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Tèt Vid

My mom would call me this often, sometimes multiple times a day. It's the Haitian Creole term for "someone that forgets easily" and translates to "having an empty head."

Whenever my mom asked me to do a task (e.g. grab some water, close the blinds) I would run down the stairs, bent on completing the task. Before I hit the bottom step, however, my mind would have already been turned off, completely oblivious to why I came down the stairs. Maybe my head was not so empty, but more too easily filled with diversions. Sometimes it would be the distracting way the lightbulb flickered or the sound made when I stepped on a particular stair: something would catch my attention, destroy my focus, and force me to run back to my mom and ask her what she had asked me to do.

Tèt Vid!

To this day I find myself repeating *tèt vid* to myself over and over again. I find the distraction is now no longer the buzzing fly, but the near-constant parade of responsibilities cycling around my mind. The beautiful paintings on our stairway walls that once stole my attention have been replaced by aspirations held so dearly that I often forget to eat in pursuit of them. How can my head be so empty yet so full?

Distractions are the prime way to keep us from accomplishing what we originally set out to do when we first encountered Christ. God is clear in the Bible on a few things He would like every Christian to be doing: growing closer to Him (**Matthew 11:27-28 (NKJV)**) and bringing Him to others (**Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV)**) are notable examples.

We soon find that life throws so many opportunities at us that we struggle to choose what to participate in. We would feel foolish *not* to say "Yes!" to every offer. Progressively, we find our responsibilities compounding, our minds further occupied with more and more of our wants and aspirations, and conversely less and less of God's mission for our lives.

Many of the distractions are admirable: starting a business, spending more time on a passion project, or maybe learning guitar. For many of us, it is our natural tendency to want to do everything.

In "The Good News of Our Limits"¹ Sean McGeever discusses how we as humans often take verses such as "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (**Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)**) and use them as an excuse to push past the limits God designed for us as humans. Taking this a step further, we use verses like this to justify doing everything we *want* to do no matter the danger it can put our spiritual lives in. The truth is that we *can't* possibly do everything. There simply are not enough hours in the day

¹McGeever, Sean. The Good News of Our Limits: Find Greater Peace, Joy, and Effectiveness through God's Gift of Inadequacy. Zondervan, 2022.

nor energy in our bodies to tackle all the responsibilities and hobbies that we could possibly take on. God did not design us to be able to do everything, so when we try to go past our physical, emotional, and mental limits we find ourselves lagging in some areas and often our spiritual lives.

A common way we try to rationalize these seasons of distraction is by saying we desire to "bring glory to God through our hard work and success." But the truth is that

God is more interested in you being His child than you being successful

God does not want us to compromise His will to do what we find great in our eyes. **Matthew 23:23 (NKJV)** describes Jesus' frustration over the Pharisees honoring God in one area of their lives but completely neglecting Him in others. We should shift our main desires from doing just what we find honorable to being where God has called us to be: growing closer to Him and bringing Him to others (among other things we may feel a calling towards).

The solution to having tèt vid moments is well known in most cases: discipline and moderation (**1 Corinthians 6:12 (NKJV)**, **1 Corinthians 9:25 (NKJV)**). Many of the things we find ourselves occupied with are not harmful in and of themselves but need to be moderated to allow for more time for our God-given goals. Finding ways to moderate how much time we spend on individual responsibilities as well as disciplining ourselves to keep to that will help us shift our priorities back to that which God set us out to do in the first place. This may look like spending one less hour practicing your guitar so you can read your bible, waking up earlier to complete an assignment so you can help lead out a bible study, or even leaving a club you enjoy to better manage your time with God. It is better to hold on to less responsibility and have peace knowing you are in the center of God's will than to hold onto more with "anxious striving" (**Ecclesiastes 4:6 (NKJV)**).

Although prioritizing our mission from God may require difficult sacrifices, we can do so with **joy** knowing that God did *more* for us. Christ chose to prioritize our lives above His own. He chose to sacrifice the comforts of heaven and participate in our pains so that we could get the chance to one day live with Him. It's in the face of this Love we choose to forego some opportunities or moderate time spent on hobbies so that we can better serve His goal in our lives.

Where have you seen the distractions of life taking away from your relationship with God? Where have your aspirations put you in a position where you're finding little time every day to speak to God let alone tell others about His love for them? Christ sent you on a task and if you're now realizing that you have forgotten it, run back to Him and reassess how you are spending your life. The sooner we admit we've been living our lives with "tèt vid" the sooner He can send us back out on His mission.