

It Is Written

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Is There A Minimum?

By Ron Boatwright

Many people want to know what the bare minimum is they can get by with in their lives. Additionally, some Christians aim to maintain a minimal level of spiritual engagement. But does God allow a bare minimum? Jesus says, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). If we really love God, we will want to do all we can.

Some may ask, "How many times a week do I have to go to church?", or "How much do I have to give?", or "How much do I have to do?" This is the wrong attitude. Jesus says, "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do'" (Luke 17:10). If we try to get by with the bare minimum in our spiritual lives, we will most likely be horribly surprised on Judgment Day when we hear the Lord say, "Depart from Me" because we have not faithfully done the will of the "Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21-23). It will be too late then. It will be final. Can we do too much for the Lord? No!

We must do the most we can for the Lord. We must "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58). Our number one priority in this life must be to go to Heaven when this life is over. God "is a rewarder of those, who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). But we must diligently seek God if we expect to receive the reward of Heaven. The Bible says, "Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure" (II Peter 1:10). But we must be "looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God" (Hebrews 12:15). We can definitely fall from the grace of God even though Satan says we can't.

What about those who are lukewarm? Jesus says, "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:16). Those who are lukewarm make Jesus sick at His stomach. But Jesus promises, "Be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

Let's make sure we go to Heaven. Nothing is as important.

Two Men Plan Their Schedules

By Bill Hall

Two men plan their schedules for the coming year. The first man plans his schedule around his service to the Lord. The second man gives little thought to his service to the Lord and will try to fit his service to the Lord into his schedule.

The first man is always available for the Lord's work. He observes dates for gospel meetings in the year and plans ahead with anticipation. He might even use a week of his vacation to devote himself entirely to the meeting. He even finds time to attend gospel meetings elsewhere. Whatever is planned, he is "ready for every good work" (Titus 3:1), for he has planned his schedule with that in mind.

The second man is the one who, during a gospel meeting, comes to the visiting preacher on

Thursday night, stating that he and his family cannot be present on Friday night because they are leaving on vacation, and, of course, "reservations were made a long time ago." He expresses his regrets and assures the preacher he will get a CD and listen to his sermon. When returning from vacation, his schedule might not allow for stopping for morning worship, and, after all, he and his wife can partake of the supper at the evening service. Somehow, it seems that he always has plans that interfere with his availability for work that needs to be done.

The first man does not "entangle himself with the affairs of this life" (II Timothy 2:4), for he knows that "the cares of this world" can squeeze out one's spiritual interests and render him ineffective in his service to the Lord (Matthew 13:22). He finds himself saying "no" to certain activities that would be pleasurable, and possibly even important in the eyes of the world, that he might focus on what is essential, not only for his own spiritual welfare, but also for that of others.

The second man's life is always cluttered, filled with activities he has planned. He fails to realize that his cluttered life is hindering his spiritual growth. He doesn't understand why the first man always has time for the Lord's work, and he never has time. It has never occurred to him that it's all a matter of how one schedules his life.

We see the first man in the apostle Paul, who would say of himself, "One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead I press toward the goal of the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). Paul focused his life on one thing: pleasing God that he might reach the goal of eternal life. Somehow, we cannot imagine Paul not being available for some work for the Lord because it wouldn't fit into his non-spiritual schedule.

We see the second man among the three men in Luke 14:15-24, who could not attend the great feast because they had scheduled other activities for that day. The truth is, they did not attend the feast because of a disregard for the occasion. Any person who feels honored and grateful for an invitation to a feast schedules his life so that nothing hinders his presence. Similarly, when one truly appreciates his salvation and fellowship in the Lord's work, he sees that nothing over which he has control hinders him from being involved when work is to be done for the Lord.

There might be an exaggeration in our examples, for we know of no man who equals Paul in dedication, nor does our second man show quite the disregard for the Lord's services as do the three excuse makers for the feast (of Luke 14), but you get the point, don't you?

What we have been discussing on a personal level can also be applied to a local church. We are hearing frequently of churches changing the time of their services so their worship to God—think of it, their worship to God—won't interfere with ball games and holiday celebrations. Is the church conquering the world, or is the world conquering the church? Should we really let the world dictate when we worship God?

But, back to the personal application, we suggest that the reader look back at the two men in this article and ask themselves, "In which of these two ways do I schedule my life?" It is one thing to talk of putting the Lord first in our lives, but another thing to truly do it.