

WORKING ON THE LIST

My daughter Coral loves movies. She was really excited about the Academy Awards a week ago and made sure leading up to that event she watched every movie that was nominated for a major award. She even had a prediction list made out ahead of time picking who she believed would win each category.

I am not a film buff like my daughter. I enjoy watching movies but over the years I have not seen what some people consider to be some of the best ones of all time. Realizing this, my daughter gave me a list of six movies back in January that I should watch so I would become more enlightened about some of the best films ever made.

By March I had only watched one of the movies on her list and half of another one. It was not that I had forgotten about her list during those two months, but rather other things just took a priority over watching those movies during that time. Last week I turned on a movie that was not on her list. She happened to come into the living room while I was watching the movie and commented how it was not on her list.

Guilty as charged and with a guilty conscious added to it, I decided to start watching a few movies on her list. It was a good week for me to do it because I had no evening basketball practices with it being March Break. I was able to watch two of the movies that were on my daughter's list and enjoyed both thoroughly. A couple of times my daughter walked in while I was watching her movies. She smiled each time and commented how anxious she would be to hear what I thought about it later. Afterward I did seek her out so I could debrief with her my thoughts about the movie.

I have been working on one of my lists during this past week after ignoring it for the previous two months. Doing this got me thinking about a list that God has given to us in the Bible to work on. God's list is found in the Ten Commandments He gave to Moses and the Israelites after He led them out of Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai. Because the Israelites were about to enter into a covenant relationship with God, He gave them the Ten Commandments to begin to work on. These commandments were meant to lead the Israelites into living a life of practical holiness.

Some of the commandments were designed to help the Israelites live in a proper relationship with God, and others were meant to assist them in living in community with one another in a way to help meet one another's needs in a loving and responsible manner. These commandments were God's way to help the Israelites not only to learn things about His nature, but also to discover His plan for how they could best live their lives. We can find these Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17 and also in Deuteronomy 5:6-21. I imagine most of us are very familiar with each of the commandments on God's list. A question we might want to consider pondering in this season of Lent is what we have been doing with God's list of late? For instance:

- Have we been ignoring God's list like I did with my daughter's movie list?
- Have we intentionally been choosing to focus on our own lists instead?
- Have we scratched a few things off His list of commandments considering them to no longer be applicable or relevant?
- Have we been working at living them on a daily basis?

Whether it is a honey-to-do list given to us by our spouses, a movie list given to me by my daughter, or the list of Ten Commandments given to us by God, we make choices as to how intentional or not we will be at working on them. Perhaps upon reflection we are realizing we have not been very intentional of late focusing on God's list of commandments. If that is the case, perhaps my effort to start working on my daughter's list will inspire some of us to do the same with God's list.

One of the reasons why I decided to become more intentional with watching the movies on her list was I could sense her disappointment that I had not been doing so. My love for her made me decide to stop procrastinating. I imagine God is just as disappointed with us when He sees we have gotten away from working on His list of commandments. Just as my motivation for working on my daughter's list was love, may this be the same inspiration that gets us focused again on God's list.

My daughter is appreciating the time and effort I am putting into working on her list. I have to admit I have enjoyed working on it too and I have grown in my appreciation of the creativity that has gone into telling some of these stories. It has led to some really interesting conversations as we discuss various aspects of the movie that intrigued us.

I think we would find ourselves surprised as well by how much we will enjoy focusing on God's list of commandments again. We will have a greater appreciation for God's wisdom and nature as we see His character and desires for us in His list. It will also lead into some very interesting conversations with God in prayer as we work through His list. We will find it surprising as well when we focus on God's list just of how much it helps us to live a more practical life that will bless our relationship with Him and with others too.

I still have three movies to go on my list. I hope to work on one each week until I complete it. I am sure when I am done my movie my loving daughter will come up with a new list for me to work on. Since I am becoming more broadened in my appreciation for movies, perhaps I can recommend one for you to watch. Memory serves me that a movie that won seven Oscars in 1957 was the Ten Commandments. It is always available to be seen on television during Holy Week. The movie is great, but God's book is even better for us to begin working on making the Ten Commandments part of our life again.

Keep Safe and God Bless

Pastor Dean