

Oblivious to the World

When I exercise at the YMCA I often wear headphones, listening to music as I walk the treadmill. Being preoccupied with listening to favorite music or engrossed in an e-book takes away my awareness of the physical exercise, and makes the time go by faster. Wearing the headphones on a neighborhood walk, however, is entirely different. I may be so involved in the music I don't pay attention to traffic, especially if I am getting ready to cross the street. On a recent walk I was enjoying movie theme songs when a guy passed me going the other direction. Not only did he wave but he said something, but my music prevented me from hearing him. The music was a distraction from interaction with a neighbor.

Sometimes we go through life in a trance, unaware of the needs of others we have just walked past. We get so preoccupied that we have blinders on when it comes to other people. Open your eyes and ears to be responsive to needs or just to be a friend to someone. *If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth (1 John 3:18).*



God has given you the gift of health, so you can walk, run, or do whatever exercise helps you take care of the body He gave you. Enjoy the entertainment of music or e-books but keep alert to ways you can serve others. Even though they may come up at inopportune times, the needs of others are not the distraction. Don't let the preoccupation with your task be a distraction from doing God's work – taking care of His people. Your kindness shows God's love to someone else. *And if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday (Isaiah 58:10).*

I recently made a comment at a meeting about the YMCA director in my home town. My comment was she spent so much time in the lobby you would think she worked the Member Services Desk. What she was doing was interacting with the members. The work on her desk could get done at another time. The people of the YMCA are her #1 priority. She serves her members first. You can still get your tasks done and give others your caring attention. Serve God first by serving others.

Faith isn't about just us spending time with God in our own little private world. Faith is having a relationship with God and then serving Him by serving others.

Scripture: *What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead (James 2:14-17)*

Question: Do you find yourself engrossed in your own little world and not taking the time to help others? How can you be more attentive to the needs of others?

Closing Prayer: Dear Lord, we pray we will listen to others and respond to their needs, as You have responded to ours. Amen.