

# Toss Your Do-List

BY DAVID LYONS



True Confession: I used to write things on my do-list that I had already done . . . just so I could have the pleasure of crossing them off! So, when my wife sent a Forbes article to me that suggested that I toss my do-list, I laughed.

Later, in my quiet time, the Lord brought me back to that idea and improved it. The One Whose Yoke is Easy knew that my do-list had become a burden. As tasks piled up week by week, my anxiety increased. I was always behind. So, Jesus suggested that I convert my do-list to a prayer list.

My wife's suggestion came at about the same time that my boss, Mutua Mahiaini, mentioned his sadness that so few Navigators seem to regularly spend a day alone with God. That practice has often reshaped my life, but his comment reminded me that I'd drifted from the habit amid increasing leadership responsibilities. Later that week, I pulled out my copy of *How to Spend a Day in Prayer* by Lorne Sanny. I once again began putting that day of prayer in my monthly schedule.

During my next day alone with God, I converted my do-list to a prayer list. Now, I begin each month with a day set aside for fellowship with God during which I pray for the month ahead. As I pray, the Lord shows me that He never intended for me to do some things on my list.

In other cases, I ask, "Is this something that you are leading me to work on this month?" If so, I schedule time for that in my calendar, not my do-list. Putting these work responsibilities on my calendar keeps me from thinking that "I'll get to it someday" (James 1:22). I also leave some items on my prayer list. This frees me from the burden to act immediately. God can add them to my calendar in His time.

Now when I am asked to do something, I either put the task on my prayer list, or I fit it into my calendar around the work that God has already assigned to me. Then, each Sunday, I pray through the week ahead and adjust as God leads. And each morning I pray for the day ahead, adapting as God leads.

This approach is described in Proverbs 16:9, which says, "The mind of a man plans his way, but the Lord directs His steps." I am also applying Philippians 4:6-7, which tells me to not worry about anything and instead pray about everything. Jesus never did anything on His own initiative, but only what the Father invited him to do (John 5:19-20; 12:49).

I experience so much more peace. I am also more productive, because I'm more focused. Yes, I'm praying more. But it's not burdening me; it's freeing me.

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I'm also interceding more, but for a different reason. The Lord transformed my intercession with this thought: "I pray because I love." Now I intercede because it's the most powerful way that I can love God and people. In the past, I've felt weighed down by long prayer lists with many names. Now I'm very selective about what goes on my daily prayer list. I only add requests when God has told me to keep asking, to keep seeking and to keep knocking (Matthew 7:7).

Why don't we pray more? Do we believe that our part is more important than God's part? Why do we settle for (or struggle with) less than what God can and will do in answer to our prayers? Why not work from your prayer list rather than from your do-list?

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