



Introduction:

Zig Ziglar tells a story of an experiment performed on processional caterpillars, so called because they often get in a line behind one another and simply follow each other. Scientists placed a group of these caterpillars one behind the other to form a circle. In the middle of the circle was food for these caterpillars. Sadly, instead of turning away from the procession to eat the food, they simply followed each other in a circle until several died. The point? Activity doesn't equal accomplishment. Sadly, churches can often do the same thing, getting so busy doing things that they forget ask if they are doing the best things. That is what this presentation is about. We want to make sure the church meeting here on Livingston Avenue is not simply busy doing things, but busy doing the best things.

Discussion:

I. Purpose matters.

- A. In **Luke 4:42-44**, our Savior and King demonstrated purpose matters. The crowds (and the disciples, cf **Mark 1:36-37**) would certainly have kept Him active doing things. But He had a purpose: "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this **purpose**" (ESV). Jesus wanted to stay on purpose. He wasn't going to allow the crowds or even the disciples to get Him off track.
- B. Someone can only stay on purpose when they know what their purpose actually is. Jesus knew His purpose and was therefore able to take charge of His direction, behavior, and activity. Do we know our purpose?

II. What is our purpose?

- A. As a congregation, do we know our purpose? As an individual member of this congregation, do you know what our purpose is? Of course, there are likely many passages we could turn to, but there is one passage our shepherds would like us to direct our attention to as a guide for our purpose.
- B. In **Matthew 28:19-20**, Jesus commands His apostles, "Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (ESV).
- C. This is our purpose, to develop disciples. We must not allow the crowds or even other disciples to dissuade or distract us from it. But this leads us to a very important question. If our purpose as a congregation is to develop disciples, what is a disciple? What must we develop in people to grow them as disciples?

III. What is a disciple?

- A. *A disciple honors God.* In **John 15:8**, Jesus said that we prove to be disciples by glorifying or honoring God through bearing much fruit. A disciple is someone who honors God. As a congregation, we want to develop disciples who honor God.
- B. *A disciple learns from God.* In **John 6:45**, Jesus said, "It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me" (ESV). A disciple is someone who learns from God. As a congregation, we want to develop disciples who learn from God.
- C. *A disciple loves like God.* In **John 13:34-35**, Jesus says we prove we are disciples by loving one another like Jesus loves us. Notice Jesus's statement isn't about how disciples love the world, but how we love each other. A disciple is someone who loves like God. As a congregation, we want to develop disciples who love like God.
- D. *A disciple points others to God.* In **John 20:30-31**, John explains why he wrote his gospel account, demonstrating the ultimate goal of his discipleship—pointing others to Jesus. Therefore, a disciple is someone who points others to Jesus. As a congregation, we want to develop disciples who point others to Jesus.
- E. *A disciple abides in God's Word.* In **John 8:31**, Jesus said, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples" (ESV). The governing principle around every other aspect of our purpose is the Word of God. We want to develop disciples who abide in God's Word and we want to abide in God's Word as we develop disciples.

Conclusion:

Jesus would not let anyone distract Him from His purpose. We must be like our Master, Savior, and King. We have a purpose. Let's pursue it with all our might. Our purpose is to develop disciples who honor God, learn from God, love like God, and point others to God while abiding in God's Word.