

Question: I wish I could do more to help others and to honor God, but I don't have a college education or any special abilities like some other people. What can I do?

All Jesus asks of any of us is that we *do what we can with what we have*. In fact, he knows how we would use even greater resources by knowing the way in which we use what we now have. To his disciples, Jesus said: “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much” (Luke 16:10). On another occasion, he taught that if we use what we already have been given then more will be added (Matthew 25:29).

The story of Jesus in Mark 14 presents this simple but helpful principle. While Jesus was a guest in the home of Simon the Leper in Bethany, a woman brought an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume and poured it on his head. Some of those present criticized the woman saying that she had been wasteful. “It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor,” they said. But Jesus defended her, saying: “She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. *She did what she could*. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial” (Mark. 14:3-9).

Also, consider the example of Dorcas, a woman of whom it was said that she “was always doing good and helping the poor” (Acts 9:36). Few people mentioned in the Bible have received higher commendation. When the apostle Peter arrived in Joppa shortly after her death, he was met by a group of tearful widows who showed him the clothing Dorcas had made for them. She had neither given large sums of money to an orphanage nor set up a great benevolent organization. But Dorcas had a needle, and she did what she could with what she had in order to help those in need.

Then, there is the story of the widow’s mite. While sitting near the place of the temple treasury, Jesus observed how the rich people threw in large sums of money; but he was more impressed with the poor widow who put in two very small coins worth only a fraction of a penny (Mark 12:41-44). She simply did what she could with what she had.

Thus, it is neither the size of the gift nor the greatness of the deed which honors God. He is only concerned that we do what we can. The rich may give huge sums of money and still have failed to give what they could. Highly gifted or talented individuals may do wonderful things in the eyes of people in this world, but God will know if they could have done more.

When it comes to the matter of Christian service—whether studying God’s word, showing kindness to a neighbor, preparing meals and caring for your family, helping the poor, giving money for special causes or driving a friend to work—Jesus wants you to know that he expects no more than your opportunities and abilities enable you to do. If you continue to be uncertain about what you can do, pray about it and find a good church that will help you identify your own gifts for serving. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians assures that they all have special gifts for ministry (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12). My prayer is that God will give you the confidence to do what you can with what you have.

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