



March 21, 2010

Artists & Specialists

We watch musicians perform and the things they do with their instruments appears to be effortless. We watch demonstrations by sculptors or other artists and may seem amazed at the mastery they have of applying a medium to paper or canvas creating an image. The use of color and other things is dynamic and we may stand in awe of what has been accomplished. We may read a novel or instructional guide and wonder where the ideas for these things come from. How does one achieve the level of expertise that is needed for the accomplishment of these tasks. The same holds true for Christians. We see those who are Christians who know their way around their Bibles. I have spoken to some folks who are very impressed that anyone can find the books of the Bible and not use thumb indexes to do so, especially when it comes to the Old Testament. Many are impressed when they find that a Christian they are speaking to understands and can bring out points from the scriptures that perhaps were completely unknown. It has been estimated in studies that in order for someone to become a specialist in a field or develop a skill that is of a higher level that a commitment of 10 to 15,000 hours on average are needed. A famous popular composer that I like once stated in an interview that he began to practice for over sixteen hours a day for a period of two years prior to embarking on his professional career. The talent was already there but there was a necessity to hone the skills until they were second nature. That is the problem. There are a lot of people who have made the determination that they cannot develop the skills of a musician, artist, writer, programmer, physician, nurse or other specialty because they don't possess the ability. There are two issues that weigh into this. One is the fact that in order to be a musician, artist or specialist in any field, there is a need to possess a rudimentary capability or talent. Many times the talent might be in line with an instrument or field of study that we did not consider or imagine but after a process of eliminating what does not work, we may settle into something we can perform. The second thing that has to be in place is a desire to accomplish the development of a skill or acquisition of knowledge. The desire has to be strong enough that we will set aside other pursuits until we have achieved a level of accomplishment. That is where the problem lies. The work that must be done is often too time consuming and interferes with such things as playing or watching sports (but we have to have it), engaging in hobbies, watching television and other things that anyone could do readily. We have a saying that if something is worthwhile it will not be easy. That explains why there are more spectators than participants in most areas of endeavor. One of the things that also prevents the accomplishment of a goal is the physical and emotional turmoil that results as we work toward acquiring a skill. Frustration and wanting to do more and not being able to get there as quickly as we would like to, perceiving a lack of progress will kill interest and involvement in many folks. Another thing that is sure to cause some to give up is that we begin something with the idea of achieving greatness rather than wanting to develop a skill or level of knowledge in an area. The trials and frustrations that come our way will impede progress in this area and we will give up or create an image in our mind that we have achieved something that we really haven't. For that reason there are unused musical instruments in back closets, unused memberships to various clubs and activities and a number of hours wasted on half hearted attempts at doing something for the wrong reasons. Serving God means that we should desire to achieve a level of understanding that God wants us to have. We need to set aside the concerns and cares of this life to achieve it and do the things that are necessary to be pleasing to God. We need to want to please God and go to our eternal home enough that nothing will stop us. Unfortunately, like a lot of other things, there are dusty unused Bibles and forgotten names on church rosters.

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