

We have had a team in Spokane doing disaster relief this week. And we are aware Shane has just returned from the Philippines, even spending time out in the jungle with a flannelgraph, sharing Jesus. And honestly there are so many who are serving in different capacities at times throughout the year. **But over the course of a year, how many days are actually spent on missions work such as this?** For sure there are some called to full-time ministry, evangelism, and missions work. Sometimes even spending the greater portion of their lives making someplace other than home their home.

- But does God expect everyone to follow that path in order to somehow be sufficient or pleasing in their service to Him? I think we know that answer is no. Yet some still carry this heavy weight of shame or guilt for not doing more. Such as selling everything they have and moving to that island where everyone who has not accepted Jesus appears to be concerned about those who haven't heard the gospel. 😊
- Now you also know I have repeatedly said the church was not designed for pew potatoes. So this certainly isn't a message for those who are not engaged in the work of serving the King of Kings. But it is for everyone who might be beating themselves up for not doing or being what God has called another to do or be. Or even for not doing as much as they wish they could.
- Why is it so many seem to compare themselves to one of the apostles when looking to determine if they are doing what they believe they are supposed to be doing? Seriously, is that to be the benchmark for everyone who truly loves God—that their labors of ministry need to parallel or even rival Paul's?

Or do the words of Paul in **1 Cor. 12** speak to this view as being incompatible with what the heart and plan of God are? Listen to what he said there. *There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit* (He did not wire us all the same). *There are differences of ministries* (not speaking only of full-time ministries, but all ministries), *but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities* (children's ministry, young adults, hospitality, security, worship, tech, maintenance and driving, parachurch ministries, raising children in the Lord, the ministry in your workplace, providing an atmosphere in the home that makes people want to be there, chaplaincy, evangelism, expressions of kindness, mission trips...so **different ministries and different ways to engage in them**), *but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills* (it's the Holy Spirit giving the particular ministries and abilities as He wills). *For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many* (so not advocating for professional or vocational ministry only). *If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body* (I can't do that physical labor therefore...I'm not a theologian therefore...)? *If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased* (you are not insufficient. You were designed to be perfectly you in God's family). *And if they were all one member* (all having the same giftings and callings), *where would the body be* (you can't have a body made of only one part—all thumbs)? *But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."* *No* (now pay close attention here), *much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it* (**1 Cor. 12:4-26**). (Emphasis added)

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- I want you to pick up that Paul (through the Holy Spirit) is saying that those who maybe have a less-noticed ministry position (or at least less frequently noticed by people in general), are in no way less than the ones who have a more public or full-time ministry. As a matter of fact, **he notes if that were the case, the church would not be able to function.** The baby holders really stand out to me. I'm good for about 10 minutes and then I don't know what to do. I could try to fake it. But that would be to no one's advantage 😊—especially the baby's. You definitely want the one who just can't stop loving and talking to them while they drool and make that face when they are doing their business. 😊
- And unless those are their own babies, how many hours a week can they really do that? But is the ministry any less significant if it's for 15 minutes once a week or several hours a day?
- Our El Salvador team, at the most, has two weeks a year they spend down there sharing Jesus (with the exception of the leadership team). Does that mean they are not real missionaries? I could go on and on, but I hope you see where we're going here.

I believe many get the impression when they read the bible it depicts an action-packed series of back-to-back events that rival some movies. But **that's simply not reality.** 1) Think about all the years of preparation so many listed in the bible went through. 2) And then consider the period of time between the events listed in the gospels and accounts of the missionary journeys.

- The gospels record **over three years** of time truncated into what would be considered relatively short books compared to those people read for entertainment (Luke being the longest and yet about a ¼ of a standard novel). 3) Then if you went to the accounts of the prophet Elijah, which are filled with amazing works of God, 1) what is the span of his time of ministry which they cover? Although not specifically listed, based on historical events he was involved in **it is estimated to be 20-25 years.** 2) And in that time frame the bible records 7-8 core miraculous events involving Elijah, and can jump to 14-16 if you count some of the lesser sensational things—**over 20-25 years!** Yes, I would have loved to see the things recorded about how God used him, but they were in no way back-to-back (It's about **one every couple of years** on average).
- What we **don't** have recorded for us are the times of sleep, meals, family gatherings, workdays, rest days, travel days, washing the clothes, household tasks... Yes, we can get little glimpses of this in some of the lives of key bible figures, but truly very little.
- Then we have accounts not only of growing and grieving, but 3) in the case of **Job**, we have an entire book (equal in size to John's gospel). **Was he somehow displeasing or out of the will of God while he went through a prolonged period of likely feeling like he was living a life in limbo** (a life that God set in motion)? 4) Then consider the prophets **Amos** and **Haggai**. They both have their own books in the bible, 1) yet Amos' ministry is estimated to be somewhere between a few months or more (before returning to Tekoa), 2) while Haggai's is somewhere between 3-4 months. Were they insufficient because instead of serving their entire life in that capacity, the Lord called them to something else afterward? I hope you don't believe that. **But even if you do not, do you believe that about yourself?**

Look, through your entire life you are to be serving the Lord, but does that mean in a full-time vocational ministry, or overseas? I know that's the extreme, but **some act as though if they have not come to that place, then they are failing.** Let's just agree that's not what the bible is indicating.

The bible places high value on the “ordinary” days. Do you? In **1 Cor. 10:31**, it tells us, **“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”** That seems like a pretty ordinary day to me. But in the Westminster Shorter Catechism (A summary of doctrine—a favored reading for many 😊) it states, “Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever”. **That's really simple and yet spot on.** 1) When you sit down to eat (or stand if you're in a rush) and you give thanks to God, you are glorifying Him. And hopefully enjoying the food and fellowship. 2) But if you speak with or of Him throughout the meal, He is receiving more glory from you. 3) And if

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you share that meal with someone who needs some love or assistance (including your little ones or maybe an elderly or ailing individual), there is even more glory being given to God. And you didn't have to leave the country to do it. It's just a meal by, for, and with God. **But it's just what He wants.** And truthfully, what we enjoy.

- Col. 3:23-24 goes on to say, "*And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ* (emphasis added)." When you go to your accounting job, or show up to work on cars or equipment, or help people get the bugs out of their tech device or homes, or wake up at 3:00 AM to feed the baby, or at 5:00 make coffee or lunch for someone going to work or school, *if you are giving the best you have because you know it is God you are representing, it glorifies and delights Him.*
- As a side note, this also tells us on the other side of this equation, **1)** those who are clock punchers or sand-baggers in the service they give, do not glorify God. **2)** Nor do those who try to do the least they can in the tasks which are theirs to do. Additionally, **3)** those who do what they do to impress people, so they might think they are something great, do not do it for God's glory but their own. Reinforcing what we read in **1 Cor. 12** about the honor that belongs to some of the lesser recognized parts in the body.
- And one more piece to consider before moving on is found in **1 Thes. 4:11-12** as the Holy Spirit instructs us "*that you also (should) aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside* (speaking of the unbeliever), *and that you may lack nothing.*" Is it God's desire that we are relentlessly chasing the mission opportunities while at the same time instructing us *to aspire to lead a quiet life*? Certainly He isn't telling us to do nothing for Him. That would contradict so much of what the bible says in other places (**Gal. 6:9, Eph. 2:10**). **But those places don't cancel out this instruction either.** So perhaps He is accounting for **the "ordinary" days** or times between some of the larger works of ministry He might have for any of us do. The days of laundry, mowing the lawn, going to work, parent teacher conferences, watching the grandkids...**all for the glory of God.** Which is all a sure and strong witness to a world that seems to value these things less and less.

As a matter of fact, I think this verse reveals that it is not in God's plan that everyone enter into full-time ministry, for who then would **1 Thes. 4:11-12** be directed towards? We know for certain this was written to followers of Jesus and not the unbelieving. Wouldn't *aspiring to live a quiet life, minding your own business, and working hard with your own hands* speak more to families and those in the secular work world?

- And again, when this is done and those around us know God is our inspiration for living this way, doesn't this seem to be a more constant way to glorify God **and do ministry** in our day-to-day lives?

And the Lord also speaks to how these seemingly ordinary or little things are viewed by Him in **Luke 16:10**, saying, "*He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.*" It sure appears to me that the way we conduct ourselves on the "ordinary" days shows the kind of servant we will be when a more pronounced opportunity arises. And not the other way around. If we love our neighbors in our conduct and outreach to them in the simplest of ways, isn't it logically more likely we will serve them in greater capacity when the need arises? But if we cannot be bothered to say hi when passing by, I think it's fairly certain we will not be there for each other when it would require more time and attention.

- It's clear the Lord sees these seemingly "ordinary" interactions and issues of integrity as prerequisites of our greater interactions and opportunities. Making the ordinary days a kind of training and testing ground for those missions He might provide or even call us to.

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- From another perspective, when the Jewish people were provided a way to return to the land God had given them after they had served their time in the captivity by the Babylonians ([Dan. 9:2](#), [Jer. 25:11-12](#)), they were allowed to rebuild the temple ([Jer. 29:10](#), [Isa. 44:28](#)). But it was nowhere near as grandiose as what stood before it was destroyed because of their rebellion. And those who had seen Solomon's temple before it came down, began to grieve because it was so much less than what they had before ([Ezra 3:12-13](#), [Hag. 2:3](#)). God then responds to them in [Zech. 4:10](#), saying, *"For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven (often representing the complete watchful presence of God manifested through the Holy Spirit [see also [Rev. 4:5](#) & [5:6](#)]) rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth."*
- The piece we all need to catch is we are not to despise the day of small things, for they are just the point from which God begins to build into our lives, shaping and preparing, and not the finished work.

Folks, every day is a mission day from God's perspective. It's just that the missions look different depending on where God has got you at this point and time. Even the preparation and recovery periods are a mission in and of themselves, because God is never done working. And He is continuously working in us.

- In those times your mission might be transformation, praise, maturity, training, grieving, rest...
- The main thing for us is **1)** to be present with Him in every season, because He is always here. **2)** And be ready for the special times He provides for you to stretch yourself and go on that mission, teach that Sunday school lesson, bible study, or maybe even preach a full message.
- Even those in full-time ministry have more ordinary days than "mission trips" to that island where they have never heard the gospel. 😊 Stay connected to God and His heart, and you will always be on a mission. Even on the seemingly ordinary days, in the seemingly ordinary things of life. Because that life is an immeasurable gift from Him.

CROSS REFERENCES

Gal 6:9 NKJV - And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

Eph 2:10 NKJV - For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Dan 9:2 NKJV - in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Jer 25:11-12 NKJV - (11) 'And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. (12) 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation.

Jer 29:10 NKJV - For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

Isa 44:28 NKJV - Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid." '

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Ezr 3:12–13 NKJV - (12) But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy, (13) so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.

Hag 2:3 NKJV - 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?

Rev 4:5 NKJV - And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Rev 5:6 NKJV - And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.