

June 12, 2022

THE “NOT-TO-DO LIST”

Barely have we opened our eyes in the morning before we are thinking about our to-do list. There are errands to run, tasks to finish, meals to prepare, households to manage, people to see, etc. Every night, as our heads hit the pillow, we know we have left many things undone.

In a society where unrealistic expectations are the norm and we are encouraged to do “all the things,” it is easy to find ourselves overwhelmed and fatigued. Rarely do we take the time to evaluate what we do or don’t have time for in our lives and whether or not the opportunities sitting in front of us will hinder us in bringing God glory.

This only became too apparent to me one day in October a few years ago. My husband was in seminary and working full-time while I was working from home and raising three children three and under. On the other side of the panic attack, my husband encouraged me to create a “not-to-do list,” and it changed my life.

As an oldest child, a people-pleaser, a Scandinavian, and a Midwesterner, it is very hard for me to say no. But we all wake up to only twenty-four hours in a day, and everything we say yes to automatically takes us away from something else. My “not-to-do list” helps me to differentiate between good things that I would like to do and the best things that God is calling me to do.

Christ came to this world to save sinners—all the sinners. But He told the Gentile woman that He “was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” and that was indeed where the majority of His ministry lay. Many of His followers expected Him to free them from their political bondage, but Jesus died under that same bondage Himself. He knew what He had come to do and lay aside that which would have hindered Him from His calling.

The beauty of the Christian life is that we aren’t called to do it all. God has made us each unique to serve different purposes in the Body of Christ. When we say no to the things that are outside of His calling for our lives, we enable others to rise up and find their place there. And when we joyfully move from one season to the next, we make way for the next generation to do the same.

What is on your “not-to-do list”?

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