

## Anything You Do In His Name is Ministry

Some years ago I received an email from a former student of mine—his words broke my heart. He described his painful feelings of failure. When he was young, preachers had told him that God had a great purpose for his life, and now, in his 50's, he decided that these preachers had deceived him. What kind of great accomplishments had he ever made, he asked. He had not become a great preacher or missionary. But he had been true to a calling that he believed God had given him, serving in a dangerous and difficult occupation in law enforcement. Now in midlife, he felt betrayed because he could show little of what he called “fruit.”

I thought much about his life and influence. For years he has personally sent out hundreds of letters to people in his hometown, sharing his testimony, enclosing a tract, and inviting them to trust Christ. He mourned that he had received so few responses.

I wrote him immediately and reminded him that throughout Biblical history and church history, some of God's dearest servants have served without recognition, reward, or even much in the way of results that they could see. Think about Jeremiah's ministry—not many believed him; he was mocked and imprisoned. But he continued to obey God and trust Him. And so even today, the message and life of Jeremiah impacts lives.

But that's not the end of the story, in recent days the dear former student of mine has written me with such joy, describing how God has been working in his life and that of his family. I rejoiced over pictures of grandchildren, and his new-found recognition of his influence on others!

All of us need to remember first, that we can't judge our impact on others' lives. Some of you have had a powerful influence through your ministry of encouragement. Some of you dear ones have prayed for those who have what appears to be a more public or important ministry. Several years ago I met a dear lady in her eighties who attended a meeting I spoke at. I learned that she has had for years a prayer ministry. “Oh,” I said, “Would you pray for me? I need your prayers so much.” I was surprised when she said, “Joy, you and your sisters have been on my prayer list for years!”

Some of you have the gift of kind words, or sweet songs, or hospitality, or loving touches. We won't know till we get to Heaven how God has used the apparently small and insignificant actions of our lives to impact others. We must never try to evaluate the importance of our lives by our busyness or service. God is most pleased when we offer Him the sacrifices of a pure and loving heart, gratitude and praise, obedience and faithfulness.

“Does the place you’re called to labor, seem so small and little known.

It is great if God is in it, and He’ll not forget His own.

Little is much, if God is in it; Labor not for wealth or fame.

There’s a crown, and you can win it, if you’ll go in Jesus’ name.”

Mrs. W.F Suffield

So take heart! Whether you are a bright young teenager, a harried mother busy with little children, or a frail older lady, whether you can give big gifts or little one, whether you share Christ with 500 or with one, anything you are or do in His name is ministry! May God bless you this year!

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