

Question: My life is frustrating. I have so many things started, but I'm unable to finish anything.

The expectations from parents, friends and others are so great. What would Jesus do?

The desire to please others is admirable, especially in a society that is so self-centered; but we need to recognize the futility of trying to live up to everyone's expectations. Jesus is the greatest model of unselfishness possible (Philippians 2:4-8), but even he did not try to please everyone. Instead, he said, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you" (Luke 6:26). Our efforts to please everyone often end up pleasing no one.

Instead of trying to please everyone and to do so many things at once, we need to set some priorities for our lives. Failure to determine what is important and to give that task or issue priority has often led to a tangled and confused life. Jesus said: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33). Once we have decided upon our priorities, we should work toward completion of that which is first in importance. That sense of priorities should keep us from being side-tracked by other things. To reduce frustration, we should not set aside those priorities without careful consideration. We may find that things of lesser importance will resolve themselves by taking care of first things. Also, weighing the importance of some things we are being asked to do—or even things we may want to do—may lead us to decide that we can do without them. Prioritizing should eliminate much of our frustration with life.

Moreover, I believe Jesus would warn us against trying to live in the fast lane. We may be tempted to think that working harder, faster and longer hours will help us accomplish more. Sadly, even if we survive the stress, we will have rushed past many of life's greatest blessings. While the Bible does encourage us to work with diligence (Ecclesiastes 9:10; Colossians 3:23), we need to realize that anything worth doing takes time. Instead of cramming too much into our lives, sometimes we need to slow down and take the time needed to do our tasks well.

Jesus never allowed anyone to rush him in anything. For example, when he received an urgent message that his friend Lazarus was sick, he did not rush off to Jerusalem even though he knew the illness would result in death. By taking his time, he accomplished something far greater. He not only raised Lazarus from the dead,

but he also helped many to an even greater faith in himself as the Son of God (John 11). We should allow God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ to help us determine and keep our priorities day by day. The wise man said, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10). No one better understands how to live in this world than God our creator. We must slow down to spend time with him, get to know him and the wisdom of his counsel.

My prayer is “that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ” (Philippians 1:9-10). With Godly discernment, each of us can find life less frustrating.

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