



# Encouraging Words

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## AT THE END OF YOUR ROPE

“Just do the next thing” was the advice author Elisabeth Elliot gave to her daughter, Valerie, when she called on the phone one morning at a point of desperation. Homeschooling her eight children, Valerie had reached the end of her resources.

“What do I do, Mom? I just can’t go on.”

“Just do the next thing!” her mother counseled her.

I can totally relate to Valerie. And I don’t even have eight kids! Many a time I’ve been at that breaking point when I felt I couldn’t clean up one more sticky mess or tackle another pile of laundry or answer another question from a four-year old. But “do the next thing”? Most times I felt more like sitting down to watch a mindless movie on TV than to “do the next thing.”

Now, let me be honest, I do like to make lists. Somehow having a list of what needs to be done and crossing off what actually gets done gives me a great sense of satisfaction. But how decide what should be the “next thing”?

Okay, what is it you absolutely *have* to accomplish today? I mean, if you don’t get another thing done, what’s the one thing that *must* be done? Then, leave everything else and get started on that one thing. True, you may never finish another item on your list but you will have done the one thing that was essential.

Colossians 3:23-24 gives purpose to what we do, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”

I know, I know, some jobs seem so purposeless. You clean up a mess today only to have another mess to clean up tomorrow. But the fact that you did it for the Lord means He will reward you. At the end of the day you may still be tired, but you will have accomplished the most important task, and you’ll know you’ve done your best.