

Distractions

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had arrived, they came and started to argue with him. Testing him, they demanded that he show them a miraculous sign from heaven to prove his authority.

When he heard this, he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why do these people keep demanding a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, I will not give this generation any such sign." So he got back into the boat and left them, and he crossed to the other side of the lake.

Mark 8:11-13

"I can't seem to get anything done. I spend most of my day just putting out fires."

Do those words sound familiar? Those little "fires" can distract us from accomplishing our major goals. They seem to take up all our time, and in the end, we realize that we haven't made any significant progress all day.

Jesus was familiar with distractions. The disciples sought him out while he was in the desert praying to his Father. The multitudes hunted him down and begged for healings or bread. His family dropped in unannounced. Often Jesus consented to the requests of the people. Indeed, much of Jesus' ministry centered on meeting the real needs of people. He willingly provided food, healing, or forgiveness. What may have appeared to be distractions were, in fact, vital parts of Jesus' ministry.

Still, there were times when Jesus flatly refused to be interrupted. When the Pharisees demanded signs after they had witnessed countless miracles, Jesus simply said no. Certainly the powers of Jesus were boundless. He could have complied with the requests of the Pharisees. But Jesus had set

boundaries to his ministry. He came for the sick and the imprisoned. He came for the poor and the weak. He came for those who would believe. Knowing that his ministry on earth had limited time, he focused on those activities that proved fruitful.

Do we have the resolve to stay focused on the big picture? Are we able to say no to activities that will prove fruitless or people who are simply distracters? At the same time, are we sensitive to the little interruptions of the day that are really part of our calling? The choices before us require wisdom that only comes from God.