

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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Busy Here and There

Our failure to accomplish great things in life usually is not the result of a lack of talent or opportunity, but because we carelessly allow trivial things to distract us from what is important.

“Now as the king passed by, he cried out to the king and said, ‘Your servant went out into the midst of the battle; and there, a man came over and brought a man to me, and said, ‘Guard this man; if by any means he is missing, your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver.’ While your servant was busy here and there, he was gone.’ Then the king of Israel said to him, ‘So shall your judgment be; you yourself have decided it’” (1 Kgs. 20:39-40).



This exchange between King Ahab and an anonymous prophet involved a fictional story used to set up a rebuke of Ahab for his failure to finish off an enemy. Our interest here is not the historical details regarding Ahab’s battles, but the prophet’s account of having allowed a prisoner to escape because “I was busy here and there.”

Though incidental to the prophet’s purpose, those words capture eloquently a common excuse for why most of us never get around to accomplishing what we know we ought to accomplish: we’re “busy here and there” with more trivial

activities, and before we know it, time and opportunity have slipped away and our greater goals remain undone.

Take, for example, our attempts at personal character improvement—think of diet and exercise, education, regular Bible reading, etc. Begun with grand intentions, these are often sabotaged by a thousand little decisions that keep us “busy here and there” with other, less important, enterprises. So as the months and years slip by, it becomes increasingly difficult to break old habits and start new ones.

Marriages grow stale because spouses are “busy here and there” with their separate careers, hobbies, and friendships. When a marriage falls apart, it is rarely because either spouse deliberately set out to destroy it, but because two people didn’t bother to invest the time and energy that was necessary to make their relationship strong. So their love grew cold and they drifted apart.

Churches struggle to grow because members—even elders and preachers—are “busy here and there” with personal interests that leave the Lord’s work

starved for attention. New prospects are not sought or cultivated into converts; weak members are neglected and eventually fall away with little or no intervention; even stable members settle into a comfortable complacency that provides few challenges for improvement. So the church quietly fades away—and the few surviving members can’t understand what went wrong.

The great tragedy in all these examples is that the “here and there” activities that derail the larger objectives are almost always perfectly innocent in nature. Vacations, hobbies, sports, home improvement projects, watching television—there’s nothing immoral or unethical about any of these. That’s why it’s so easy to justify spending our time on them. But if we allow ourselves to become so entangled in these activities that we neglect the bigger things, we will end up wasting a life that could have accomplished so much more.

Staying busy in life is a good thing, but it’s important that we prioritize our busy-ness by making the *first things* truly first in our lives.

— David King