

Beginning, Continuing and Ending Well

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Life is a journey, isn't it? I have a "BC" – a life Before Christ. Sometimes I may relegate my past as a total waste compared to the Christian life I am leading now. But how does God look at my time before I met Jesus personally?

Yes, I was not a model person. I did sin and often did not feel remorse over many of my poor choices. Yet there are ways that God was at work. I remember working hard to please my parents and teachers. God was teaching me to give my all to my tasks. Colossians 3:23 says, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord, and not for men." But even when I was walking opposite of God's purposes, He used the consequences of my actions as lessons to draw me to want something better...Someone better...to help me avoid these pitfalls in the future.

You probably can relate in some fashion with your life before Christ. You may have not been as bad as I was, or maybe you have been worse...but God had you in His sights. Matthew 5:45 reminds us, "That ye may be the children of your father that is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to arise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust."

Now we have met the Lord Jesus and are trying to be faithful, obedient saints. Each of us has a set of roles to play within our current lives. These roles are placed in different circumstances and situations. For example, one of my roles is a pastor. This role is centered in our church in Montgomery, but also as one who teaches and counsels women in different parts of the world. It can feel ominous to have such a role with its responsibilities, but God promises His grace will abound if I but walk in obedience to His call.

Are you overwhelmed in one of your roles? Does something seem bigger than your talents, education, or experience? Remember that God has called you to take every weakness and shove (yes, shove!) them on His shoulders so He can show Himself strong. God knows how you feel, He said to Apostle Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9).

This attitude works! As many of the roles I have can seem to compete for my time, energy, and money, I have learned to not let them control me, but allow God to direct what I must give my attention to right now. To find out what He says, I do what Susannah Wesley did when she needed to pray. With her ten noisy children around her, she threw her apron

over her head and prayed. My apron is my prayer closet. Running there brings direction and peace.

Do you feel you don't have time to spend before the Lord because of your stress? How dare you let these earthly cares have such power over you! The Lord can take your burden, but you must give it to Him. You can't afford not to spend the time to get His direction. It will cost you more time, energy and money to meet your obligations than not to take the time to seek Him.

Then, there is the future. I want to end well. I may want to retire from certain jobs or roles that I have now, but I don't want to retire from life. How will you continue to hear God's choices for you when you are not able to do what you have always done? Remember God's creativity is endless. He has some incredible ways of making way for powerful ministry even if you are in a wheelchair. I know a shut-in who sends little notes to kids to encourage them. Another makes extra servings of what she is eating to send to other people's homes.

I expect to be one of God's ministers until the day I die. What is your expectation? Whether before Christ, in the present, or in the future. God has the best strategy for you. He said, "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

I believe God looks for someone who is teachable and obedient; then He explodes His grace into that person's life without merit. Are you that kind of person as you work out your salvation today? Will you continue the journey in the future being teachable and obedient? If you do, there is only one outcome...a life lived well.

Live well, woman of God!