

How's Your AIM?

Ministry

10/29/18

We have been thinking through or evaluating if we are “on target” in our personal lives and ministries. That is a bit of a funky question because it can very easily become formulaic. We can try and establish some “rules” to live by, or “boxes” that we check and think that it results in godliness and/or effective ministry.

This last week as some of us have been meditating on [John 14-17](#) there are some things that have emerged to me – specifically, I have been wrestling with [John 15:1-17](#). First, in order to know if we are on target we must have some idea what the target is. In [John 15:1-17](#) Jesus is pretty specific about the goal or target that He has in mind for his disciples—fruitfulness. It is fruitfulness that the branches (we) cannot create. It is fruit that comes from the root or vine who is clearly stated to be Jesus. Our fruit-producing life flows always and only from Him. God the Father is all about cutting and pruning the branches (us) based entirely on the purpose of producing fruit. Without going into a long discussion, I believe that is both the fruit *in* our lives and the fruit *from* our lives.

The purpose then, for our lives in Christ is fruitfulness. The process is abiding in Him. Specifically, it is abiding in His love. The word “abide” means to dwell with or in something or someplace. The process of producing fruit for us is consistently abiding in His love – establishing our residency there. When I do that, I am free to be fruitful because I am not responsible to make fruit happen. I am, instead, responsive to what He is doing and wants to do in and through my life. Someone recently said to me, “Doug, you are not responsible to ‘pull ministry off,’ you are responsible to participate in it.” That is so freeing and results in fruit that actually remains!

Ministry, then, is a bi-product of abiding in Christ’s love (intimacy with Him) which is, in turn, a bi-product of understanding who God is and what He wants to do. As we abide in His love, we willingly choose to do what He desires of us, which brings glory to God and joy in our lives. Without fruitfulness there is no joy, because fruitfulness is what we were designed for, and is part of the process of salvation. ([Ephesians 2:8-10](#)) It is also what we were saved to.

Let’s think this backwards a bit. If joy is a bi-product of fruitfulness, which is a bi-product of obedience, which is bi-product of abiding, then my focus is on abiding in Christ’s love. He provides the life giving source and power, I simply bear His fruit.

I have been focusing on abiding in His love for me and for others. What a difference it makes, and the fruitfulness simply happens in His time and in His way. What a joy to be a part of that!

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How would you define fruitfulness in a person’s life?
2. What part do we play in Jesus’ mandate for His disciples found in [Mathew 28:18-20](#)?

