

The Gospel According to *Evan Almighty*

Special thanks to Dave's wife, Julia for contributing this article

I am sure that you have felt the call of God on your life several times. You may have responded in one of two ways: responding to the call fervently, or just completely ignoring it, thinking that it is just another one of those many crazy thoughts in your head. Whether He has called you to do something small or large, you must never ignore it.

This is the basis for Steve Carrell's *Evan Almighty*. Though replete with good, clean humor, there is also a message from this movie that can be applied to real life. After many years, television newscaster Evan (Steve Carrell) is living out his long-awaited dream of being a United States Congressman. The family, Evan, his wife and three sons, move into an enormous house in a posh Northern Virginia housing development. Evan buys an SUV, and has high expectations for all of the things they will do as a family. In short, he was set in his life.

For many years, he had dreamed of and sacrificed for this one thing to do in his life. He wanted to "Change the World" (the slogan for his campaign). In his own naïve mind, he feels that this is the only thing that he can do to make this world a better place to live; he felt he needed to do this globally, in a sense of the word.

Soon after he launches into his job as a Congressman and immediately carries on the stressful obligations that are involved that take time away from his family, he notices small changes in his life, not the least of which is animals in twos following him everywhere (and the number of pairs of animals proliferates as the movie progresses), even into his office, much to the chagrin of his colleagues; and large orders of wood were unexplainably delivered to his house.

Unlike our earthly lives, God (portrayed by Morgan Freeman) appeared to him in bodily form and told him up front that he was to spend his time building an ark, much like the one Noah built (see Genesis 6-9), which explains why he received all of the wood. Shortly, several orders of it had accumulated at his house, and Evan made many futile attempts to get rid of the wood. Also, he was so absorbed in his role as a Congressman that he thought this calling from God was bogus.

He may have thought it bogus for the very same reasons we think of when God calls us to do something unusual. The following may sound familiar:

"I don't have time. I'm too busy with work/school/family."

"I don't have enough faith."

"I don't have what it takes to take on something big like this."

“My family and friends will think I am crazy.”

“What if I fail and embarrass God?”

“I’m too young/old/short/tall/fat.”

First Corinthians 1:27, NKJV, says, “But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.” This verse speaks volumes about Old and New Testament prophets, apostles, and kings and people in today’s world alike. If you recall the encounters that Moses, Abraham and Sara, Noah, Jonah, and Gideon had with God speaking directly to them about His promises, you may also recall the unfavorable reactions to each of these: self-doubt and ridiculing laughter (right in God’s face!), and deliberate refusal, just to name a few.

After many days’ worth of fighting God about this, and the increasing intensity of these “signs”, Evan finally gives in and starts building the ark. Though it did not happen immediately, he saw improvements in himself, his family, and his colleagues. In fact, when he set out to build the ark, his three sons jumped at the chance to help him. This was the first time since the move and subsequent start of his job that he found the time to spend with his boys (Luke 9:23-26, Matthew 23:11-12). This bonding is in stark contrast with their disappointment at his earlier cancellation of a camping trip to review a voluminous bill.

Looking at the big picture so far of this review, it is quite obvious that God was calling him to temporarily give up his prestigious position in Washington, DC, for something that did not provide any income but, as he soon found out, had eternal value. While impossible to the human eyes (Matthew 19:26), it does seem the way God works as a former shoe salesman named D. L. Moody and a former singer named Kenneth Copeland and millions of others can testify. Have you ever gotten a similar call, to give up a high-paying yet highly stressful job for something with less pay, only to find that it generates only Kingdom purposes?

Pretty soon, the outward changes in his life take over to the point where he no longer considers his government position important; he is so busy with the ark, he does not think about what he left behind.

In conclusion, I’d like to summarize all of the main points both from the movie and from this present article. First and foremost, you do not have to set out to do something dramatic to change the world. You may feel badly about not doing missions overseas, but you can have just as great an impact on your family and community just by being a light for them (Matthew 5:16). Something simple as spending time with your family, taking time from your busy schedule to do volunteer work or calling a friend, or encouraging someone are just a few things that you can do to change the world.

Secondly, everything you do here on earth can be either of a temporal or an eternal value. If you choose the former, you will be sad to find out that upon your death, all of the things for which you labored, that you thought were meaningful to life, will be reduced to dust (Ecclesiastes 2:18-19; Psalm 103:14). On the other hand, the latter condition will allow you to leave a lasting legacy, both here on Earth and in Heaven. Evan did have a wonderful opportunity to serve our country by being Congressman and desiring most of all to "Change the World". Though he meant well in this cause, he was called to fulfill a much nobler one. Because of this, his marriage strengthened and he felt much closer to his sons and was eventually respected by his colleagues. Doing just that much can speak volumes for at least some part of his life on earth.

Lastly, it is admittedly difficult to give up a secure position in life, whether it is on the job or at home. However, when you feel the call of God to do something that is outside of your comfort zone, and causes you to make adjustments in your life, you will see how richly He will provide for you and change you from the inside out. Although we may never experience God in bodily form and speaking audibly to us, or never be called to build an actual ark, there will be many "arks", both big and small, that you feel is God's calling for your life. No matter how big, impossible, or foolish it may be, the only thing to do is to pursue it wholeheartedly and not worry about what will happen.

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