

Lifelines

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Topic: priorities

Anything, Everything, or Both?

By Ed Jordan

Recently I was speaking regarding there being a time for every purpose under Heaven, and our challenge is deciding what and when to do the things God wants us to do. During the message I also shared about "The Kill It Principle." This seemed to be interesting for people. The principle is that we can realistically only do so many things in a day, or a life. So, we must prioritize the things most important to do by the power of God.

Whenever someone approaches you with a new thing "for you to do," and you feel led to do that thing, you must look at the things you are currently doing, and decide which thing you are going to "kill" or remove from your list, before you add a new thing to your responsibilities or duties. If what you are asked to do is not more important than what you are already doing, then decline the new thing or assignment.

At the end of the service someone handed me a small piece of paper with a nice reminder on it. The note read: "You can do anything, but you cannot do everything." I like that comment. By the power of Christ working through us, we are enabled to do anything He asks us to do. Well, actually, it is Christ, living in us and working through us, who makes us able to do anything He asks us to do. But with our human limitations and capabilities, we cannot do everything, no matter how noble those things may be. So, as humans, we may be able to do anything, but that does not mean that we can do everything.

In Matthew 19:16-26, Jesus is approached by a very religious, devout young man, asking Him "What good thing should I do that I might obtain eternal life?" Jesus pointed him to fulfilling the 10 Commandments. The young man said: "I have done all these things, what other thing am I lacking? Jesus told him that if he wanted to become complete, to go sell his possessions, give to the poor, and come follow Jesus. The young man went away grieved, for he was a man who owned much property.

The disciples were watching this encounter, after which Jesus turned to them and stated how hard it is for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God. It is like a camel going through the eye of a needle. Then a disciple frustratingly said: Then who can be saved? And Jesus responded in Matthew 19:26 (NIV84): ... "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

The context is how can a person come to know God and live in His Kingdom. The answer is, it takes a work of God. For man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible. But this principle applies in many areas of our life. Only God can do everything. Only God can do more than is possible for humans. God can not only do anything He decides to do, but He can also do everything. He does not need to remove things from His "To Do List."

So how are things going in your life? Most of our lives are filled with so much to do, that we get exhausted just going through the list. There never seems to be enough time to do what we need to get done, let alone add some more things to our schedules. From time to time, it is good for each of us to go through our lists and weed things out. There are many things that we can do, but are not really what God needs us to be doing. There are some things we could do, but then lots of other people could do that also. There are other things that we seem uniquely gifted and skilled to do. In fact, they are usually things that energize us rather than drain us as we do them.

United with God, we can do whatever He asks us to do. However, we cannot do everything. This part of the sentence calls us back to setting some restrictions and limits upon our aspirations. In the final analysis, we need to affirm that, thanks to God, we are skillful and can do many things. But we also need to evaluate and choose to do those things which God wants us to do, when God wants us to do them, and by the power that God gives us to accomplish His will.

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