

Making an Eternal Impact

I will not be taking anything with me into the grave. Neither will you. The question then is what do we wish to leave behind? My goal is to leave this world knowing that my life had a profound and lasting good influence on other people. This is one of the things that the Lord calls every Christian to do. All of us Christians know that our main mission is to make sure that we share the Gospel of Jesus with everyone who will listen. We also have a mission to be ambassadors of Jesus to this world. It is therefore on us to make our lives count. Sometimes we're not exactly sure how to pursue this goal. Come with me while I show you how to make this work.

Being an effective Christian means that we are growing in the spiritual attributes of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. We do not cause the growth in ourselves, God causes the growth. Our part is to avail ourselves of the very tools which God tells us to use. Christians grow best when we are consistent in our study of the Bible, when we are constant in prayer and when we share the love of God with other people.

The key to making an eternal impact is to step away from the business of life for a few moments and go somewhere quiet. Close your eyes and watch the color movie in your head. What does your impact look like? What kind of people are you going to reach? What skills and gifts will you use? Do you communicate best through writing, through speaking, through art, through sports? There is a primary method by which you are gifted and called to reach people.

As you watch the movie in your head look for the things that will produce joy in your life. We all have plenty of trouble. I live in a house that I hate. I hate it because the realtor who sold it to us tried to cause a divorce between me and my wife. The house is an inanimate object. It is not a logical or moral problem that I hate where I live. It is a spiritual problem. If I choose to keep myself busy doing positive things and helping other people the pain disappears. The point is that we all have things in our lives which cause pain. The pain can distract us from doing what God has called us to do.

I do not wish to belittle anyone else's pain. You may say "Gee, your example of the house is so minor." Maybe to you, but to me it is huge. Yet I have suffered far worse things which do not distract me at all. Each of us reacts to trials and tribulations differently. This is why we need to be in fellowship, prayer and community with other Christians. We will never make the size of impact that we should make if we allow ourselves to be distracted.

Once we have seen the things which cause us to rejoice the next thing to do is to schedule those things into our lives. Staying joyful requires that we have the discipline

to create a schedule and stick to it. Make time to do the things which are fun for you. This will produce in you a happier heart and a face which smiles more often.

Finding Your Area of Impact

Now that we have identified the things which cause you joy, let's ask the question. What ministry is no one else building? Where do your sources of joy intersect with other people? If you love travel and meeting new people, you may enjoy doing missions trips. If you love deep theological studies your area of impact could be the arena of public debate. There are approximately five billion people on the planet. This means there are at least five billion opportunities to share the love of God. All the famous preachers, pastors and evangelists can't even begin to make a dent in that number. Reaching the world for Jesus necessitates that every Christian be involved. There's a reason why God tells us that every Christian is of equal value. We are all of one body, and no part is more important than any other part. Jesus gave us the command to reach the whole world with His Gospel. We can only do that as a worldwide family of Christians.

What ministry is nobody building? Where is the intersection of your joy with the interests of other people? These are the questions. Pray on them. Meditate on them. Lift them up to God. He will receive your prayers as sweet incense rising up to His throne room in heaven. He will respond in love. Opportunities to make an eternal impact are all around you.

Some specific applications

I will give two examples of how to make an eternal impact. The first is being welcoming and accepting of agnostics and other doubters. People who are simply not convinced of the truth of the Gospel are not hostile to us. They are just not convinced. It can take years to reach such a person. By continuing to be joyful, even in adversity, you show your contact what it means to live by faith. Eventually the steady trickle of living water which flows from you by the Holy Spirit will eat away at the bedrock foundation of their doubt. There is nothing that impact eternity more than when we bring an unsaved soul to the feet of Jesus.

The second example is the more difficult. For reasons which I do not understand many Christians in my city prefer to discourage other believers rather than to encourage them. This is especially prevalent among the professional pastors. There is a certain element who feel that their churches are their personal kingdoms. Approach your pastor with your idea and with a reasonable plan. If you get the cold shoulder don't bother them any further. Just go find someplace where you can make your ministry happen. You can always contact me through www.Amos413.com I will be happy to walk with you and to help you make an eternal impact.