

Why the Mundane Matters

As New Year's approaches, many of us are setting lofty resolutions. The humdrum of the everyday is easy to get sucked into, so the new year is a refreshing start for many. It's a milestone to set some goals and focus on self-improvement.

While setting lofty goals is a laudable objective, looking at New Year's as a grand new beginning—a blank slate—overlooks everything else that happens in our lives, all those little moments that make up everyday life.

Each ordinary day, we make hundreds of little decisions, and these actions make up the overwhelming majority of our lives. That's not to say that big pivotal moments aren't important, but if we only think about these instants, the rest of life will pass us by.

I've recently been reading Jordan B. Peterson's [*Beyond Order: 12 More Rules for Life*](#), and in it, he shows how everything has symbolic meaning: One of Peterson's running theses through his work is that everything has meaning in it.

"You can only find out what you actually believe (rather than what you think you believe) by watching how you act," says Peterson in [*12 Rules for Life*](#). "You simply don't know what you believe, before that. You are too complex to understand yourself." Each action we take is an outward representation of who we are in our hearts and what we believe.

In practice, this means that those seemingly everyday moments deserve our attention. While it's not worth *obsessing* over the little things, we can take heart knowing our everyday lives matter.

Peterson, though, isn't the first person to observe this truth. In fact, it was stated about two thousand years ago by the Apostle Paul. "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do

everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him,” reads [Colossians 3:17](#).

For Christians, actions should be done “in the name of the Lord Jesus.” But more broadly, this means our actions should strive toward an ideal, a higher purpose. Washing the dishes isn’t simply washing the dishes. It may be a way to show appreciation to a spouse or roommate. It could be the path to breaking the procrastination habit. Or maybe washing the dishes is the one time of day you get to chat uninterrupted with your spouse. These are all things of untold significance.

Only a few verses later, Paul says, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men” ([Colossians 3:23](#)).

While this is an order, it can also be an encouragement. We should work heartily *because* God cares about what we do in our daily lives or because our actions have higher value and purpose. And thus, the work we do each day must matter.

The meaning in the mundane isn’t just an encouragement, though. Above all else, it’s a responsibility. Suddenly, inconsequential actions are serious. Washing the dishes becomes a task with monumental implications.

And it’s not a responsibility shirked without consequences. If what we do every day doesn’t matter, then why shouldn’t we go around lying and stealing? Dismissing the mundane is a turn toward entropy, emptiness, and evil. In other words, we can take heart knowing that what we do matters, but we are also *warned* that what we do *matters*.

By treating the mundane as meaningful, we can also gradually improve our lives. Instead of leaving those dishes for later, we can do them now and become a more proactive person. Or by being polite to the cashier, we can brighten someone’s day. We are gradually transformed into better people. It’s a simple way to create long-lasting habits.

So, as you set your resolutions this year, remember that those quiet, small moments—the things you do each day without a giant resolution—can be full of greatness.

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