

A walk with Mr O (24)

As few regrets as possible

Mr O, you seem to have had a very productive life. Can you tell me how you did it?

Believe me, things aren't what they seem. I'm in my senior years and I carry with me a thousand regrets. Many of those regrets are to do with poor stewardship of time and wasted opportunities.

For these I must answer at the judgment seat of Christ. If it were not for His cross, where all my sins have been forgiven, I would be in total despair.

I don't know what to say, Mr O, except that I want to go through life with as few regrets as possible. Surely you can pass on to me a few bits of advice.

Well, there are three or four lessons that come to mind. These are things that I have had to learn the hard way. If I had learned them earlier I could perhaps have avoided many of my mistakes.

And now I'm all ears!

The first thing I would say is **Slow down**. The world is in a hurry. God is not. Be like Him. Always. Yes, the Christian life is a race, but it is a race for the slow. The prize is not for the fastest runner, but for all who finish the course. Scripture tells us to walk, not run. That applies to every area of life.

But the Lord tells us that He wants us to 'bear much fruit'. We've only got a short time on this earth. How can we bear much fruit if we don't get a move on? We've got to do as much good as we can, haven't we?

Apples and pears don't appear on a tree overnight. They take time to grow. Hurried fruit has no flavour. It's good for nothing – as are hurried prayers, hurried studies, hurried relationships, hurried actions, hurried conversations, hurried decisions, and hurried everything else. Go at God's speed, not the world's. What is not slow is not godly.

'What is not slow is not godly'. I can't believe what I'm hearing! No one has ever told me anything like that before.

The second thing I would say is **Single task**. Do one thing at a time. Give it your full attention. Do it with prayer; with the Lord and for the Lord. In this way you will do it thoroughly, which will bring Him glory. Despite what they say, no one can give the whole of their mind to several things at once.

Yes, someone once told me to be like an air traffic controller – to concentrate on landing one plane at a time, and to keep all the others circling. It's not safe to do anything else.

Thank you for that illustration! Is it all right if I use it in a sermon, or in an article, sometime?

Yes, of course, Mr O. But what is your third piece of advice?

The third thing I would say is **Savour the moment**. Ever since we were excluded from the Garden of Eden our lives have been plagued by toil and difficulty. Nothing is easy anymore.

But that does not mean that everything in life is a chore. Hidden away in every activity is something pleasing and fulfilling. Find it and enjoy it. Squeeze the orange until the juice comes out.

Some Christians are not very happy people. They have not yet learned to find the God-given reward in every task. But it's there! Keep sucking the bitter herb until you can taste some of its sweetness.

That's something that I need time to think about. But I'll do it slowly!

And to these three pieces of advice, I would add a fourth: **Stop in between**. Never go straight from one task to another. Our God is a Sabbath-loving God. He punctuates our life with a day apart every week.

He punctuated Israel's year with feast days. So put 'micro-sabbaths' into your day – lots of them! - moments when you stop, lift up your heart to Him, and feel Him near. Then go the next task in His strength and with His blessing You will never regret it.
