

Rice University: Importance of intentionality

November 22, 2016

I believe we sometimes overlook the importance of intentionality. We are sure to turn it on when it's convenient, and at other inconvenient and uncomfortable moments, we turn it off. We must remember Jesus lived a life of complete intentionality. I saw this reaffirmed by a recent experience I had that resulted in someone joining the kingdom of God.

About six weeks ago, I was leaving the parking lot of Rice University, preparing to go home. Little did I know I would see one of my old surface-level friends walking by, heading back to his dorm. After some debate with myself, I asked him if he wanted a ride. This was not because of some innate goodness. Honestly, I was ready to go home. What helped spur this was remembering Galatians 6:10: "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

Quickly accepting the ride, my acquaintance jumped in my car, and we began engaging in small talk. Not too far into the conversation, he asked me what I was doing now. I gave a brief explanation about what a campus missionary intern is and all that it entails. Then, he asked if I would mind taking him to church sometime. I jumped at this opportunity, knowing it could lead to a bigger conversation about Jesus.

After our first trip to church, I invited my acquaintance to coffee so I could get to know him more. To my surprise, he said, yes. A few days later we met and I learned more about his backstory, in addition to discovering how he was personally and spiritually in life. After about an hour, I offered him an opportunity to read the Bible together in a way that would change his

life. He showed interest—even admitted he had not done read it before. When we ended our first meeting, we set up a regular meeting schedule for the future to read the Bible together. I knew I had to be intentional here to help support his growth toward Jesus. Without intentionality here, I didn't know when or if he would have read the Bible.

Showing signs of really wanting to seek Christ, my friend returned to church with me the next week. The following Monday, we met and discussed John 1 and 2. We lingered for a while on chapter 2 and discussed belief in Jesus to see whether he had really come to Christ. At this point, I knew he was seeking earnestly but still didn't know if he was really a follower of Jesus. Just to probe a little, I decided to share the gospel, using Romans 10: 9-10. I knew for sure he believed Jesus existed and rose, but I asked if he had made Jesus Lord of his life. My friend quickly let me know he had not sincerely done it. I offered him the opportunity to accept Christ, and to my surprise, he quickly agreed.

I paused for a moment, filled with excitement and astonishment at what had just happened. After finally coming back to myself, we prayed. I told him now I was his brother, and if he needed something, to let me know, whether it was easy or difficult. Then I asked him how he felt, and he said, "Excited!" Since then, he has returned to church with me every week, joined a Bible study and still joins me once a week to read through John's Gospel.

What struck me from this experience was how my near-lack of intentionality almost limited my friend on several occasions. My lack of faith and preconceived notions made me believe everyone needed a long time to truly decide to follow Jesus. In addition, I believed people would not follow after I first shared it.

I wonder how many times my lack of intentionality negatively affected people or even caused some to stumble. Intentionality exists in the

convenient and inconvenient moments. Intentionality isn't something to turn on or off, but rather something that should be integrated into every moment of everyday life, as it was with Jesus. I can attest that the more we implement and follow Jesus' form of intentionality, the more souls we will help win. Jesus gave us the formula; we just need to follow it. In doing so, I guarantee that we will see our faith and productivity increase like never before.

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