

How You Can Avoid Pursuing the Enemy's Distractions

In James 4:14, our lives are described as “a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.”

There are not enough hours in a day to do everything. There are not enough years in your life to live for everything. There is not enough blood in your veins to bleed for everything. That's why it is so important that you choose your battles wisely, don't get distracted and sacrifice what is “best” on the altar of what is “good.”

In 1 Corinthians 9:24, Paul encourages us to run the race of our lives “that you may obtain it.” A person who is running to win sets his eyes on the finish line and goes for it with all his might. A person who is running to win has made a choice to lay down everything else for the sake of the prize.

Reinhard Bonnke once told me the story of how a newspaper had spread vicious lies about him. His friends, jealous for his reputation, urged him to respond. But when he prayed, the Lord spoke to him and said, “You are My harvest worker. Don't stop the combine harvester just to catch a mouse!”

There are a lot of good battles out there to fight, and the devil would be happy if you would get involved in every one of them, because if he can keep you distracted chasing mice, he can rob you of your harvest. John Maxwell wrote, “At age 60, I now look back at my youth and I cringe at my naïveté. My toolbox of experience had only one tool in it: a hammer. If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. So I pounded and pounded. I fought many battles I shouldn't have.”

Years ago a friend of mine became fascinated with a particular doctrinal debate. Although it was an issue of little or no real-life consequence, he was so sure he was right that he

started an ongoing argument within the church where he was on staff. The pastor, realizing that this debate was causing more harm than good, asked him to drop it. He refused, choosing rather to forfeit his job and ministry.

This story would not be worth sharing if it were the only time I have seen this. But I could point to several people who are out of ministry today because they were derailed by something petty. Somehow they lost sight of the big harvest and started chasing mice.

Paul exhorts us to “avoid foolish debates, genealogies, contentions, and arguments about the law, for they are unprofitable and useless” (Titus 3:9).

Notice that Paul did not call these controversies, arguments and quarrels sinful things; he called them unprofitable and useless things. Even if something is not necessarily a sin, it can still distract us from what is important. That is why Paul was exhorting us not to get distracted but to stay focused on what is useful and profitable.

I’ve seen pastors who spent more time doing construction projects at their church than they spent pastoring their people. I have seen ministries of evangelists whom God called to preach the gospel of salvation transform into humanitarian organizations. I have seen people who have been gifted in particular areas decide to follow more lucrative paths that took them away from their calling.

These are all examples of the ways the enemy can distract us from God’s will for our lives. It’s not that the distractions are necessarily bad things. In fact, sometimes they are wonderful things. But if they keep us from the best thing—doing God’s will—the enemy has succeeded.

We’ve been talking a lot about God’s will for your life, but remember, the devil also has a plan for you, and his plan is to make you ineffective and unfruitful. He would love for you

to park your combine harvester to chase mice. If he cannot block you, he will try to derail you. He will try to distract you from your assignment. Ignore him. Keep your eyes on the prize, keep fighting in the middle of your field, and run your race in such a way that you will win! {eoa}

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