



Enjoy the Moment!

The main thing is the hand God has dealt you for this moment—to use an old poker player's imagery—to play it, to enjoy the game and sometimes to collect your winnings.

I have recently become aware that I've fallen into the trap of thinking of my life as a series of "projects," "tasks" and "ministry efforts" that I must get through without messing it up so horribly that I can't fix it.

Did you ever think that life is something that happens while you are going somewhere else? In other words, because we are always looking to "get through" something to the next thing, we miss what God has planned for the present thing. I've even come to the realization that the "main thing" and the importance of doing the "main thing" isn't the main thing at all.

One of the great tragedies to affect me of late was the tragic death of one of my best friends, Rusty Anderson. I miss him more than I can say. He affirmed grace to me and always told me not to "shilly-shally." He encouraged me when I thought that I was ugly and my mother dressed me funny. He discouraged me when I started thinking of myself more highly than I ought to have thought. He was sometimes profane, didn't obey many of the rules and loved God with all of his heart. He gave me the freedom to be real, and he modeled grace for me.

One of the best things about Rusty, though, was the way he lived life—not for what was going to happen tomorrow or next week but living life in the here and now. He enjoyed every minute of it by squeezing out of each moment everything that moment could give.

Live the moment and let the next moment be for the next moment. Or to put it in Latin so you will know how sophisticated I am: *Carpe Diem!* ("Seize the day!"). My life's verse is Ecclesiastes 9:10: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might...."

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old poker player's imagery—to play it, to enjoy the game and sometimes to collect your winnings.

Now that I think back on my poker playing days, it wasn't even what I won (sometimes I won a lot) or what I lost (sometimes I lost my shirt), it was the game, the friends with whom I played and the joy of being together while we played the game.

And no, I hardly ever play poker anymore. (I do need my job.) But after my poker playing days I turned "religious." I thought that God needed my help. I started looking over his shoulder, as it were, to see what the next hand would be. I was so focused on the next hand that he was going to deal, so focused on doing it right and serving him properly, that I missed the joy of playing the game. In other words, I forgot to squeeze the moment for the life, the joy and the reality that it offered me.

How much we miss in preparing for, thinking about, planning around and faithfully doing the next thing. God, in his grace and freedom, wants us to do the thing that is presently before us...like spending time with and enjoying a good movie with your family, drinking a milk shake with friends, playing golf or maybe even playing poker (or, if that offends, Tiddlywinks).

I know that doesn't sound very "Christian" or "religious." Doesn't matter. Sometimes that is the hand God deals. Sometimes, though, his hand has to do with laughing at a joke told by your son or daughter, having dinner with friends or watching television. Sometimes the hand will have to do with your obedience but, at other times, it may just be that he wants you to relax and to enjoy the moment.

He asked me to remind you...as long as you do it with joy. □

—Steve Brown