



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



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It's the last thing we want to do, but the only thing we can do if we expect to bring home a paycheck. It sometimes involves long hours, conflicts with management, and a hostile environment. If you haven't guessed it yet, I'm talking about work. As we celebrate the observance of Labor Day, we ought to consider the significance of the first responsibility God gave mankind and its impact on our lives.

In Genesis 2:15, we read: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." God designed us for work. It's healthy, and it gives us a sense of fulfillment. King Solomon later wrote: "In all labour there is profit" (Proverbs 14:23a). Whether we are involved in God's work or have a 9-to-5 office job, it is our privilege to work for the glory of God.

So if work is so good for us, why do many people dislike it so much? One of the reasons is the awareness of our inadequacies. Day after day, we're confronted with our physical, emotional, and spiritual limitations. When you add other people, with their unique shortcomings and expectations, to the equation, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and fail — or even worse, give up.

Some people feel that if they isolate themselves from others, they will be able to work better. It's true: when there are no other people to deal with at work, there's no pressure, competition, and unfair treatment — and there's no ministry. Yes, I just used the words "work" and "ministry" in the same sentence. Your workspace affords you a unique, God-given opportunity to impact others. That's ministry, Friends. And you can't have it without people.

The problem with dealing with our inadequacies at work centers not on the people we work with or on the magnitude of our responsibilities, but on our attitude towards them. Far too often, we trick ourselves into thinking we can't perform any given task because (1) We failed last time, or (2) Someone else is "more qualified."

Since when has God turned anyone down from serving Him because of their past failures? Since when has anyone God called been qualified for the task at hand? If you want some real-life examples of "under-qualified servants," consider Moses (Exodus 3-4), Gideon (Judges 6), and Peter (John 18).

The fact is, God has called every Christian, and we are all under-qualified. Rather than comparing ourselves to others or thinking about how much we can't measure up, we need to take our flaws at face value — and get to work. We ought to do the best we can for God's glory. Missionary John Beekman said this, "Human frailty dedicated to God can accomplish what armies can never do." God works best through our weaknesses. Do you believe this?

The time will come when you must put these things into practice. It may be sometime today. It could be tomorrow. Perhaps it won't be until next month or next year. Whether you fail or succeed, remember that once you have given God your best, you can trust Him to do the rest.

- C. T. Edwards

BIBLEWAY Q&A

Q. I want to grow spiritually, but I keep getting tied up with distractions. What's the best way to stay focused?

A. The fact you have admitted you are distracted proves two things from the start: 1. You have identified something that is important to you; and 2. You have identified something which keeps you from accomplishing that objective. From this starting point, you can begin to work toward accomplishing your goals and overcoming the obstacles which stand in your way. Here are some tips which will help:

1. Make a list of your spiritual goals. Make sure they are clear, attainable goals. Don't just say, "I want to pray more," or "I want to be a better Christian." Determine what that looks like tangibly. Maybe this means spending X amount of time reading your Bible and praying each morning. It could mean waking up earlier each morning so you will have time to do these things. (Which means you may have to go to bed earlier the night prior.) You might consider taking another believer under your wing and discipling him or her.
2. Identify where you are in relation to achieving these goals.
3. Determine your priorities among these goals. What is most important to you? How much time will be needed, and what will be needed to achieve each objective?
4. Start on the smallest tasks first so you will have time for larger tasks. This includes tasks with a known time frame. For me, this means if I know I will need 60 minutes per day for studying, 30 minutes for piano practice, 20 minutes to wash the car, and 10 minutes to polish my shoes, then I should accomplish these tasks first. Larger projects with an open-ended completion time are more manageable when smaller projects are out of the way.
5. Put work before play, but make time for yourself to relax as well.
6. Identify your distractions, and either eliminate them or put them out of reach until you accomplish your goals. (i.e. – Checking email or social media can wait until a set time, rather than until the next notification arrives.)

You won't find any shortcuts to spiritual growth. It takes time; diligent, intentional effort; and prayerful persistence. Apply these principles to your spiritual and personal goals, and you will begin to accomplish more.



Contact Dr. Edwards if you would like to have him as your special guest.
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