, I seem to get more easily distracted now than before. I'll be focusing on one thing, then another comes up. I stop to take care of the one, then forget to even go back to the other. Yes, I know there are probably too many things on my plate, but without the "clear-mindedness" mentioned in 1st Peter, I'm not sure which things to remove from my daily list.

It sometimes leads to not accomplishing anything. It's not really giving up, because tomorrow I'll be back at it again, trying to figure my way through it all. I'll be measuring priorities and resources and determining what can be accomplished with each new day.

Ultimate Concession

Then finally, I'll have to admit that by the end of each day I will be kneeling before God offering up my daily apologies for all I have failed to do, simply because I'm conceding defeat to the things I'm not sure of. Concession means give in to the fact that you will not get it all done, so you grudgingly agree with yourself to let it go.

Again, turning to the Scripture we also find a prayer for this time:

*"Direct my footsteps according to your word;
let no sin rule over me."*

Psalm 119:133 (NIV)

Some will relate to my dilemma, others simply do not struggle with this frame of mind. However, a lot of that depends on what your call is, how you view your role in it, and how good you are at making yourself do the things you feel you are supposed to do, but that's an entirely different issue for another time.

Until next Monday (or Tuesday), may the Lord bless you! Pray for us!

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