



*The master answered, 'You did well. You are a good and loyal servant. Because you were loyal with little things, I will let you care for much greater things. Come and share my joy with me.'* Matthew 25:21 (NCV)

*"Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards".* Song of Solomon 2:15 (NASB)

## THE IMPORTANCE OF LITTLE THINGS

Wow... what a summer! For me it has been a blur of great activities. International travels, training events, launching a ministry, writing projects, family gatherings, the marriage of my daughter Julie to a great guy (Pete)... have made the summer pass so fast.



But now I'm sitting in front of my desk, with piles of correspondence, unanswered e-mails, and several lists of details that need to be completed. I call this "administrivia". But now, some of my most important work begins!

Through the years, God has taught me the importance of two major tasks. The first is "priority management". For years I struggled with time management, only to discover that for me the real issue is priority management. If I choose the right priorities, time management tends to care for itself.

But the second task is equally important in God's eyes. Once the priorities have been prayerfully and carefully identified, then I must follow through with the smallest of details. These "small things" of Matthew 25, coupled with the warning that the "little foxes are ruining the vineyards" has proven so true in my life experiences. Doing the little things well, is often the difference between failure and success... especially from God's perspective.

The Scripture is clear, if small things are handled well, God can entrust us with more.

So I have cleared my travel schedule this Fall to tackle these uncompleted 'little things'. And it feels good to have blocked out time to do this 'administrivia'... knowing that in doing them well, I serve the Lord and can one day hear Him say, "Well done, you are a good and loyal servant... you were faithful with the **little things**".

## GOD'S FAVOR

Every now and then, in a unique way, you sense God's Favor. Recently that has happened for me.

For over 20 years, Steve and Joan Hudson have been great friends and ministry partners. I first met Steve as a youth pastor in Colorado. After the Evangelical Free Church denomination endorsed the training of Sonlife, Steve then became their first National Youth Director... overseeing youth ministry in all their churches. Later Steve became the chairman of our board, and for 10 years we worked closely in watching Sonlife grow nationally and internationally. At the same time, Steve became head of the EFCA National Ministries Team and then Senior Vice President of Leadership Development. Steve is a gifted leader and close friend.



**I say all of this, to let you know that as of January 1, 2009 Steve will be joining me at GYI to help us move Global Youth Initiative to the next level.** Throughout the last three years, we have seen significant global advancement for GYI... and this addition will give us much more 'leadership horsepower' to take it to the next level.

Not only do I sense God's favor personally, but Steve and Joan spent a great deal of time seeking the Lord concerning this move, and as Steve told me recently, "To not take this step of faith, would be an act of disobedience. We know God is calling us to GYI."

Perhaps the best way for you to understand this decision is to hear what Steve's colleague, Tim Addington, wrote about Steve's decision:

**This week, a 20 year colleague of mine, a fellow Senior Vice President of the EFCA took a huge risk. He resigned from a safe paycheck and solid ministry to move to a tiny ministry that requires him to raise his support and take a major income cut.**

**At 56! After 22 years at the EFCA!**

**Steve did what most of us are not willing to do at his age - leave the comfortable and the secure for the scary and unknown.**

**In explaining his decision, Steve put his finger on several issues that all of us who are secure in our positions ought to consider.**

**First, he did not want to do what he had seen so many people do - coast into retirement and not stay on top of their game. It is easy for us to become comfortable and start to coast in our ministries or employment. Whenever we get too comfortable we lose our edge and we either need to redesign our job so we stay 100% engaged or consider something else.**

Second, Steve had consistently worked himself out of jobs and found himself in a place where while extremely competent, he was not in the center of his sweet spot. He understands that it is only when we are in the center of how God made us that we will be most effective.

Third, his heart was restless. And had been for several years. When our hearts grow restless we need to pay attention because it is often God trying to get our attention! If we experience the restlessness and do nothing about it, we run a risk that our restlessness will become complacency leading to a loss of ministry passion and a coasting to the end.

For all of us in our 50's there is a great temptation to become comfortable and settled after the hard work that has brought us to where we are. This is a danger zone. To finish well we must press on with the same passion and missional commitment that got us to where we are.

It is sad to see people start with passion and end with complacency. But our comfort often keeps us from "getting out of the boat" and taking the risk. We know that our comfortable salaries and benefits will be at risk. We are less willing to move from the comfortable to the scary.

I honor Steve for taking the risk. I ask myself if I would be willing to take the risk. Would you be willing to take that risk? Would God be asking any of us to take that risk?

Peter did when he got out of the boat to walk on water to Christ. Steve is as he gets out of his boat to follow Christ to a new, uncharted and scary place. May we be as sensitive to God's call and our engagement!

Please pray for Steve and Joan as they will need to raise approximately \$150,000 yearly for their travels, salary and administrative needs. A portion of this will also be used to serve as a "ministry fund" to meet pressing global needs of younger leaders. If any of you would like to support Steve and Joan, please feel free to contact me. They would be a great investment of Kingdom resources and I know he will multiply that investment many fold!

## LEADER'S PODCASTS

I have asked many of you to be praying for Mark Edwards and I as we are working this Fall to produce 50 Leader Podcasts for the new Knowing Him study that Mark has recently written.

Working out of a studio we have put together in our basement, we now have 16 of these done... with 34 more to go. Please continue to pray for us as we work to record five a week over the next seven weeks. I truly believe these are going to be used broadly to encourage many to go deeper in studying the Scriptures.



## PRAYER REQUESTS

- For Mark and I as we record the thirty six remaining leader podcasts
- For our October 21-22 GYI Leadership Team Meeting in Chicago (our continent leaders will be gathering to lay out the next 3-5 years of priorities for GYI). We will have six continents represented... Africa, Europe, Australia, Central and Latin America, Asia, and North America.
- For the next two weeks of working on the really important "small things" on my desk
- For Steve Hudson's support raising... that the Lord would supernaturally provide the needed resources

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

A father decided it was time to have "the talk" with his ten-year-old son. Sitting the boy down, he thought it best to first find out what his son might already know. So he asked his son if he knew about "the birds and the bees".

"I don't want to know," his son replied, bursting into tears. "Promise you won't tell me. Please!"

Confused by this reaction, the father asked his son what was wrong.

"Oh dad", the boy replied, in between sobs, "when I was six, I got the 'there's no Santa' speech. At seven I got the 'there's no Easter bunny' speech. When I was eight, you hit me with 'there's no Tooth Fairy' speech. If you are going to tell me now there's no such things as birds and bees I don't know what I will do!"

**A president's pension currently is \$191,300 per year. Assuming the next president lives to age 80. Sen McCain would receive ZERO pension as he would reach 80 at the end of two terms as president. Sen Obama would be retired for 26 years after two terms and would receive \$4,973,800 in pension.**

**Therefore it would certainly make economic sense to elect McCain in November. (How's that for non partisan thinking???)**

A ten-year old, under the tutelage of her grandmother, was becoming quite knowledgeable about the Bible.

Then one day, she floored her grandmother by asking, "Which Virgin was the mother of Jesus? The Virgin Mary or the King James Virgin?"

**Six-year-old Angie and her four-year-old brother Joel were sitting together in church. Joel giggled, sang, and talked out loud during the service. Finally, his big sister had enough.**

**"You're not supposed to talk out loud in church."**

**"Why? Who's going to stop me?" Joel asked indignantly.**

**Angie pointed to the back of the church and said, "See those two men standing by the door? They're hushers!"**

The young couple invited their elderly pastor for Sunday dinner. While they were in the kitchen preparing the meal, the minister asked their son what they were having.

"Goat," the little boy replied.

"Goat?" replied the startled man of the cloth, "Are you sure about that?"

"Yep," said the youngster. "I heard Dad say to Mom, 'Today is just as good as any to have the old goat for dinner.'"



Support for Dann and Char Spader or the ministries of Global Youth Initiative can be sent to: Global Youth Initiative c/o Josiah Venture, P.O. Box 4317, Wheaton Illinois 60189-4317