

Do You Walk the Talk?

I have been a soccer referee for over 30 years. My pre-season routine was to walk several times a day in the neighborhood, starting in mid-July. As I was in one of those walks a lady ran by me, not once but three times. She was going in the opposite direction and kept a really brisk pace. On her third pass she said, “Aren’t you the Y director?” Although she didn’t mean it this way, I thought to myself, “I work for a Christian wellness organization and the best I can do is to walk. What kind of example am I?” Contrast that with the current Y director. She exercises at the Y daily, swims three days a week and utilizes the cardio equipment on other days. She is a model of a person who puts the priority of taking care of her body high on her very full to-do list. God only gives us one body and she is faithfully taking care of hers. She is living a life that reflects the mission of the YMCA – physically, mentally and spiritually. She is truly walking the talk.

I had several built in excuses for my less than robust fitness routine. I worked at the YMCA, a non-profit organization that took lots of time and commitment. Once I arrived at work I knew I had a mountain of work waiting for me. The moment I turned the office door key I wanted to check things off my to-do list. I was a work-a-holic and it controlled my choices in life. Instead of heading for the fitness room or pool I sat down at my desk and started on my tasks for the workplace. At the end of the day I had lots of checkmarks on the to-do list, but I had let God down by not taking care of the gift of my body. Even though I was surrounded by the best fitness facility in the community I let my own expectations of work performance get in the way of having a better balance in life. My second excuse was that I refereed soccer games in the evening, so I was getting exercise. My wife is always quick to remind me that I am not running the full 80 minutes of the game. And I occasionally played racquetball. I was getting spotty exercise.

We both worked from exactly the same desk with essentially the same job, but with different results. So how does a highly successful manager get her work done and make health a priority in her life? Some days she arrives at the Y by 5:30 AM and exercises first, before workplace responsibilities take over her day. On a more casual day she arrives at 7 AM, often after a run in the neighborhood. She is not letting any excuses prevent her from taking care of the priorities in life. It takes will power and she has it. She proved to me it is possible to be good at your job and also take care of yourself.

Will power is not confined to exercise. We know what we should be doing. We may talk a good game about helping others, taking time for prayer, reading our Bible, and spending more time with family, etc., but do we actually carry through? Or do we let excuses provide the justification to let priorities slide? Fulfilling priorities doesn’t happen without a plan. Do you reserve time to do the things you know should be priorities or do you let the busyness of life eat up all your time? Well-planned priorities are your purpose in life – of what God gifted you to do? God put you where you are to be effective in your family, your place of work and your community. He wants you to succeed, but not at the cost of other higher priorities.

I am now retired, so you would think I would be better at doing the things I should be doing. It is easy to fill up your day with worthwhile projects and activities, but miss what is really important in God’s eyes. Make Him a priority in your life – learning about Him, serving Him and using His gifts.

It is easy to overlook what is really important in life. Sit down and write those on a piece of paper. Display that list prominently in your house as a reminder of goals you know you should seek to achieve. Then, make a plan of how, when and how often you will actively work on those goals. Now, walk the talk!

Questions: Whose priorities are more important – God’s or your own to-do list? How can you adjust your schedule to make God’s priorities your priorities?

Scripture: *So that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10).*

Prayer: Dear Lord. It is easy to get caught up in the busyness of life, and not do the things that are really important. Help us to take better care of ourselves and those you place in our path that need our attention. Amen.