

God is in the Details

I once wrote a short story with this title, about a new teacher struggling to find a way to get her students to exhibit Christian behaviour. She thinks she doesn't know how ... but of course we find out that she really is doing it all day long, by modelling it in all the little things she does.

Thinking about that story recently, I thought I would look into the phrase a little more deeply, to see where the quote originated, and to see if there was anything I could learn from it.

"The devil is in the details" is a commonly heard quote, which seems to mean that solutions to problems break down if you examine them too closely, or 'even the grandest project depends on the success of the smallest components.' As in, the devil in the details may ruin everything.

The true origin of this idiom is unknown, but its first recorded use was by Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, a German philosopher and poet (1844-1900). He is quoted as saying, "*Der Teufel steckt im Detail,*" or when translated, "*The devil is in the details.*"

"God is in the details" means that opportunities for creativity and growth come from digging into the details. This quote originated with the famous twentieth century architect Mies van der Rohe, who was referring to architecture, and how great designs are planned down to the smallest bolt and screw.

What does all of this mean from a spiritual point of view?

Consider what William Blake said:

*“To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour”*

Or in other words, God is in every leaf of every tree, in every flower and every ray of sunlight.

It's so easy to see the beauty of nature and see God all around us. It's so easy to see positive results to prayer. But it's a lot harder to see God in the everyday tasks of life.

If we learn anything from the Bible, it's that the *details* of our lives are important to our salvation. The devil is in the details, because if he can convince us to neglect one little thing, he's started on the path of convincing us to give up our salvation. After all, people who sin are not concerned about the details. In 2 Peter 1:8-9, we see that if we slip back into a life of sin, we become blind because of darkness (sin). Or from 1 Cor. 15:33 – “*evil companions corrupt good morals*”.

But if we are careful to observe the details in our lives and obey God, we can be saved. God is in those details.

Everyone strives for perfection, for a life that is completely pleasing to God ... but no one can ever achieve it. So often when we do things, we try to do just enough to get by. We ignore the little things; we let things slip by, figuring that they aren't important.

But God notices *all* the things we do, and the effort we put into them. He notices what we care about, and what we choose to ignore.

Do we thank God for all His blessings, or do we just try to get through the day?

When kids in my classroom were occasionally disrespectful or rude, did I get angry, or did I thank God for giving me the opportunity to be a part of their lives and to show them I loved them, even when they might have thought nobody else did?

When people came to me with complaints or problems, did I just do my job, or did I thank God that they felt comfortable enough with me to seek out my help?

When I looked at my own family, with its occasional problems and aggravations, did I get stressed, or did I thank God that our family is full of love?

When I had disagreements with my wife, did I show anger and resentment, or did I thank God for giving me a warm, caring loving companion who helped me to accept Jesus into my life?

When friends seemed to ignore me, or never seemed to have time to talk or visit, or when I felt lonely ... did I experience resentment, or did I let God show me that His love is all that's really important?

I failed often at these things, more often than I could count. But I always knew what I was supposed to do, and really tried to do better. Especially in the little things.

God is here. He is in everything. He is waiting for me to recognize Him in everything I do. I thank Him often for being so patient with me, especially when I forget.

I am ready to discover His designs anywhere and everywhere in my life. He's in the details!