

On Doing Our Best

by J.R. Miller

J.R. Miller emphasizes the importance of doing our personal best in all aspects of life as a service to God.

Scripture: Colossians 3:23

Topics: "Excellence in Work", "Serving God with Our Best"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the importance of doing our best in all aspects of life, reminding us that we are only required to give our own best, not someone else's. He illustrates that everyone has different capacities and progress levels, and that even the smallest tasks should be done with care and excellence, as they reflect our commitment to God. Miller encourages us to approach every task, no matter how trivial, with the mindset that we are working for God's glory, and that our efforts should honor Him. He highlights that God does not expect perfection but desires our sincere best effort in all we do. Ultimately, we should strive to improve daily and offer God the best of our lives and work.

Transcript

Your best is all you are ever required to do; indeed, no one can do more. It is not some other one's best which is expected of you, either -- but your own. Sometimes people forget this, and worry because they cannot do as well as some other person does. Our gifts differ -- no two people are just alike in their capacity. Besides, no two people are ever at precisely the same point in their progress. Of a student in a lower class, it is not demanded that he do as well as one in a higher class. The young girl who has been taking music-lessons only a year, is not expected to play as well as her sister who has been studying for five or six years with the best teachers. You are to do your own best, not some other one's best.

It is a shame for anyone ever to do less than his best. It may be only the writing of a postal-card -- but it should be done as carefully and neatly as you can possibly do it. You should never send a carelessly written scrawl to anyone for a letter. Some people fall into wretched habits of writing. Their writing is atrocious, so illegible that their letters can be deciphered only by the most painful effort, and then often only half made out. Some people seem to imagine that plain, beautiful handwriting is a mark of inferiority of some kind; at least, it is a common tradition that all great men write very illegibly.

But, really, bad handwriting is never a mark of genius. No doubt some great men have written miserably enough -- but their bad writing was no proof of their greatness. Nor does it follow that scrawling, unreadable handwriting -- will make you great. Write as plainly and beautifully as you can. Think of the person who is to read your letter -- and have pity. Many eyes are strained and hurt in deciphering careless

writing, to say nothing of the straining of patience and the hurting of the temper caused by the trying ordeal.

The same motto, "always do your best" should be applied to everything we do. A man who had risen from a very humble beginning, to a place of distinction, even to great eminence, when asked the secret of his successful life, said he had always sought to do his best in whatever he undertook, summoning the best thought, the finest skill, the greatest energy, of which he was capable -- to every piece of work he was doing. He demanded of himself, too, that today's best should always be better than yesterday's.

It were well for us if we all would make and inflexibly follow such a rule as this. No most trivial thing, should never be done carelessly. All work is for God, and it is sacrilege to do anything for him in a slovenly, negligent manner. It is a desecration to put marred or careless work on any block which we carve for God's temple.

The workmen on the old cathedrals wrought as conscientiously and as perfectly on the parts of the building which would be high up, far out of human sight -- as on the carvings of the great doors which every eye should see and admire.

When a heathen artist was asked why he took so much pains with the back of the figures he was chiseling, since they would be against the walls and no one would ever see them, his noble answer was, "The gods will see them." Always we are working for God's eye, and should ever do our best!

Not only are we working for God's eye -- but it is God's own work that we are doing. Whether a man is a carpenter, a painter, a stone-cutter, a farmer, a teacher, or a minister -- it is God's work he has in hand; and he must do his best. Old Stradivarius, the violin-maker, was right when he said that if his hand slacked, he would rob God. We rob God whenever we do anything carelessly, or do less than our best! A writer says, "The universe is not quite complete, without my work well done." We misrepresent God and disappoint him -- when we do in a slovenly way anything, however small, that he gives us to do.

The lesson is for the housekeeper, for the student, for the teacher, for the preacher, for the boy at play, for the singer -- less than the best we can do, dishonors God. Get your lessons at school as well as you can. In the games in which you take a part, do not play languidly, indifferently, indolently -- but with enthusiasm and earnestness, and all the skill you can command.

Dress as neatly and tidily as you can; even if your clothes are worn-out -- be sure to have them clean. Make your room as bright and beautiful as possible. Always speak as correctly, gracefully, and sincerely as you can, enunciating every syllable distinctly, and making sure of your pronunciation.

We should also carry the lesson into the highest things. We should live our best every day. We should always "approve the things that are excellent." We should be just as careful when no human eye is upon us -- as when we are working under the gaze of thousands! God is not a hard master -- he is not unreasonable in his demands upon us. He does not expect great skill in a beginner. He does not demand that a new Christian shall be as mature in thought, disposition, act, and character -- as an aged saint. He does not expect a common Christian to be as eloquent in witnessing for Christ as the minister, after years of training and experience. But he expects us to do always what we can -- our best.

"She has done what she could!" was a very sweet and gracious commendation by Jesus. But Mary's "what she could" was a rich offering; it was the costliest thing in her possession. We must never put God

off with anything unworthy. In ancient times, no lame or blemished animal could be offered in sacrifice to God; the offerer must always bring the best he had. We should never give God anything broken or sin-soiled. We should never give in charity, garments which are so worn that we ourselves would be ashamed to wear them. We should give God the best of everything we have -- the true first-fruits of all our life and work.

We should make the most we can of our life, and rise to better attainments every day. The way to do this is in every smallest task and duty, in every thought, word, and act, to do our very best.

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