

## Too Little, Too Late

11/26/13

Often a failing effort is described as being too little, too late. It has fallen short of its goal's required quantity or quality, and it has missed its goal's appointed time. Because the effort fails on both counts, it is a complete failure and is utterly deficient in achieving its purpose.

Certainly, none of us want to be counted as doing too little or being too late concerning any worthy goal, but we should be especially appalled at the idea of failing to achieve the goals set for us by God. We are stewards of God's blessings and opportunities, and as such each of us will have to give an account to Him for our efforts in His service. In this stewardship, God has given us His assurance of success provided that we follow His directions and give the effort. He shows us the way to succeed, helps to carry our loads, forgives our faults, and grants repentance that we may change our course. How then should we ever do too little or be too late in the service of God? Total failure in the Lord's service is inexcusable, shameful, and pathetic. Even so, many times we still do too little, and our effort comes too late.

Scripture testifies that there will be many who will do too little and will be too late to be saved. Once Jesus was asked, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?" Jesus responded, "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able" (Luke 13:23-24). Similarly, Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14,

<sup>13</sup>"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. <sup>14</sup>For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

Of course, Jesus is the narrow gate, and the only way to life is through Him. Those who do not enter through Him will be lost because they have too little to offer in atonement for their sins. Rather than seeking salvation through faith in Christ and His atoning sacrifice, they vainly attempt to stand on their own merit and righteousness. Many will also be lost because they have waited until it was too late to call on the name of Jesus for salvation. The opportunity for salvation closes at death, and no man knows when his death will come. Those who delay obedience to Christ's gospel may miss the opportunity altogether.

In marriage, many spouses do too little and act too late to fulfill their God-given roles. Husbands give too little to their wives when they fall short of the standard of self-sacrificial love set by the Lord (Eph. 5:25-30; Col. 3:19; 1Pet. 3:7). Wives give too little when they fail to respect the headship of their husbands as God has ordained (Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; Tit. 2:4-5; 1Pet. 3:1-6). Moreover, husbands and wives often delay fulfilling their respective roles until it is too late, and the damage has already been done to their marriages. The present epidemic of divorce reveals the damage that is done by husbands and wives who fail to achieve God's goals for them.

Many parents do too little and start too late to seize the best opportunities for raising their children in God's wisdom. Concerning children, God calls on fathers to "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Mothers likewise are expected to love their children and bring them up (Prov. 6:20; 1Tim. 5:10; Tit. 2:4). Opportunities to fulfill these responsibilities begin at birth and continue until adulthood and even beyond. In order to succeed, parents' efforts must be constant and consistent. Consider the directions given to Israel concerning their children and the commandments of

God: “You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up” (Deut. 6:7). Sadly, many Christian parents fall far short of such effort when they choose to surrender their children to the world for their upbringing. When their children start to bear the fruits of the humanism and the godlessness in which they have been trained, the parents realize that they have done too little to train their children properly and that it is too late to start over.

In the service of God, doing too little and being too late are simply unacceptable. Even so, we all fall short at times. Thankfully, God forgives through Christ, and He gives us more opportunities to serve. If you have done too little and have been too late in your service, then change your ways today. Ask God’s forgiveness through Christ, make amends where you can, resolve to follow God’s word, and supply the necessary effort henceforth. God will see to your success. “Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness” (2Cor. 9:10). Your service will never have to be too little and too late again.

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