

## “Wade, Slide, or Dive: Just Get Wet!”—Fully Engaged (4 of 4)

I want to begin this last message on being “**Fully Engaged**” with a little quiz. I’m going to read a few facts about two people and see if you can guess who they are. One is a man and one is a woman. If you think you know, just let the person next to you know how smart you are.

**Who is this man?** He was born the son of a Lutheran pastor in 1875. He became an acclaimed organist and worldwide authority on Johann Sebastian Bach by the time he was 30. Later he earned doctorates in theology and philosophy. In 1905 he enrolled in medical school so that upon receiving his degree he would no longer have to, “*merely talk about the religion of love, but put it to practice with his own hands.*”

In 1913 he and his wife moved to French Equatorial Africa, now Gabon, to build a treatment center for Africans living in poverty. He stayed there the rest of his life. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952. He died at 90 years of age in 1965. **Who was he? Dr. Albert Schweitzer.**

**Who is this woman?** She was born the youngest of three children in the former Yugoslavia in 1910. She joined a church youth group, and by the age of 17 she knew that she wanted her life to be directed by God. She became a high school geography teacher, and was promoted to high school principal in 1944. But her career there was ended because she contracted tuberculosis.

In 1948 she started an unofficial school for young children in the slums, and she combined teaching and medical care to nurse them toward health.

In 1950 she rented a house with her own money so that the people who were dying in the streets could be transported there and die with dignity. She was one of the earliest pioneers of treating people with AIDS before the disease even had a name. She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. She died at 87 years of age in 1997. **Who was she? Mother Theresa.**

Now here’s an amazing fact about these two people: My children, my grandchildren, my great grandchildren and my great-great grandchildren are still going to know their names for one simple reason: They went around doing good for others, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Albert Schweitzer and Mother Theresa are not going to be remembered for their pursuit of wealth or power, or because they built industries or armies. These two people just decided that their daily job description was going to be to “do good.” They put their work gloves on every day and “did good” until their final day.

Here’s another quiz: Let me read for you the following passages and see if you can find the common theme: From Hebrews 10:24, “*Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.*” Hebrews 10:24 (NLT) From 2 Thessalonians 3:13, “*As for the rest of you, dear brothers and sisters, never get tired of doing good.*” 2 Thessalonians 3:13 (NLT) From Matthew 5:14-16, “*You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*” Matthew 5:14-16 (NLT) (In the sermon on the mount, Jesus summarizes the function of Christians in the world. Reduced to one word, that function is “influence.” The purpose of letting our light shine and reveal our good works is not to bring attention or praise to ourselves but to God.)

From Galatians 6:9-10, “*So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.*” Galatians 6:9-10 (NLT)

(Our doing good should extend to everyone, Christian or not. There should be no favoritism.)

From Romans 12:21, “*Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.*” Romans 12:21 (NLT) (Paul is writing about evil people who oppose you. How do you respond? Do good!)

And from 1 Timothy 6:17-19, “*Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with*

others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NLT) Tell me now, what’s the common theme? “Do good to others.”

This is no better explained, than in Titus 3, “Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone.” (Be ready, all throughout your day, to do whatever good you can do— and do it with gentleness and true humility!)

“Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other.”

“But—‘When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of his grace he declared us righteous and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.’ This is a trustworthy saying, and I want you to insist on these teachings so that all who trust in God will devote themselves to doing good. These teachings are good and beneficial for everyone.”

Titus 3:1-8 (NLT) (Paul says, “Don’t squander your one and only life by missing opportunities to do good.”) In verse 14 he says, “Our people must learn to do good by meeting the urgent needs of others; then they will not be unproductive.” Titus 3:14 (NLT)

Put all of this together with our key verse, Ephesians 2:10, “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) You have been saved to serve! What would our world be like if every Christian went around doing good and expressing simple acts of kindness for others?

Let me ask you, “why aren’t you dead? Why are you still sucking air?” There is really only one reason: Because you’re not finished doing the good deeds that God wants you to do between this day and the day of your death!

Is there a way to live your life that meets a real need, that improves our world, that blesses others, and that points people to the hope that you have in you?

There is such a way to live: It’s called, picking up the towel and living beyond yourself. It’s how Jesus lived! After all, Jesus came “not to be served, but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

**To wrap this series up, I want to ask and answer a few big questions:**

**Q:** The first question is the “**Why**” question. Why should we live beyond ourselves? Why should we go out of our way to do good deeds? Why should we part ways with so many other people in our world whose supreme goal is good times, not good deeds?

**A:** We should be devoted to doing good because it has been God’s destiny for us since the beginning of time, as Ephesians 2:10 tells us. We are to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ from this point to the day he takes us to heaven.

**Q:** The second questions is the “**Where**” question. Where should you be doing all of these good deeds?

**A:** We should be doing good wherever God puts us. Remember the parable of the Good Samaritan? Who is my neighbor? Anyone you come into contact with! I’ve seen Christians leave church and on the way out to the car take a “nasty pill” and pound their families, or pound the waitress, or pound your co-workers.

**Q:** The third question is the “**How**” question. How do you do the good works that God wants you to do?

**A:** My answer: However the Spirit leads. One of the greatest untapped resources of the average Christian is the Holy Spirit who lives inside of every Christian. Have you heard from the Holy Spirit lately? Has he tapped you on the shoulder and prompted you lately? Listen to him throughout the course of every day and let him direct you.

**Why** do good? It’s your destiny. **Where** do you do good? Wherever you are. **How** do you do good? However the Spirit prompts you to do it. And you’ll feel so blessed as you do that.

So, are you ready at this point in time to pick up the towel and serve? In my 20 years of being a Pastor, I have never seen anybody just drift into the towel bearing lifestyle. The drift is always towards *selfishness*, *selfish ambition* and *self-absorption*. A decision has to be made. Are you ready to make it?\_\_\_\_\_

As I started this message, I quizzed you on two people who have won the Nobel Peace Prize. Do you know how that prize

came about? It all started with a man name Alfred Nobel.

Few people will ever have the opportunity that Alfred Nobel had. Alfred was a very educated man. He eventually made his fortune in life as a chemist and as an inventor. In fact, he pioneered a number of works. But probably the thing that he was most famous for is that he was the inventor of a substance called dynamite. And Alfred, in a short time, took that invention of his and catapulted it into quite a fortune as he sold that substance to various political entities and such that wanted to use his invention for the production of weapons.

Later on, when Alfred's brother suddenly died, one newspaper accidentally printed Alfred's obituary instead. As he read in that obituary the assessment of his life, it shook him to the core because he saw himself described by this mistaken newspaper as a man who had become incredibly rich simply by enabling other people to kill each other in mass quantities. And seeing that ugly public assessment of himself, staggered him.

As a result of all that mistaken obituary, Alfred had a big change of heart. As a result, he resolved from that day onward to generously use his wealth to reward accomplishments that benefited humanity. One of the many awards that he funded and the one that he is best remembered by is called "The Nobel Peace Prize."

Have you ever thought about the end of your life on earth? What will be on your tombstone? What will be your epitaph? What will people say at your memorial service? What will be in your obituary? What will God say to you as you enter into his Heaven?

It's wise to imagine how we will finish this life, to go all the way to the end and think about where we are going to be and how we are going to end up...how it should have been lived...to think of ourselves and how we will be remembered...to think of ourselves as what we stood for and stood against, and what we have accomplished in life.

Can you in your mind stand at your grave side and see yourself there? What will you have accomplished? What will you have experienced? Sorry to bum you out, but the death rate still hovers at 100%! With no vision of how you'll live your life in the hear and now, you'll find that it quickly slips through your fingers. Who are you living for? Are you living beyond yourself?

**ILLUS (Hillsboro Aquatic Center: Kiddy Pool? Water Slide? Diving Board? Just get wet!) SERVE Brochure.**