

THE TRENTON BULLETIN

But Why Can't Things Go Like I Want? (Gary Ogden)

For some strange reason, parents usually have vastly different ideas about life than their children. There is often conflict when the child wants earnestly to do one thing and his or her parents want something different. Bedtime is a good example. When Jeff and Jay were young, we felt they needed to be in bed at 8:00 p.m. We needed the rest whether they did or not. "Bed" was a bad word in their vocabulary. They had this thing about going to it, but despite their reluctance, they just had to go to bed.

Sometimes, they cried for a long time before finally succumbing to slumber. The trouble is, they were 15 years old at the time. Just kidding; 15 months. Toddlers need their rest, and so do moms and dads, so they just can't be allowed to stay up all hours of the night, no matter how much they protest.

Life is like that most of the time. None of us can have things go the way we want them to all the time. Somebody or something will come along and change our schedule or divert our attention or affection from what we would really like to be doing. We have the choice: we can either pitch a royal fit or roll with the flow. Pitching a fit doesn't seem to be the way the Lord would have us deal with situations that are not to our liking. That would be immature behavior, like crying because you must go to bed!

The Apostle Paul wanted to go to Rome to preach the gospel, and I doubt very seriously that he would have chosen the route that eventually got him there. He would go as a ward, not a free man. If he could have gotten there without the shipwrecking, I'm sure he would have preferred that.

When he finally made it to Rome, he was under house arrest and did not have a free run of the city. So, things just didn't go the way Paul would have liked. What did he do? He preached the gospel anyway. He got on with the business for which Christ had commissioned him and didn't let the inconveniences of life hinder his work.

Here's how Luke records it: "And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him" (Acts 28:30,31).

Paul teaches us the importance of learning to handle situations that are not to our liking. No matter how much we desire it, we cannot always have things our way. You might be able to get a hamburger at the joint "your way, right away," but we can't expect that life will cooperate so easily.

Sin changed the schedule of God. After man



sinned, God had to put in place a plan for the redemption of man that would require that God would have to die for the sins of the world. When we see the Son of God in the garden, we realize that if He could have chosen another way, He would have. Who would want to go through that? But for whatever reason, there was no other way, and Christ endured the suffering on the cross as planned.

One of these days, everyone reading this will face the prospect of death. Now, if you had your way, you'd just go on living and not give death a second thought, but if you were able to choose, you would want to die in your sleep, quietly. But alas, we can't have our way in such matters.

We may be able to eliminate some diseases or distress of body and mind if we follow a certain lifestyle, but we can't choose the way we're going to

die. How we face death will, however, demonstrate our attitude toward the will of God for our lives. Death is as much a part of life as what to buy at the grocery store.

How effective are you at accepting life's realities that don't go as you had planned and hoped? Some don't pitch fits, but they go into a state of depression and despair. They turn into miserable wretches and seem to make it their aim to have everyone around them join in their misery. Such behavior makes others want to stay as far away as they can manage.

What if Paul had constantly complained about the raw deal that Life was handing him and went into a perpetual state of emotional distress? How could he



YOU CATCH THEM. THE LORD WILL CLEAN THEM.

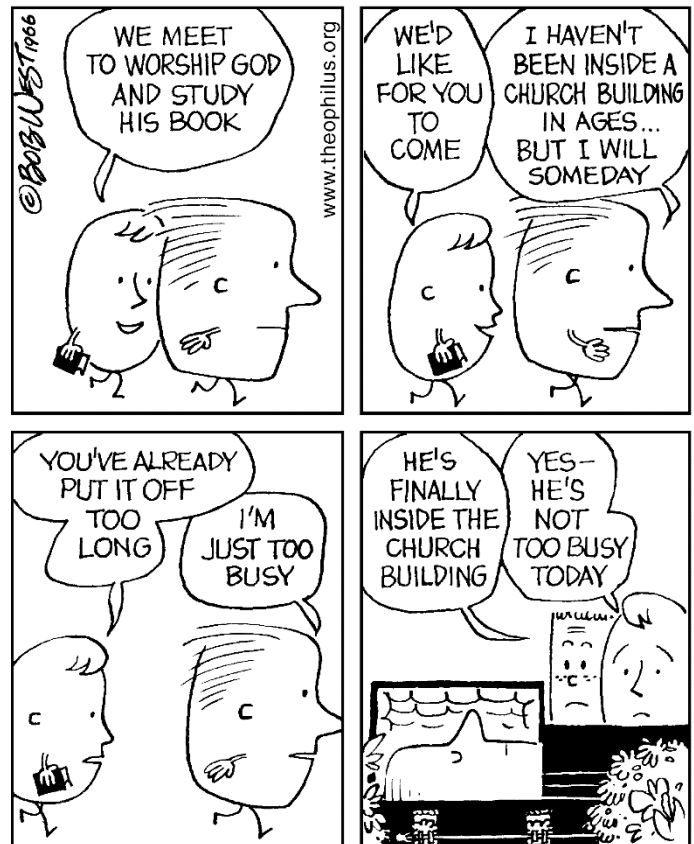
have gotten anything done? Now, don't think that Paul didn't have his moments of despair and distress, for he mentions those times - "For indeed when we came to Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears" (2 Corinthians 7:5). But such did not consume him, and he managed to pursue his goals despite several rotten days.

Jesus was sorrowful in the garden as He faced the prospect of crucifixion, but that did not sway His resolve to finish the work the Father had given Him to do. He got up off His knees and offered His hands and body to the torturers.

Friend, you and I will face many a day that won't go as we want it to. Plans will fall apart, loved

THEOPHILUS

Too Busy



ones will depart, jobs will be lost, health will fail, friends will forsake you, society will crumble, the government will tax you, nations will fight each other, and you may get caught in the crossfire.

If you and I remember Who is in charge and Who sits on the Throne, we will be able to make it through. We will sing "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" and mean every word. We won't mope around, at least not for long, and we'll get up and be about our Father's business. Life is too short, and eternity is too long to do it any other way.

Father, Your way, right away! "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

