

The Overlooked Commandment

Imagine this not too far-fetched scenario: Mom and Dad are going out together for a few hours, and before they leave they make a simple request of their young son: "Johnny, we will be back in a few hours. Before we get back, could you please straighten up your bedroom?"

Mom and Dad enjoy their evening out together, but they're shocked by what they see when they return home.

The lawn is freshly mowed. The living room has been vacuumed. All the dinner dishes have been washed.

"Johnny, the house looks great!" they exclaim. "We can't wait to see how you straightened up your bedroom!"

"The bedroom?" he replies. "Oh, yeah ... well ... I never even got near that."

If you're still with me, please don't click off. We're about to assault a major charismatic misconception that acts much like a "Johnny."

Question: What's the one simple mission Jesus gave to every Christian?

Answer: "'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature ... make disciples of all the nations'" (Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19-20, NKJV).

One mission: Go. Two parts: Preach and make disciples. Pretty

simple, isn't
it?

Yet, like Johnny, we get busy doing all kinds of other "stuff." Some of it's pretty good stuff, even excellent, although none of it is actually the "one thing" Jesus said to do.

I've spent more than 30 years traveling in America partnering with local churches to ignite evangelism in their communities, and I've seen many types of teaching or training programs in charismatic and Pentecostal churches.

For example, men and women are trained to become pleasant, efficient ushers, greeters and parking-lot attendants. Believers are trained through continual exhortations, teachings and seminars to become good stewards who give financially. A constant, much-needed emphasis is placed on praying fervently, effectively and every way imaginable.

Praise God for all of these points of service. No complaints here on any of them.

Yet, recently I read that only 1 in 3 churches trains its people for evangelism. That means two-thirds of all Christians have been trained to do everything but fully obey the command of Jesus. As a result, many of us are part of a growing population of Johnnys who are ready to do anything but the one

thing Jesus asked of us!

It's amazing that evangelism is given token attention or even avoided for "deeper things" or more palatable spiritual matters. The majority of conferences, whether they are addressing the prophetic "this" or the restoration of "that," rarely do more than make minimal, perfunctory efforts to help the saints practically or effectively spread the message of Jesus.

I don't know about you, but I'm more than ready to see the tide turn—now. It makes sense to me, especially if we've chosen to follow Jesus on His terms rather than ours (ouch!).

When Jesus saved me I was completely unchurched and totally unaware of anything remotely Christian. I'm Jewish, from New Jersey and was a heroin addict and hoodlum. But when I met Christ it was immediately clear to me that I must tell people about His work in my life.

It is not because I am an evangelist that I must do this but because I am a believer. That was 1970, and our ministry keeps going today by the grace of God.

Here is my proposal for you to prayerfully consider. Let's take God's one mission and have a very real and personal part in fulfilling it in our own lives, ministries and churches. Let's honestly admit to Jesus that we have avoided and neglected what is so dear to His heart.

I want His heart to be my heart. I am sure you do, too.

It's time to show the world how wonderful we know Jesus really is. How? By living and telling friends and enemies, in-laws and outlaws that we believe in Jesus enough to reach out, touch, help and tell.

The one we believe in is true. He still changes situations, families and lives today.

Despite the busyness of our everyday Christian lives, let's remember to do the one thing. Jesus, and maybe you, will be glad you did.

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