

Do What You Can

Joe Slater

Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, poured costly perfume on Jesus' head and feet shortly before He was betrayed, arrested, and crucified. Judas Iscariot and certain others criticized her, but Jesus came to her defense, saying, in part, "She has done a good work for Me . . . She has done what she could" (Mark 14:6, 8).

Mary couldn't do some things: she couldn't stop Judas from betraying Jesus; she couldn't keep the Sanhedrin or Governor Pilate from condemning Him; she couldn't keep the Roman soldiers from crucifying Him. but she did what she could. Likewise, every one of us ought to do what (s)he can for Jesus. Why don't we? Consider some possibilities:

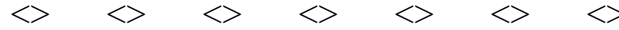
Under the guise of humility, we often underestimate what we can do. We claim we're too young, too old, we don't know enough, we've never done it before, or we just don't have that talent. To hear some of us tell it, there just isn't much of anything we can do. Humility is a virtue, but hiding behind false humility to avoid doing a good work is a sin!

Oftentimes, we don't do what we can because we're afraid of failure. Like the one-talent man who buried his money rather than investing it (Matthew 25:24-25), our fear prevents us from even making an attempt. Such a paralyzing spirit of fear, however, does not come from God (2 Timothy 1:7). God is well-aware that we will occasionally fail; if we were perfect, we wouldn't need a Savior. But the surest way to fail is not to try!

Another reason we don't do what we can is that we are distracted. On a different occasion, this same

Mary sat at Jesus' feet listening to Him. Her sister, Martha, objected because Mary wasn't helping her prepare the meal. Luke informs us that "Martha was distracted with much serving" (Luke 10:40). In our mobile, affluent world, innumerable matters compete for our attention. We strive to balance education, employment, rest, recreation, civic duties, family events, and church functions, all within the twenty-four hours each day contains. Time constraints and activity overload make it all too easy to put God and His work on the back burner, or maybe even in the refrigerator to be "warmed up" later!

Brothers and sisters, let us do what we can! Don't insult God by underestimating the abilities He has given you. Plan to succeed, but know that God will forgive you if you try, but fail. And remember Jesus' words: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).



BETTER JUDGE

When the famous politician and orator, William Jennings Bryant (1860-1925) was a young man, he went to the home of the father of his prospective wife to ask him for her hand in marriage. Bryan was determined to impress the father by quoting from the Bible, and he chose Proverbs 18:22 – "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord."

Bryan was unnerved when the father replied by quoting Paul: "So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better" (1 Corinthians 7:38).

Bryan, never at a loss for words, said: "Yes, but Paul had no wife, and Solomon had 700. Therefore I believe Solomon to be the better judge as to marriage."

via Jacksonville, AL

Picking Blackberries!

"For our light affliction, which is for the moment, works for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:17).

"Those berries are already ripe. If it rains, they'll be knocked off the vines." Such was Mom's sentence. It meant we had to go up on the hill of our farm and pick blackberries. It was Wednesday, the free day at the pool, and my brothers and sisters and I wanted to go swimming. It didn't matter how hard we begged. A few minutes later, we were headed toward the blackberry patch. Each of us carried a two-and-a-half gallon bucket in one hand and a quart jar filled with ice water in the other. We couldn't come home until our buckets were full.

At the time, it seemed like cruel and unusual punishment. We knew that when we got home, we would have to help Mom clean the berries and can them. Right then, we weren't thinking about the blackberry jam, cakes, and cobblers that we would be enjoying the coming winter. We were thinking about the briars sticking us, the sweat bees stinging us, and the hot sun beating down on our heads. How much nicer it would have been to be floating in a cool swimming pool.

Such is the thinking of children. In a way, we are still children learning the ways of God. Satan tempts us and tries us. Sometimes we give in to temptation. We think we cannot bear our troubles. But God has promised that He will be with us. If we look to Him, we can overcome our temptations. God will see us through our troubles.

Paul calls our lives here "a moment." All we can see is here, tied up in this life. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could see what is waiting for us in heaven? Our troubles last for a little time. God has a glorious eternal home prepared for us. By faith we know that our troubles here work for us an eternal weight of glory, our place in heaven.

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