

# “Are We Majoring in Minors?!”

Matthew 23:23-24

**Intro.** – Recently in going over some of my school documents, I found Mary’s transcripts and was reminded of her excellent record. Let me brag a bit about my wife... Maintained a topnotch GPA, did this traveling almost every weekend for the school... She ended up with 154 hours. Since that time she has done more schooling at Indiana University (30 hrs with a GPA 3.9) so she now has the equivalent of 180 plus college credit hours... She has a bachelor’s degree. Her major? She has a double minor (Christian Education and Music). In short, Mary majored in minors (always giving her a tough time with that), but believe me she doesn’t through her life!

Our text takes to another type of majoring in minors. This type is not all right; instead, it received one of the sharpest rebukes from our Lord. He gives this rebuke to the religious leaders of the day: “*You Pharisees,*” Jesus said, “*are very particular. If a gnat gets in your drink, you very carefully strain it out. But if a camel gets in it, you gulp it down hair, humps, hoofs and all.*”

What is wrong with this conduct? Jesus certainly isn’t urging the drinking of gnats is He? No, He rebukes the Pharisees and scribes for concentrating on a gnat while at the same time going ahead and swallowing something much bigger. In short, Jesus accuses the Pharisees and scribes of majoring in minors. How about it, is such a rebuke appropriate for you and me? Do we fret over minor detail to the neglect of far weightier matters? Are we prone to gag on a gnat; yet, attempt to swallow a camel? Do we conscientiously pick the specks out of our brothers’ eyes but have logs hanging out our eyes?

*Purpose: to realize our need to embrace only God’s Truth – to avoid majoring in minors*

Unless the Truth of God is foremost in our lives, the inevitable result will be our majoring in minors:

## I MAJORING IN MINORS IS COMMON

### A. As Seen in Home Life

1. Those who have come seeking help/encouragement in their marriages (note: no great counselor...) – generally I hear a common theme: “We just can’t get along...”
2. As a rule, these difficulties are not result of some colossal evil/sin – generally the BIG things are the straw..., it’s the petty, little things (little foxes) that make shipwreck out of many marriages.
3. Illus. – Clovis Chappell (preacher/principal) performed a wedding for a “highly educated idiot to a wholesome, sane, young lady with little formal training.” This Ph D came to Chappell ready to divorce his wife. Why? – he caught her “reading a book below his intellectual standards.”
4. Often make same blunder in dealing with our children:
  - a. so wrapped up in “providing for them” make little time to train them to make wise decisions...
  - b. serious threat to homes today = husbands/wives (dads/moms) intent upon majoring in minors..

### B. As Seen in Work Life

1. How often have you heard: “I’m not in this business for my health you know?”
2. If “profit” is the sole motive behind any business, then that business is majoring in minors
3. Best seen in vocations other than what is in the business world:
  - e.g. what would you think if M.D. “I’m practicing medicine for the big bucks...”
4. Point: we all stand on same ground – as Christians our first duty is to *serve* and NOT be served... to make a *life* and not just a *living*...
5. Illus. – 2 steamboats belonging to rival companies left New Orleans for Memphis at same time. Seeing each other they began to race. Race so close, one captain ordered his fireman to start throwing some of cargo (hams) into the fire. Well, it worked. He ordered more. It steamed ahead and won, but in the process burned up very purpose for voyage. Majored in minors!
  - such is a great illustration of each of our lives when we major in minors...

### C. As Seen in Worship/Service

1. Pharisees were religious... worked hard, BUT their sin was not the sin of indifference... sin of wrong emphasis – concerned about appearances and man’s applause...
2. Jesus accused them of spending their time on matters of 2<sup>nd</sup> or less importance... thought that tithing more important than being righteous, just or even merciful...
3. Any application for us here? Illus. – preacher friend told me of elders/deacons/ mtg. where spent 1 ½ hour deciding IF they should move a piece of furniture in auditorium for one time or not...

May we recognize how common/dangerous majoring in minors is!

## II MAJORING IN MINORS IS ALLURING

### A. Due to the Lack of a Sense of Humor

1. There are some with keen sense of humor still major in minors, but those with none always...
2. Bad to have a hearing/sight problem etc... but worst to have no humor:
  - Illus. – Ralph/Lora Hunter... Tommy Harrison...
3. Ours is a day of dictators... Castro, Khadafy, Chevez (N. Korea’s) etc. Note: all real “fun” guys to hang with aren’t they? Name a dictator with a wholesome sense of humor.
  - Illus. – Abe Lincoln was anything but a dictator; yet, had greatest sense of humor... conversely how would you like to joke around with Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini?

### B. Due to a Small View of Matters

1. Often many think in “minor ways”
  - a. worry = 95% over inconveniences and trifling disappointments...
  - b. we often pray in such trifling manners (generalities etc.)... James 4:2 “*have not because...*”
  - c. even criticize in minors... e.g. criticism often concerns matters of little significance...
2. Old saying: “Though it might not be pleasant to be swallowed by a whale, it would be far better than being nibbled to death by minnows.”

### C. Due to a Wrong Sense of Values

1. Ability to recognize genuine from a fake is invaluable... ask any girl about to become engaged whether a real diamond is all that important as compared to a cubic zirconia... (by way this fake)
2. Often people exchange something priceless for something worthless and even harmful (cf. Esau exchanged his birthright for some stew...)

Here then are three solid reasons why majoring in minors is alluring...

## III MAJORING IN MINORS CAN BE AVOIDED

### A. Keep a Sense of Humor Alive

1. Refuse to listen to those who say laughing is of the world:
  - Illus. – Grayson Ensign used to never smile for picture because X never smiled...
2. Laughter important part of sane/wholesome living... right kind will help sweeten bitter lives...
3. Happy is the individual who is able to laugh at his own failings/inadequacies:
  - Illus. – James G. Blaine (lost the presidency by 1,149 votes) – couldn’t take defeat... bitter...  
Conversely, Wm Taft was expected to easily win 2<sup>nd</sup> term, but best friend Teddy Roosevelt ran against and split the party. Had reason to be bitter; instead, laughed/remained friends...
4. “Learn to laugh – if you can’t look in the mirror and see why people are laughing.”

### B. Learn to Discern

1. Rely on truth to identify that which is right and that which is wrong... that which is good as compared to that which is best...
2. Christ said it in Matthew 6:33 “*But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*”
3. We need to learn to make value judgments with Bible glasses on!

### C. Make Christ Lord of Your Life

1. Knowing God enables us to see and keep matters in proportion:
  - Illus. – when younger, everything so BIG... grow up and just doesn't seem so big anymore...
2. Relationship with God enables us to see how small seemingly BIG matters really are and how BIG seemingly insignificant matters really should be!

**Conclusion:** Want to conclude and summarize this message with the following. Does the name Harold “Bunny” (nickname given to him by his mother) Levitt mean anything to you? Lived in Silver Springs Shores, Ocala, FL. His wife’s name is Edith. Their combined ages don’t add up to the free-throw shots “Bunny” made in succession. At age 28, he shattered the AAU free throw competition. Bunny sank 499 consecutive free throws – a record that still holds today. Bunny recalls that failed short by saying, “I missed on my 500<sup>th</sup> shot. I must have choked.” Bunny later hooked up with the world famous Harlem Globetrotters, who offered \$1,000 to any person who could beat Levitt in a contest of 100 foul shots. The money was never claimed. The best any challenger did was 86; the worst Levitt ever did was 96. He once tutored NBA Rick Barry (90% lifetime) and Bill Sharman (94% lifetime). “All it takes is concentration, relaxation and follow-through,” says Levitt. It becomes germane to ask why, if Levitt was such a matchless foul shooter, did he never achieve fame as either a college or professional basketball player. The reason is simple: Bunny stood 5’ 4” at his tallest.

Here then is the point of this text. It is not saying that any person with a keen sense of humor, right values and Christ as Lord and Savior of their Life won’t encounter challenges... It is saying they will recognize what life really needs. This is what Paul meant when he said, *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”*

Truth really does matter. It enables us to identify that which is major and that which is minor. Truth enables us NOT to major in minors, but instead, to major in that which really matters!