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When It Seems Too Late



On the day after Thanksgiving, I awakened to my 2:45 a.m. alarm. I slipped out of bed and tiptoed into the bathroom, trying not to awaken my husband. The night before, I had laid my clothes, my shoes, my jewelry, my phone, my coupons, and my small shopping purse, which goes over my head and across my body so as not to be in the way of the day's serious work. I quickly dressed for the day's task, right down to my tennis shoes which are my personal requirement for a major shopping day. I downed a cup of coffee faster than you could say Black Friday.

My daughter and I arrived at the mall at 3:05 a.m. to snag the best deals at Belk, a local department store, which had opened at 3:00 a.m. To my dismay, there were no parking spots left in the front of the mall. None. Apparently all the folks who had hit the 12 a.m. sales at Wal-Mart and Target and Best Buy were now at the mall. Not to be outwitted, I found a place to park behind the mall even though there were no entrances there to any anchor stores. After all, with my tennis shoes on, I could walk/run the length of the mall in a minute flat.

When we finally got to Belk, we entered an endless sea of women grabbing \$19.99 boots as if they were necessary for one's survival. Women were tossing boxes to their friends. They were grabbing boxes off tables. Polite pushing and shoving ruled the moment since news had already reached the mall of a man tazered at our local Wal-Mart for fighting with a woman over the last smart phone.

It was the craziest moment I've seen since McRae's had a Cracker Jack of a Sale the day after Thanksgiving several years ago. That day, every shopper got a box of Cracker Jack's upon entrance to the store, one of which had a diamond ring hidden inside. Whoever planned that promotion overestimated the human desire for responsibility and order. I've never seen so many Cracker Jacks in my life. They were on the floor, on the tables, and even in the bathroom. Women were tearing those boxes open so fast that you think at least 99% of them had never even seen a diamond ring before. Needless to say, McRae's never repeated that promotional.

Back to this year, we did manage to get some great boots for \$19.99. We did, however, have to wait in longer lines to check out because of our 'late' arrival, and we missed the bargains at the other stores because by the time we arrived at our other destinations, they were sold out of most of the 'must haves'. But my daughter and I had lots of fun. We honored our day after Thanksgiving shopping tradition by driving through Chick-Fil-A for chicken biscuits with honey and more coffee followed by more shopping. Later we returned home for more family food, fun, and football games.

It was a light-hearted day for us. We didn't mind missing a bargain or two.

This morning, however, I couldn't help thinking about the more serious moments when we are too late. Times when we don't awaken soon enough and we miss what God has for us.

At those moments, we often struggle to accept our failures and our humanness. What can we do when we've been too late and doors of opportunity have closed?

We can pretend that it doesn't matter, acting as if we don't care.

We can ignore the entire matter by refusing to think about it or acknowledge it.

We can become mired in the failure with self-hatred, depression, and/or discouragement.

We can allow our failures, our missed opportunities, our 'too late' moments, to teach us and bring godliness and brokenness so that we don't miss it the next time.

We can trust that someone God can really do what He says and work all things together for our good.

Have you been 'too late' to connect to something really good? What will you do with the disappointment and pain? Will you open your heart and ask God to heal the pain and redeem the failures?

It's never too late for God to do wonderful things in our hearts and lives. He is the God of new mercies and new beginnings.

You can also find this article published on [When It Seems Too Late](#), and on the tag pages [Black Friday](#), [day after Thanksgiving](#), [failure](#), [mercy](#), [missed opportunities](#), [new beginnings](#), [redemption](#), [too late](#).