

Practical Purpose

Topical

I've been stewing on this one for a while

Maybe it was just me, but in my earlier days of being a Christian (I'm still not that far), **It seemed the practical and the spiritual were two things.**

One could be practical. But the spiritual was better than practical. Two silos.

Work: digital, traditional

"Too heavenly minded to be any earthly good" (not a scripture by the way)

And I think there was some value to this, partly:

- Being sanctified/stripped of my earthly habits
- Being taken from my ways into more Godly ways
- Learning to look to God and for the Biblical answer to a solution

I really struggled with practical application of certain things. The practical ways of life, savings, a career, buying a car, maintaining it, all were things I had,

but I wasn't sure how to balance them.

The car would need brakes, but I wouldn't have money to fix them (even though I made more money at the time being single than I did at some point having two kids) and I'd be praying and in need. God would help, usually through a Christian friend or pastor.

I had forgotten something that God started showing me at an early age, even before I had a real relationship with him.

Story of changing first tire

That sometimes, perhaps even a lot of the time, the answer to our prayer is practical. It's right in front of us.

Cartoon about people on a roof praying for help

Now, I'm not saying the practical is it. Or that all practical solutions, or even man's wisdom, is always or ever the right answer.

But that when living a life lead by the Spirit, instructed by the Word, and seeking God first, that the practical has a purpose in accomplishing the spiritual.

[Mat 6:25-34 NKJV] 25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, [will He] not much more [clothe] you, O you of little faith? 31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day [is] its own trouble.

Do not worry. To be truly practical, we must not worry.

This should not be because of some self confidence in our practical ability.

Our faith, our trust, our hope should be in God...and then we go from there.

[Pro 16:9 NKJV] 9 A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

"The best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry. No matter how carefully a project is planned, something may still go wrong with it. "

There's a saying in war, "No battle plan survives first contact with the enemy."

We can have all the best plans in the world, but we can never plan for everything. We can never be prepared for everything.

[Pro 6:6-11 NKJV] 6 Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, 7 Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, 8 Provides her supplies in the summer, [And] gathers her food in the harvest. 9 How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep-- 11 So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, And your need like

an armed man.

God is saying...hey lazy man, do you know why you don't have what you need right now? It's because you're not being practical. You're not working. You're not saving up. You're sleeping in when you should be out working to provide.

[2Th 3:6-12 KJV] 6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. 7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; 8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. 10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

Even Paul and the other apostles and disciples knew how to fund their missions trips...by working. Sure, others would bless them, or even give them work to do.

But the men who followed Jesus worked hard. Their spiritual aim was the gospel and not hindering it, so they wanted it to be free of charge to those who heard it. And the way it was free of charge was if they paid their own way.

“But God will provide, brother!”

Sure he will, and it may come by a miracle, an envelope in the mail, the kindness of others, a coin in a fish's mouth...but 9 times out of 10, it'll come by you being practically obedient to the spiritual precepts.

Now, does this rule out the spiritual intervention? The miracle from the hand of God? Absolutely not.

Elijah fed by ravens by a brooke.

But John the Baptist (if you can believe it, Elijah) ate bugs and honey.

Elisha and the widow's oil

[2Ki 4:1-7 KJV] 1 Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. 2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou

in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. 3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, [even] empty vessels; borrow not a few. 4 And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. 5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought [the vessels] to her; and she poured out. 6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, [There is] not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. 7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

She had a real need, and God met that need in faith. But it was her duty to sell what God gave her to make the money to meet her physical needs.

God will always meet our spiritual needs. We may go hungry. We may be shipwrecked and naked like Paul. But God never left him.

Sometimes we already have the provision, it's just not organized properly
Joseph and Pharaoh's dream

> Helps ministry sheet, going over finances, crown financial. Organizing finances properly. **REORGANIZING THE THINGS YOU HAVE TO MEET THE NEEDS YOU HAVE.**

The problem is we won't do it because we idolize the thing we have to get rid of, let go of, sell, repurpose. We idolize a certain lifestyle. In the end, we want a lifestyle that has the most practical purpose...the problem is, the practical purpose we want might be for an idol (being rich, famous, or like so and so or having such and such) instead of that lifestyle serving a practical purpose for God's purpose.

[Ecc 11:1-2 NKJV] 1 Cast your bread upon the waters, For you will find it after many days. 2 Give a serving to seven, and also to eight, For you do not know what evil will be on the earth.

Spread out your finances, different bank accounts, different investments. Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Spread out your hobbies, your dreams, your goals and see which one God might begin to bless - even all of them!

I'm not saying "name it and claim it" - but what I'm saying is, you're already spiritual, great, now go be practical too!

[Mat 10:16 NKJV] 16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

[Luk 16:1-13 NKJV] 1 He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. 2 "So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' 3 "Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 'I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.' 5 "So he called every one of his master's debtors to [him], and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7 "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' 8 "So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. 9 "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. 10 "He who [is] faithful in [what is] least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in [what is] least is unjust also in much. 11 "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true [riches]? 12 "And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? 13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

If we can't take care of the practical, is there any proof we can take care of the spiritual?
 If we take care of the spiritual, we'll take care of the practical
 "Trickle down economics"

This doesn't rule out getting help, family, friends, even the church at times...but our main dependence should be on God, and from there, do our best to be self-sustaining. Is it any wonder the world wants more and more government to depend on? We're designed to primarily depend on a higher power, but from there to walk it out.

Turn to 1 Cor 12:12-31

We are designed to be stewards. Good stewards. Garden of Eden. But without His Spirit, without His commands and morals, we become wasters.

The gift of administration...that handling practical things with wisdom...guess what...is a spiritual gift!

The biggest practical purpose is the church working together, as one body, as it should. Is it really practical reaching the lost when church bodies don't work together? When

they're each worried about their own kingdom? Is it any wonder revival hasn't happened? There's nothing practical to support it when it does. Not that God couldn't bring it, like in Acts, thousands saved and the church grew to handle it...but when we've been given the practical tools and we've neglected the body at large...will the church really be effective?

**We cannot equate a large church with God's moving.
We cannot equate a small church with God's absence.**

Sometimes, sadly, it's quite the opposite. But the practical, the physical appearance cannot be used as the sole factor in determining a work of God.

Back to being stewards...

There's a reason God says through Paul:

[1Co 13:11 NKJV] 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

Men, adults, are to put away childish things. I remember when God gave me that verse about playing video games.

Not that I won't play from time to time with my kids, or even have had a lan party or two over the past decade and a half...but video games do not take up the majority of my time. I do watch movies, and maybe games are your movies and it's OK, but for me, there were other things God wanted me spending my time on. And perhaps a big problem with adults living with their parents, depending on them into their thirties...when they should be, by most accounts, providing for their own children by that time, is because they haven't stopped being a kid. They haven't grown up and put away the childish pursuits in their lives.

Or maybe you're not at home, you're successful in the world, but your personal life is barren. Perhaps you're too busy playing and not taking your relationships seriously. You're not committing to someone else...

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

Many times we just want to meet the physical needs of the poor. And that is good. But what is best, is meeting their true need: a savior to free them from the ways that might be enslaving them to poverty.

And from there, practical purpose, wisdom, education, training, skills...to eventually meet their own needs. So they're not dependent on handouts, and can eventually even help others.

[1Th 4:11-12 KJV] 11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; 12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and [that] ye may have lack of nothing.

Starting your own business (or even just minding your own business and not meddling with other's), **with your own skills, is the ultimate form of financial freedom. You work hard, you'll be rewarded. You'll even be able to give jobs to others.**

It's not for everyone, but there is something very spiritual, very Christ-like, about a Christian who is quiet, works hard, provides for themselves and has no lack that they might then bless and provide and send others.

The spiritual need is greater than the physical need. If we have the physical, the practical, but not the spiritual, we're poorer and more naked than we realize. But if we have the spiritual provision, the physical lack is something that God will get us through...or we might go through it our entire life. "My grace is sufficient for you."

We cannot equate practical provision with God's blessing.

We cannot equate practical lack with God's absence.

As with most application of God's truth, it's higher than that:

His presence is the provision.

[Isa 55:8-13 NKJV] 8 "For My thoughts [are] not your thoughts, Nor [are] your ways My ways," says the LORD. 9 "For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. 10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper [in the thing] for which I sent it. 12 "For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap [their] hands. 13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; And it shall be to the LORD for a name, For an everlasting sign [that] shall not be cut off."

Nehemiah building the wall

Depressed about Jerusalem. King asks him what's wrong. He asks the king if he can go! The king sends him with supplies. A worldly king is used by God to provide for his people practically. Spiritual set up of the need. Practical provision.

And even then, when building the wall, they need protection. Do they just pray? No, they have a hammer in one hand and a sword in the other.

Do you want God to protect you? He will...but one way he might practically do it is by you getting your concealed carry permit. Or keeping a shotgun in your home. Perhaps even if the oppressive government comes for your children, you might have a way to protect them as a godly parent should. "Oh no, I'll just sit by and pray that God will protect me from the attackers coming in my home" - So will I, but I'll have something practical to stop them with if it comes down to that. **Why? Because I sought God first and he provided for my protection practically before that protection becomes outlawed or I'm in need and I was a sluggard getting one before no one was breaking in.'**

Remember we are stewards of what we are given in life.

[Psa 50:7-15 NKJV] 7 "Hear, O My people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you; I [am] God, your God! 8 I will not rebuke you for your sacrifices Or your burnt offerings, [Which are] continually before Me. 9 I will not take a bull from your house, [Nor] goats out of your folds. 10 For every beast of the forest [is] Mine, [And] the cattle on a thousand hills. 11 I know all the birds of the mountains, And the wild beasts of the field [are] Mine. 12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world [is] Mine, and all its fullness. 13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, Or drink the blood of goats? 14 Offer to God thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High. 15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

God doesn't need your tithe. He wants it. He expects it. And I'll tell you by experience, whatever amount you tithe, God will always provide a blessing that far exceeds it's value. You may not notice it for years, it may never be a monetary repayment...but learning to trust him, STARTING with effectively at 10% pay cut, you'll begin to see how much affect and the effects it has on your life.

- Dependence on him
- Not wasting money
- Learning to give
- Having a part in the kingdom
- Having inheritance in the kingdom
- Learning to be more frugal
- Learning to better organize and take care of what you do have...it's 90% after all!

[Mat 6:19-21 NKJV] 19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 "but lay up for yourselves treasures

in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

God wants your heart in heaven. Your hands will be here though.

[Luk 9:62 NKJV] 62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

It's important to give and support the ministry. Even if they do work. I didn't expect my pastor to work. It was honorable. It was something to look up to. But at the end of the day, shouldn't we want our pastors, missionary friends, and ministries focused on practically doing the spiritual?

Let us go to work practically that they might get to work spiritually.

[1Ti 5:17-18 NKJV] 17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer [is] worthy of his wages."

[Phi 4:10-20 NKJV] 10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. 14 Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. 15 Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent [aid] once and again for my necessities. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. 18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things [sent] from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. 19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and Father [be] glory forever and ever. Amen.

Don't know how to be practical? Do you lack that wisdom?

[Jas 1:5-11 NKJV] 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7

For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 [he is] a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. 9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, 10 but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. 11 For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

[Pro 6:1-5 NKJV] 1 My son, if you become surety for your friend, [If] you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, 2 You are snared by the words of your mouth; You are taken by the words of your mouth. 3 So do this, my son, and deliver yourself; For you have come into the hand of your friend: Go and humble yourself; Plead with your friend. 4 Give no sleep to your eyes, Nor slumber to your eyelids. 5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand [of the hunter], And like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

**Read Proverbs. Read Ecclesiastes. Read the entire Bible.
Read it again and again and again.**

I love Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes for morning time with the Lord...I am foolish. I am unwise. And the small amount of wisdom that's rubbed off on me has payed huge spiritual and practical dividends.

God gives us salvation. He'll guide us through sanctification. I believe in some way, salvation is the spiritual driver, sanctification is it's practical purpose.