

Six Counter-intuitive Proofs Your Life Matters

By Viki Rife

If you're like me, you want to know that if you're putting forth effort, the results are worth it. The events of 2020 have made many of us re-evaluate our lives and priorities. Churches and ministries are forced to take a hard look at how they can accomplish their purposes in the midst of rapidly changing circumstances. Many pastors are now also technical directors. Children's Sunday School teachers are unable to teach and may be trying to find other ways to connect with their kids. Everyone's traditional ways of doing ministry have changed.



These changes affect every child of God. You may not even think of yourself as being “in ministry,” but you are still “God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10). We have been called as citizens of God’s kingdom to advance His purposes. But how can we know whether our efforts are worthwhile? Here are some guidelines that will help you know whether you’re on track:

1. What you do feels insignificant.

It’s easy to look at the greatness of God’s kingdom and feel that our contribution is inadequate. We can be reassured, however, by the fact that Jesus emphasized over and over that the small things lead to big things. Think of the parable of the mustard seed in Matthew 13:31-34. If your faith is as tiny as a mustard seed, God can use it to accomplish great things. The Jews were expecting their messiah to come as a great king; they missed him because he was a seemingly insignificant commoner. Contrary to popular thought, it’s when we think we’re doing great things for the kingdom that we are in danger of veering off course.

2. You are investing in preparing yourself for opportunities.

I know a woman who was very depressed because she was single. She decided to start using the lonely evenings when her friends were with their husbands to spend time studying God’s Word and interceding for others. She poured her energies into discovering and living out a Christlike way of thinking. Eventually, God gave her a husband and a large, active family. Because of the investment she already made during the hard times, she has internalized truths she uses to teach others despite often not having much time to prepare. We never know when God might give us an assignment. I compare it to the parable of the virgins in Matthew 25:1-10. Since they didn’t know when the groom would come, some didn’t bother to make sure they had enough oil. If we want opportunities to serve God, we need to anticipate His call.

3. You love to see others thrive and don’t feel threatened by their success.

This attitude is key for those who want to make a difference for God’s kingdom. We must be actively seeking to see others through the eyes of Jesus. When we see them as He does, we will desire to see them walking in God’s truth and using all their gifts and energies for His purpose. We will live with the awareness that we’ve been called to make disciples, not garner praise and glory for ourselves. When we seek to build others up, we are creating ripples that will flow out and influence the world in ways we never could on our own.

4. You're being honest with yourself and others.

You want God's truth more than you want your own comfort and convenience. You are willing to make whatever changes He shows you are needed in your life. You also are willing to lovingly, prayerfully, graciously, confront others in a way that draws them to seek God's truth for their own lives.

5. You choose what matters in God's kingdom over everything else.

You really want to help others have a close walk with God. You will give anything it takes to help them see God better. Whether your gift involves hospitality, teaching, music, art, listening, or cleaning bathrooms, you do it in love as a sacrifice to God. You're like the individual depicted in Matthew 13:44 who sold everything to purchase a field with hidden treasure. You're willing to give up everything to gain the privilege of enjoying what has eternal value.

6. Your identity is not dependent on your ministry title or recognition.

When our ministry defines us, we are in danger of ministering for all the wrong reasons. It's hard to obey God when we're seeking the honor and praise of others. I know a man who wanted to be "in ministry," but circumstances instead gave him the title of school janitor. As he cleaned bathrooms, he prayed for the students who might use those toilets throughout the day. He may never know how much difference his prayers made, but God does reward those who are faithful in the "little things." Jesus pointed out in Matthew 20:25-26, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant."

The Kingdom of Heaven is counterintuitive. When we are serving God in humble ways that others don't see or acknowledge, that's when we are most likely to be furthering God's purposes. Rejoice in the confidence that He sees, and your contribution to His Kingdom does matter.