

All we had to do was nothing

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It was a house their grandparents built. Forty years have passed and situations changed. Grandma and Grandpa are gone now, and the house had been in the hands of renters for a number of years. The landlord, their dad, lived hours away. When dad's age and health prevented him from keeping up with what was happening, he deeded the house to his two daughters.

Going to the house, the daughters were shocked. The house was run down, the carpet was infested with bugs, and various encroachments had whittled away almost three acres of the homestead. Fences had been moved. Automobiles had been junked. When asked by friends how all this had happened, they replied, "It was easy, all we had to do was nothing."

Doing nothing is a silent thief that can rob us of a lot. And like with the two granddaughters, it may take a lot of work and effort to recover what that silent thief stole. Proverbs 27:23-24 warns us about the silent thief this way, "Be sure you know the condition of your flocks; give careful attention to your herds; for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations." God is saying, "Take good care of what's important to you. What you don't take care of, you may very well lose."

And it's not just possessions, it can be personal. There are people who end up with major health problems; not because they do terrible things to their body, but because they just let their body go. They end up paying a price for their neglect.

Neglect can be even more damaging in our relationships. We might not have done anything to our mates or children or parents that's really bad, but maybe we just haven't done much at all. Remember, neglect is the silent thief. Slowly, but very surely, intimacy is lost, trust is lost, communication closes. The longer we let things go, the harder it's going to be to get them fixed. It may be time for a priority check to bring those that we love and care for back from the margins into the center of our attention.

And then there are relationships with God. Many people will spend eternity away from God, not because they did something awful or rejected what Jesus did on the cross, but because they simply neglected Him and a relationship with Him. They put it off, they made excuses, and they postponed God, or just slowly pushed Jesus to the edges of their schedule and life.

Neglectful damage might also result from us. Some years ago a friend of mine was killed in a tragic accident. We had talked about many things, but one thing we had never really talked about was his relationship with the Lord. I don't know if he ever gave his heart to Christ. All I know is that I never shared with him about Jesus. For a follower of Christ, one of life's most haunting regrets can be the realization that we never discussed with a friend or family member about Jesus while we had a chance. Even now my neglect still hurts when I think of it.

We can't alter the past, but we can change the future. Too many people wait one day too long to get to Jesus. All we have to do is nothing, and an eternity is lost. We can make the difference, and today may be our last chance to do it.