

I'M TOO BUSY!

Joe Slater

We're busy people! Employers demand overtime. We have more possessions (homes, yards, vehicles, etc.) requiring more time for care. Opportunities abound for recreation and community service. Ease of travel makes out-of-town excursions commonplace. Education and extracurricular activities keep us running. Even retired folks are busy (or so I hear)!

While I'd rather be busy than bored, the fact remains that our hectic schedules usually impact our spirituality in profoundly negative ways. Bible study? Who has time for that? Prayer? I'm far too busy? Visit these discouraged brethren? Some other time! Contact those prospects for a home Bible study? I have too many other things to do!

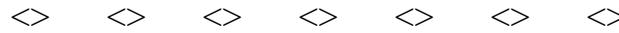
Brethren, does this sound familiar? It need not be the case! We can and must prioritize. There is nothing wrong with being busy, provided that you keep the Lord and his kingdom first and foremost (Matthew 6:33).

God has always used busy people. Moses was busy tending his father-in-law's flocks; Elisha was busy plowing; Matthew was busy collecting taxes; Peter, Andrew, James, and John were busy fishing. Somebody said, "If you want something done, give it to a busy person." I'm suspicious of a repair shop or a restaurant that isn't busy; maybe there's a good reason the place is empty! A busy place, on the other hand, probably means they do quality work in a reasonable time. Likewise, even though we are busy, we can do good, timely work for the Lord.

Jesus warned that the cares of the world, especially the riches and pleasures of this life, would choke out the word of God in the hearts of many, rendering them fruitless for God (Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14).

While we do our best to keep up with the break-neck pace of our world, let us not be distracted by what it has to offer. Remember, it is all temporary; only what is done for Christ is eternal.

I wish you every success in your education, your career, politics, your finances, athletics, and whatever else you choose to pursue that is righteous before God. But no matter how well you succeed in any or all of these, if you neglect the Lord and lose your soul, you are an utter failure! Jesus asked, "*For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*" (Matthew 16:26).



God's Minorities

When **Noah** was building the ark, he was very much in the minority – but he won!

When **Joseph** was sold into slavery in Egypt, he was a decided minority – but he won!

When **Gideon** and his 300 followers went with pitchers and lamps against the Midianites, they were an insignificant minority – but they put the enemy to flight!

When **Elijah** prayed on Mt. Carmel, he was a notable minority; but God answered with fire, and he won!

When **David**, ridiculed by his brothers, went out to meet Goliath, in size he was a decided minority – but he won!

When **Jesus the Christ** was crucified by the Roman soldiers, He was a conspicuous minority – but He won!

What about **you**, friend? Are you in the minority, standing with Christ? Or are you on the other side? Why not stand where the faithful have always stood – in the minority?

via Bulletin Digest (adapted)

Culpable Ignorance

An ox knows its owner, And a donkey its master's manger, But Israel does not know, My people do not understand (Isaiah 1:3 NASU).

In this verse, the prophet contrasts dumb animals with God's people of his day. He laments the fact that dumb animals know where to go to get nourishment, but Israel does not know where to turn to be spiritually nourished.

Every year, over 1.2 million students drop out of high school in the United States alone. That's a student every 26 seconds - or 7,000 a day. Yes, these statistics might be inflated, but they also might be conservative; the fact remains, many young people choose to remain ignorant. This is such a horrible tragedy!

But there is a worse tragedy. Millions of people, non-Christians as well as Christians, choose to remain ignorant of God's word. They seek nourishment for their soul in "food" that has zero value, like eating spoons full of sugar.

Geophagy is the practice of eating dirt. Scientists once thought humans are attracted to dirt because of malnutrition, but the dirt eaten usually has very little nutrients at all. The dangers of eating dirt are obvious. Such a practice is rare, but less rare is the practice of seeking spiritual nourishment from dangerous sources much like dirt.

The obsession for sex, the proliferation of pornography, and appetite for the latest pop psychology to solve problems, the appetite for trivia, the voracious cravings for movies are just a few of the distractions from the nourishment of God's word, the real source for spiritual health.

Another prophet wrote, "*Though I wrote for him ten thousand precepts of My law, They are regarded as a strange thing*" (Hos 8:12). There's not a lack of spiritual food for everyone, but so many do not have an appetite for spiritual things. Even animals know where to find food, and we do too, but if we choose to starve spiritually, we've made a foolish a choice just like those who eat dirt.

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)