

TAKE AWAY: Your relationship with Christ is your top priority

I) Intro: A Great Looking Yard

Both our _____ and the _____ in which we pursue that goal need to be _____.

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance ¹⁵ but, as the One who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; ¹⁶ for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy. (1 Peter 1:14-16 [HCSB])

II) The Allure of Accomplishment

Most fitness magazines use the allure of accomplishment and appearance as a way to lure you into the world of muscle tone and good health. You are the priority, you are the reason, you are the focus. But that is completely opposite of the way Jesus conducted Himself. Everything He did was designed to bring glory to the Father (see Jn 17:4), and that's the way we need to shape our efforts. We want to endeavor in a way so the end result is something that alerts people to Jesus as opposed to being a mere billboard for an effective work out routine and the ultimate cocktail of supplements and vitamins. In other words, we want to dispatch the spiritual fruit of self control so people are noticing more than just the disciplined nature of your bearing, they're inquiring about the Source and the Power that fuels your resolve.

¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do _____ in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Col 3:17 [HCSB])

¹⁵ but set apart the Messiah as Lord in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. (1 Peter 3:15 [HCSB])

And it's not just about being a compelling witness. At the end of the day it's about the quality of your work and your own wellbeing.

Throughout Scripture you see people wearing themselves out to get something done. Meanwhile, God stands by, offering the very thing that is needed and yet He is ignored. His Counsel, His Strength are all disregarded by those believing that they know better. The end result is disappointing if not complete failure.

When God provided the Israelites with manna, He told them to gather what they needed, but to not try and keep it over night. It wouldn't have been illogical to try and get some extra and store it. It sounds pretty prudent, actually. Most responsible men would've tried to get some extra "just in case" despite the fact that God had said not to. Look what happens in verse 20 of Exodus 16:

²⁰ But they didn't listen to Moses; some people left part of it until morning, and it bred _____ and _____. Therefore Moses was angry with them. (Ex 16:20 [HCSB])

Session Three – The Top Button (Part I)

But here's something interesting: Though you weren't allowed to gather extra during the week, on the sixth day they were told to gather twice as much so they wouldn't have to worry about working on the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is a big deal. You, nor any of your household, were supposed to work on Sunday. If you did, you were put to death (see Ex 31:15). It was a tangible exercise in trust and obedience and it's illustrated beautifully in Exodus 16 where God provides twice as much knowing that the Israelites would have to keep some overnight. In this way, they wouldn't have to work on the Sabbath.

No one would've been surprised if they were to wake up on Sunday and find the extra they had gathered filled with maggots. After all, that's what happened just a couple of days ago when they tried to keep it overnight. But to their surprise, the manna was fine. God had provided not only what they needed to eat, but He did it in a way where they didn't have to exert themselves on the Sabbath. Working harder, let alone at all, wasn't necessary as long as you were obeying God.

Close in prayer...

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