

The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

1 Kings 19:11-13 NIV



Small Things

WE HAVE BECOME A SOCIETY of individuals bent on outracing everyone else. Our technology helps us perform two, three, four tasks at once—all at lightning speed. We can instantly be in contact with people on the other side of the world; we can read or view the news as it happens; we can “be” anywhere we like, at any time of the day or night, via the Internet, smart phone, or satellite.

Family members are so far-flung, each moving at top speed, that it is a stretch even to call them, collectively, a “family,” for they are so infrequently in the same room together. Even as parents bemoan the fast and frantic pace of their children, they sign them up for more activities, more after-school events—and buy them ever-newer mobile devices for keeping “in touch.”



We are surrounded by big things—big events, big people making loud and frantic noises. We are moving through life, from one big thing to the next, at breakneck speed. And all the while missing the small things.

Small things today have become insignificant. They have become expendable. *No time for that! No time! Gotta keep moving!* And at the end of the day—if we ever do reach the end of our day—we scratch our head and

wonder, *What happened? Where did it all go? I want to spend time with my husband, but we have become disconnected. I want to spend time with my kids, but they are now adults—and gone.*

I want to spend time with my God, but I no longer know where to find Him.

God can indeed be found in the big things, but more often He is found in the small things, the quiet things, the small moments that are missed by modern, busy, fast-paced, distracted people today.



One day I parked the water wagon behind the house to refill it for watering the garden. I ran the hose into the sixty-five gallon tank, turned on the water, and sat myself down on a nearby step to wait for the tank to fill.

In just a few moments a male goldfinch landed on the edge of the birdbath that was just a few feet away. The feathers of the diminutive male goldfinch are a brilliant yellow. They are a beautiful, delicately crafted bird, and, parenthetically, the Iowa State Bird. Goldfinches are not uncommon in our area; they feed on the thistles that grow wild in the fields. But I had never before been so close to one.

Sitting there, I realized that I had not moved since taking my seat, so

the finch didn't even notice me. It happily drank and bathed in the water while I remained motionless, enjoying the delicate beauty of the bird. If I had held some thistle seed in a motionless, outstretched hand, it probably would have helped itself.

It was a rare experience, and one that would never have occurred had I not been perfectly quiet and still. If I had sat myself down and immediately flipped open a smart phone to chat with a friend, I would have missed it.



Sitting there, watching this tiny jewel of a bird, I realized that here was God, in a small golden bird perched on the rim of our birdbath. Had I not paused for a moment in the bigger thing of watering the garden during a dry period, I would have missed Him altogether. I would have missed the small but precious thing of a quiet moment of communion with His glory.

To be sure, the garden needed watering. It needed that water desperately. I had to do it. But because in the midst of all that importance and activity I stopped, for even a moment, I was favored by God's beautiful grace.

We all have big things in our lives. We all have things that are important, that require our attention and activity. But when we never pause for the

small things—those fragile and fleeting oases of heavenly communion—our connection to God begins to atrophy. Eventually it will dry up and blow away from disuse.

And for the tyranny of the temporal moment, we will have bargained away sweet, heavenly moments with Him.

**Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!**

Psalm 46:10 NKJV