

**BALANCING 'DOING' WITH 'BEING'**

By Jim Langley

In William Shakespeare's classic literary work, *Hamlet*, he includes the famous words, "To be, or not to be – that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or to take arms against a sea of troubles...." Through these, Shakespeare states, we see the essence of simply *being*.

For years I have been intrigued with the concept of *being* versus *doing*. In the business and professional world, *doing* is foundational to our work. We create "to-do lists," maintain schedules either manually or on our computers and smartphones, establish specific, measurable goals and objectives, evaluate performance by bottom lines that reflect sales, productivity and profits. We are all about "doing." But what about "being"?

Many years ago my friend Jay Carty wrote a short article that has stuck with me ever since. Jay, like most men, admitted he was a doer. His wife, Mary, challenged him to not focus on doing but on just being. In time he found that perspective became revolutionary in his life.

Over the years I have dabbled with the idea of simply being rather than doing. My main source of study has been the Bible, and I find it fascinating to learn God referred to Himself to Moses as "I AM" for the purpose of letting the Israelites know who had sent Moses to free His people. In Exodus 3:14, God said to Moses, "*I AM WHO I AM.*" Then He said, "*Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.*" It seems this involves a being-versus-doing attitude. Do you consider yourself a doer?

Jay Carty published a book on the Beatitudes designed for young boys and girls dealing with adversity in life. However, many adults have also gleaned much from Jay's creative approach of using eight colorfully illustrated stories to explain the teachings of Jesus. The term "Blessed are..." began nine consecutive statements as Jesus taught the multitude, as recounted in Matthew 5:3-11. I have found it instructional to note Jesus taught the *be*-attitudes and not the *do*-attitudes!

Doing is our natural tendency, and we certainly are compensated for doing things, not for sitting and staring out windows. But I have come to conclude God is not particularly focused on all we do. He is most concerned about our relationship with Him and those He puts around us. It really is more about our being, and not our doing.

When we busily go around doing things, refusing to slow down long enough to listen to God, to pray, or even consider what He expects of us, we run a great risk of missing out on what God wants of us. As someone has said, it is all about our availability – not our ability.

Think about God having the ability to move through this universe faster than the speed of light, while we move along at a snail's pace in comparison. For this reason alone, we would be wise to slow down and realize the need to look around us, experience God's handiwork and His presence, and listen so we can discern His desires for our lives. We need to stop, look and listen – to "*be still and know that I am God,*" as He reminds us in Psalm 46:10. If we can master this command and apply its reality to our lives, we might be amazed at how much we can get done!

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### **Reflection/Discussion Questions**

1. How would you distinguish between “doing” and “being”? Do you consider yourself to be a “doer”? What are some positives – and negatives – of this?
2. Why do you think it is so difficult to practice “being” in the workplace? Is it even possible, from your perspective? Explain your answer.
3. What do you think God meant when He declared “I AM WHO I AM”? What relevance – if any – do you think this assertion has for followers of Jesus Christ as they start each day in the demanding, competitive workplace?
4. Imagine you determined to take time regularly to apply the command, “Be still and know that I am God.” How do you think this could have a positive impact on your status, performance and productivity as a business or professional person?

NOTE: If you would like to look at or discuss other portions of the Bible that relate to this topic, consider the following brief sampling of passages:

Matthew 5:1-12; John 6:29, 15:5; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 4:13