

Question: Many people seem bent on finding a shortcut for everything they do in order to save time and/or money. Is this what Jesus would do?

G. Campbell Morgan, a famous British preacher of the 1800s, is supposed to have said that he had not found as much as five minutes of life for which the Bible did not have something relevant to say. This question about shortcuts well illustrates what Campbell Morgan said. It should also lead us to reflect more carefully upon the practical wisdom as well as eternal value of the Christian faith and life.

The concept of the shortcut is not inherently bad. In fact, a shortcut may be of value if it achieves the needed results without compromising integrity. However, the decision to use a shortcut often overlooks the importance of taking time to be thorough and of producing quality workmanship. Therefore, I believe Jesus would point out the possible dishonesty often involved with shortcuts on the job or in our business affairs.

For example, we may be tempted to cut corners or short-change others in order to speed things up and save ourselves money. This action often results in inferior workmanship causing customers to end up receiving less than they paid for. Anyone with business experience should know that a reputation for high quality work builds trust in one's clientele. In contrast, carelessly done workmanship can endanger and destroy lives. Thus, the wise man of Proverbs said: "He who walks in integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out" (Proverbs 10:9 NAS).

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul gave instructions to first century Christian slaves that provide some guiding principles for Christian workers in every century. He said: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men. . . Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism" (Colossians 3:23-25). Thus, faithful Christians should not take shortcuts that result in inferior quality work that could be avoided by time and diligence.

Our heavenly father provides a model for us in the way that he does not rush when accomplishing his purposes. He does not take shortcuts (2 Peter 3:9). The Old Testament story of Abraham and Sarah's attempt to shortcut God's plan for them to have a son illustrates the folly of such shortcuts. Sarah gave Hagar, her

handmaid, to Abraham so that he might have a son as God had promised (Genesis 16); but this plan only brought problems. They still had to wait until the right time for Isaac, the son of promise, to be born (Hebrews 6:15). In a similar way, the world had to wait until the right time for God to send his Son into the world (Galatians 4:4).

When Christians follow this example to “wait on the Lord” (Psalm 27:14; 37:7) instead of taking shortcuts, they can learn the lessons of life that come through patience and perseverance over time (James 1:2-3; Romans 5:1-5). One of the Lord’s apostles admonished: “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9).

Jesus would have us to see that truth, honesty, diligence, perseverance and patience are of far greater value than any money or leisure time gained by unethical shortcuts. “A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold” (Proverbs 22:1).

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