

Choosing to Do Hard Things

by J.R. Miller

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of choosing hard paths to achieve meaningful growth and success in life.

Scripture: Philippians 4:13, Colossians 1:29, James 1:2

Topics: "Perseverance", "Hard Work"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the necessity of choosing to do hard things in life, arguing that true achievement requires effort and struggle. He illustrates that many dreams remain unrealized due to a lack of perseverance and hard work, and warns against the dangers of an easygoing attitude that leads to mediocrity. Miller encourages individuals to embrace challenges as opportunities for growth and character development, asserting that noble living is often born from enduring hardships. He reminds us that with faith and courage, even the hardest tasks can become manageable when approached with the right mindset. Ultimately, he concludes that significant accomplishments require sacrifice and dedication, echoing the sentiment of Colossians 1:29 about laboring with God's energy.

Transcript

"I labor, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me!" Colossians 1:29

The man who seeks only easy things--will never make much of his life. One who is afraid of hard work--will never achieve anything worth while.

In an art gallery, before a great painting, a young artist said to Ruskin, "Ah! If only I could put such a dream on canvas!" "Dream on canvas!" growled the old master. "It will take ten thousand touches of the brush on the canvas--to put your dream there!" No doubt, many beautiful dreams die in the brains and hearts of people--for lack of effort to make them realities.

On the tomb of Joseph II, of Austria, in the royal cemetery at Vienna, is this pitiable epitaph, prepared by direction of the king himself. "Here lies a monarch who, with the best intentions, never carried out a single plan."

There are too many people who try to shirk the hard things. They want to get along as easily as possible. They have ambition of a certain sort--but it is ambition to have the victory without the battle; to get the gold without digging for it. They would like to be learned and wise--but they do not care to toil in study, and "burn the midnight oil," as they must do--if they would realize their desire. They wish to have plenty of

money--but they hope to get it from some generous relative as an inheritance, or to have some wealthy person endow them. They have no thought of working hard year after year, toiling and saving as people have to do--to earn for themselves, with their own hands, the fortune of their dreams. They may have a certain longing to be noble and Christlike, with a character that will command respect and confidence--but they have not the spirit of self-denial and of earnest moral purpose, which alone can produce such a character.

They may want to be godly and to grow into worthy manhood--but lack that passionate earnestness which alone will yield vigorous piety, and manly virtue, and the heroic qualities of true Christlikeness. Mere "holy dreaming" will yield nothing better than spiritual effeminacy! No religion is worthy--which does not seek to attain the best things; and the best can be won only by the bravest struggle and the most persistent striving!

In all departments of life this indolent, easygoing way of getting on--is working its mischief. There is much of it in school or college. It also abounds in the trades and professions. A successful business man says that the chief reason why so many young men never get advancement nor make anything worth while of their lives--is the lack of thoroughness. They do only what is easy, and never grapple with anything that is hard. Consequently, they do not fit themselves for any but the easiest places, and no position of importance ever can be easily filled.

Indolence is the bane of countless lives! The capacities in them are never developed, for lack of energy. They do not rise--because they have not the courage and persistence to climb.

A mark of a all noble character--is its desire to do hard things! Easy things--do not satisfy it. It is happiest when it is wrestling with some task which requires it to do its best. Young people are fortunate when they are required to do things, which it seems to them they cannot do. It is under such pressure, that they grow into their best.

One is usually thought to be particularly favored, who misses difficult experiences and the enduring of hardships in youth. "Until I was fourteen years old," said a lady in middle life, "I never had a disappointment of any kind." It was regarded as remarkably fortunate that her early life had been so easy--so free from anxiety or burden. But those who knew the woman well--saw in this very fact, the secret of much in her life that was not beautiful. Her indulged and petted girlhood--was not the best preparation for womanhood. She had not learned to endure, to submit to things that are hard. She had not grown strong, nor had she acquired self-discipline. Even in her mature womanhood, she was only a spoiled child who chafed when things did not go to please her.

It is not so easy--but it is better, if young people have disappointments, burdens and responsibilities, and do not always have their own way. Thus, they will be trained to self-restraint, and taught to submit their wills to God's.

Of course, not always do people get the lessons and the character they should get--out of the hard things of earlier years. Some are not good learners in life's school. Some grow bitter in disappointment, and lose the sweetness out of their lives when they have to endure trial.

But in all that is hard--there is the possibility of blessing. The goal of noble living, is to gather new virtue and grace--from all life's struggles, cares and sorrows.

It is perilous presumption, to rush into the battle when we have no business in it, when it is not our battle. Yet, on the other hand, we are not to be afraid of any struggle or temptation, when it lies in the way of our duty. It is cowardly to shrink from the battle--when we are called into it. When God leads us--he means to help us. No task which he assigns, will ever prove too hard for us--if we do our best in Christ's name. When we face a new condition for which it seems to us we have neither strength nor skill, the only question is, "Is it our duty?" If so, there is no doubt as to what we should do, nor need we have any fear of failure. Hard things become easy--when we meet them with faith and courage.

Some people have a habit of skipping the hard things. It begins in childhood in school. The easy lessons are learned, because they require no great effort--but when a hard one comes in the course, it is given up after a half-hearted trial. The habit thus allowed to begin in school--work easily finds its way into all the life.

The boy does the same thing on the playground. When the game requires no special exertion, he goes through it in a creditable enough way. But when it is hotly contested, and when only by intense struggle can the victory be won--he drops out. He does not have the courage or the persistence to make an intense effort.

The girl who lets her school lessons master her, who leaves the hard problems unsolved and goes on--soon begins to allow other hard things to master her. The home tasks that are disagreeable, or that would require unusual effort--she leaves unattempted. It is not long until the habit of doing only the easy things and skipping whatever is hard pervades all the life. The result is that nothing brave or noble is ever accomplished; that the person never rises to anything above the commonplace.

In many ways does this habit of failing at hard things hurt the life. These difficult things are put in our way, not to stop us in our course, but to call out our strength and develop our energy! If we never had any but easy things to do, things requiring no effort--we would never become strong! If we timidly give up whenever we come to something that is hard--we shall never get beyond the attainments of childhood! If we decline the effort, and weakly say we are not able to make it--we have lost our chance of acquiring a new measure of strength and ability.

We should not forget, that no one ever did anything of great value for others--without cost. A quaint old proverb says, "One cannot have an omelet--without breaking eggs!" If we would do anything really worth while, that will be a blessing in the world--we must put into it not merely easy efforts, languid sympathies, conventional good wishes, and courtesies that cost nothing. We must put into it thought, time, patience, self-denial, sleepless nights, exhausting toil.

There is a legend of an artist who had found the secret of a wonderful 'red' which no other artist could imitate. The secret of his color died with him. But after his death an old wound was discovered over his heart. This revealed the source of the matchless hue in his pictures. The legend teaches that no great achievement can be made, no lofty attainment can be reached, nothing of much value to the world can be done--except at the cost of heart's blood!

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