

Do Hard Things Wk 4 ***Types of Hard Things Part 2***

We've talked a lot about doing hard things over the last couple weeks. We've talked about how many of us are taught to believe the lie that tells us this time in our life is all about us. We also talked about raising the bar, raising our own standard of excellence to God's standard for our lives. Then last week we changed gears some and started talking about big hard things, things so big that a team is needed to accomplish the task laid before them. This stuff is all good stuff, and as usual each of you has to decide what you're going to do with it. Will you take what you've heard and allow it to go through one ear and out the other? Or will you apply it to your life and begin to allow God to work in and through you and that you'll be changed and that change will overflow into the lives of others.

This week we're following with one of the most difficult hard things to do, probably some of the most difficult things you'll ever do. I want you to think for a moment about some hard things that either you do or could do. What comes to mind...? (wait for response, take and give examples). Maybe things that come to mind could include getting straight A's the rest of your life, playing professional sports, becoming a rock star, or even becoming the president of a company or the United States might stand out. I want sort of rearrange all that this morning and challenge you with this. Although all those things sound difficult and rather important, they all have something in common. With each of those jobs come position, popularity, and power. When you have one of these difficult jobs, others will recognize you because of it and there will be something obvious to gain because of it. But what about the jobs, the hard things that no one gives any credit for, things that don't go away, and don't seem to be important or make any difference. Many times the hardest thing you'll ever do is make a commitment and do something you won't get any credit for and doesn't seem important, minor things. You know, things like everyday chores; cleaning your room, washing the dishes, taking out the trash. Things like stretching before you practice or play, doing your homework, and going to bed at a decent time. I would challenge you that doing these types of hard things consistently in your life right now, would be more difficult for you than it is for LeBron James to play an entire 82 game season. On the other hand I would also challenge you with this; it was just as hard for LeBron to clean his room when he was your age as it is for you today. Why, no one sets up a game where you can display your room cleaning skills that you've practiced all week. Eventually an athlete will get some sort of acknowledgement for their sport; a president will get recognition for their job. If I go home after a long day, take my shoes off and then actually get off of my butt and put them away, I can guarantee you Becky is not going to say, "gee Rick I really appreciate what you've done here. You've taken your nasty shoes and actually put them back where they go. Your awesome, great, come on I'm taking you out to get a new video game". Um, guys, not happening. The hardest things for us to do will be the things we never get recognition for.

There's another side to it though. Let me give you a story to illustrate; (Fishing story p. 132-133). "Take a careful look at the drudgery you're stuck in today. If it's making an effort to be kind to your sibling, your accomplishing at least two things: shaping your future relationships with your brother(s) and or sister(s) and training yourself on how to relate *to others*" p. 138) These things that seem monotonous, things which seem unimportant and we don't get credit for usually bring and build character into our lives. Jesus actually said a lot about small things and the big changes and differences they can make.

... like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. "After a long time the master of those servants returned and

settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. "'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (Mt. 25:14-30)

Each had been given a small amount, by the master, but they each chose what their attitude was toward the master and toward the amount. Some understood what was at stake and put what they had to good use. As a result what they given was multiplied and because the wise servant used what he was given to the best of his ability he was given more. But the one who didn't take seriously what he was given and didn't do his best with it is regarded as worthless. The kicker here is that we're all given what we are given. Some of us are given much, we're given major things to do, but what do we do with the resources we're given to complete what God has for us? Some of us are given little things to do for the kingdom and we're given adequate resources for the task given to us, and the same question remains. Will we take seriously the task God has given us and the God that gives the task, or will we be the worthless servant who doesn't do our best with what we've been given.

Another example of this is in Galatians 6,

Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

Gal 6:8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

"Every action no matter how small, is defining our future harvest. Small seeds can make big weeds, but they can also produce beautiful flowers or feed a nation. But that's where lazy servants (and many of us) get tripped up. We enjoy the harvest, but we don't enjoy sowing and cultivating the good seed. We enjoy being fit and strong, but don't enjoy exercise. We all want to do big and important things, but we tend to discount the small things that get us there" (139). We need to understand that the size of the task is not nearly as important as the standard of excellence. God desires our best no matter what the task, so why do say things like I'll give my best when I think it works to my advantage, but not when it I don't see the importance of a minuet task. Smaller task like stretching before your game or turning in homework have prepare us for the task ahead. By being faithful in the small things we gain, maintain, and demonstrate the strength needed to accomplish something great. The question is do we care enough to put forth that effort.

You see we as we examine Doing Hard Things, we have need to decide what our attitude will be toward what God has placed before us. We can look at these things as a wise servant and

give our best, despite the size of the task. On the other side we can be like the foolish servant. We can procrastinate; do the task with a bad attitude, compromise on quality, and just be inconsistent. The choice is up to us, how will you approach the things that seem minuet but are the character attributes at core of who you are and the type of person you will become.

Small Group Discussion: p. 143-144

- Think of a regular or daily task you hate that takes less than five minutes a day. How do you most often deal with it? Procrastination? Inconsistency? Irritation? How might you benefit from a shift in attitude and a renewed commitment to this small thing?
- Do you have a big goal for your life that you can't achieve without a commitment to small hard things? Write down your big goal. Then write out the small hard things that will help you achieve it—and how faithfully doing those small hard things now will help you achieve your dream later.