

How to Make Life and Ministry Matter

I'm going to let you in on a "trade secret" about the work of pastors and staff members.

Full-time ministers are not necessarily more spiritual or closer to Jesus.

In my early 20s, I left secular employment and headed to seminary. I loved seminary (which tells you I am a serious book nerd), but I looked forward to the time I would serve a church full-time—and my day would be full of prayer, the Word, and constant communion with Jesus.

That day came, but what didn't come with it was more time for prayer and communion with God. In fact, my life as a full-time minister didn't translate to any more prayer, more study in the Word, or constant communion with Jesus than I had when I had a "real job." I was exceedingly busy in ministry, yet I discovered it was very easy to do things *for* Jesus without doing things *with* Jesus. And that is a constant battle every minister worth his weight in commentaries can affirm.

Jesus doesn't want me simply doing things for His kingdom. He wants me.



During His last night with His disciples, Jesus said "I am the vine; you are the branches" (John 15:5). This is a powerful statement of our dependence on Christ, not just for salvation, but for every aspect of life. Throughout John 15:1-8, Jesus called His disciple—and us—to remain in Him. It's a call to


reside in Him continually, to constantly and consciously "hang out with Jesus."

Is that important? Well, yeah. With a little skill and practice, just about anyone can preach ... lead a Bible study ... share the gospel ... serve ... even endure a weekend as a youth sponsor. But if you want these actions to actually mean something—have an eternal impact—do it while you're in a state of constant communion with Jesus. Read verse 5 in its entirety:

"I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because **you can do nothing without me**" (John 15:5).

We might be doing something, but it comes to nothing if it is not under the lordship of Christ and through the power of His Holy Spirit. Jesus calls us all to follow Him—and He calls us to live lives with purpose, serving His kingdom. And that will only happen as we let Him fill us and empower us.

Remain in Jesus.



**Don't do things for
Jesus without first
being with Jesus.**