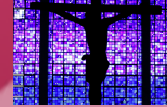


“We train disciplemakers...”



Importance of being singleminded
— p. 2



Motivation
— p. 3

Update from Kansas Communities Ministry

Why make disciples?

Listen to this excellent series with Larry Beck

Making Disciples Naturally Podcast

The First “Silent Night”
— page 2

The critical importance of being singleminded
— page 2

What motivates you?
See the article by Richard Spann on page 3

Mark your calendars for our Spring Men’s Retreat April 12-13, 2024 at Crosswind Conference Center. Special guest speaker is James Carter, Kansas City Ministry Director for The Navigators ©

Pointing people to Christ at Christmas

It’s that time of year again when we are reminded of the arrival of our King as a tiny baby. He came into our world, not by force, but in humility and love. This season may bring memories of happiness with loved ones, or of sorrow as we remember those no longer around the table. It may be a season of stress as we rush to buy gifts, prepare the Christmas dinner, attend multiple events and try to put on a relaxed, happy face.



In any event, Jesus calls us to remember that “it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). As we experience joy, sorrow, grief, stress, encouragement or discouragement, remember that we have the awesome privilege of pointing others to Jesus by our attitude, our words and our actions as we let Christ live His life through ours. How do we do that? By taking daily time to abide in Him (John 15:4) through His word and prayer, as well as by keeping our eyes on Him (Hebrews 12:2). Let’s respond as Jesus would respond to whatever this season has for us. Let’s point people to Christ by our example and words!

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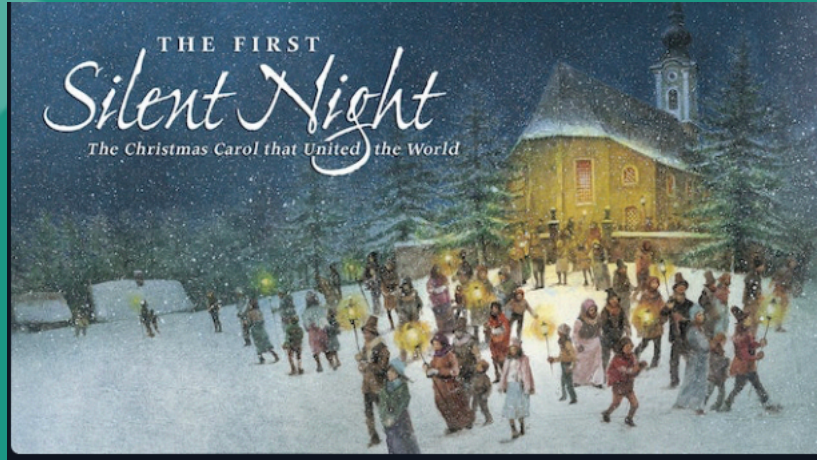
“The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are God’s children. And if children, then heirs (namely, heirs of God and also fellow heirs with Christ)—if indeed we suffer with him so we may also be glorified with him.”

—Romans 8:16-17 (NET Bible)

The First Silent Night

Would you like a wonderfully refreshing, visually captivating and edifying movie to watch? This is the one!

Shot on site in Austria, this movie tells the story of the ever-popular Christmas carol that has endured for nearly 200 years. We may have heard bits and pieces of its origin, but what is the full story? Who all was involved in its development?



The story of Silent Night is much more than the story of Franz Gruber and the need for a guitar-accompanied song one Christmas eve.

This movie has not only beautiful music but also visually-stunning video of the Austrian alps. The host takes you on a trip to interview historians and to visit churches and other venues pertinent to the history of this heart-warming carol.

It is likely that young children would be bored with this movie, but this should appeal to anyone junior high and older, particularly if they have an interest in beautiful music.

Where to watch? RedeemTV.com. This does require you to enter your email and a password, but is a free service.

Goads and Nails

By Richard Spann

“But *one thing* I do ... I press on toward the goal” -The Apostle Paul in Phil. 3:13-14

In his message on the importance of being singleminded, Leroy Eims mentioned that there are three ways to waste your life. The first of these, he relates, is to give way to a lazy, slothful nature. Although not common in success-driven cultures, we still see this in some people. This may be driven by a desire for pleasure, or merely the result of procrastination. This attitude is reflected by aiming for the minimum standards, or as an employer remarked in an employees' evaluation, “He consistently sets low standards for himself and then fails to meet them.” Proverbs 20:4 describes the result of laziness as follows. “A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.”

A more common cause of wasting your life, Leroy states, is to have the wrong goal for your life. Many there are who climb the ladder of success only to find out at the end of their lives that it was leaning on the wrong building. Businesses are built, corporations are formed, and these individuals are highly acclaimed in our newspapers. As you look more closely, you can see personal lives crumble, families dissolve and at the end of life there are nothing but regrets. The Lord describes the life of those with the wrong goals in this passage. “And he told them this parable: ‘The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops. Then he said, ‘This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:16-21)

The most common among the three reasons that Leroy gives is simply having too many goals for our lives. We may have a sincere desire to know Christ better in our lives, but alongside this objective are those which motivate us to expend extra effort to be competitive in our business, to advance our reputation as a business person in the community... To this attitude of mind our Lord comes with the same question He asked Peter. “Do you truly love me more than these?” (John 21:15)

In Christ, Richard Spann

Motivation by Richard Spann

Webster's dictionary describes motive as "any emotion or desire operating on one's will and driving it to action." No one wills anything without a prior cause. This is true of all our actions, our speech, and our decisions every day. Our will responds to motivations which may come from many sources. The Lord, who created us with this will, also uses motivation to guide us in our walk with Him. Years ago, a Navigator speaker, whose name I cannot recall, listed the motivations that the Lord uses in our lives. I have found these to be beneficial over the years and trust that they will be helpful to you as well. There are nine in number and are found in II Corinthians.

Second Corinthians 5:1-9 describes a motivation based on the knowledge of our future dwelling place with the Lord. At the moment we take our last breath we enter into an eternal house in heaven! We are assured of this because the Holy Spirit is given to us as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. The certainty of our eternal destination is a powerful motivation for us as we labor with Him for the lost.

Second Corinthians 5:10, a motivation by judgment, reminds us that the Lord takes careful note of our entire lives, remembering all that He has done through our lives as we have relied, by faith, on His Spirit to work through us. Nothing that He has done through us is overlooked. The judgment seat is a seat of rewards! Our sin was judged at the cross and is remembered no more. The motivation of judgment encourages us as we labor in anticipation of receiving our praise from Him!



Second Corinthians 5:11 refers to the fear of God as a motivation to serve, to worship, to love and to trust Him. It is not characterized by being fearful, but rather a worshipful awe, respect, and wonder because of who He is. Our hearts should be stirred to please Him with all of our thoughts, words and deeds.

Second Corinthians 5:13 introduces the motive of unselfishness, which we also find in the life of our Lord Jesus. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." (II Corinthians 8:9) Here in II Corinthians 5, Paul states that he is willing to let others think less of him so that they might come to Christ. He refers to this in II Corinthians 4:12 as well, "So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you."

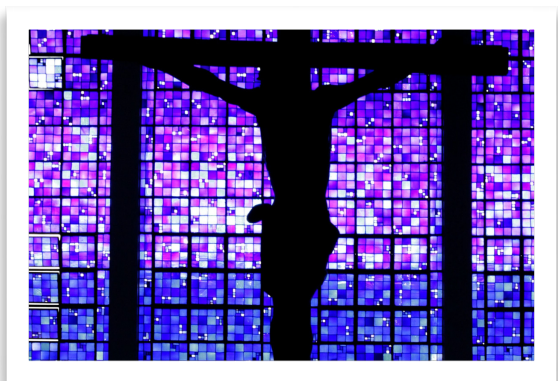
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"We have focused our Aim on laborers. But laborers must originate from some source. Those Jesus sent out were chosen from among His disciples. In our day it's the same. Tomorrow's laborers come from among today's disciples. We have also seen how laborers don't just happen. Usually they are consciously equipped for service by... others. We have called these people equippers. So in The Navigators we look for results in three basic areas: disciples, laborers and equippers.."

— Lorne Sanny, Former President of The Navigators © (quote found at <http://discipleshiplibrary.com/pdfs/N354.pdf>)

Motivation (continued)

Second Corinthians 5:14-15 describes the motive of love, “For the love which Christ has for me presses on me from all sides, holding me to one end, and prohibiting me from considering any other, wrapping itself around me in tenderness, giving me an impelling motive.” (II Corinthians 5:14 Wuest) This is none other than the love of Christ, which is given to us as a birthright when we trust in Him as our Savior and Lord. His love for us, for Him, and for others is poured out into our hearts. (Romans 5:5)



Second Corinthians 5:16-17 reminds us that we are motivated by regeneration. Because of the change in us, we see people differently. We have a new sense of their worth to God. We are motivated by their value in the eyes of our Lord to both love them and to serve them.

Second Corinthians 5:18-21 relates to us that we are motivated by reconciliation. God has made possible the non-imputation of sin and the imputation of righteousness. The news that each one we meet can be fully reconciled to God through belief in His righteousness as a gift to them is a powerful motivation in our lives.

Second Corinthians 6:1-2 impresses us that time is a powerful motivation in our relationship with others. The guarantee of more time is not given to anyone. “Now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.” (II Corinthians 6:2b)

Second Corinthians 6:3-10 lists the sufferings Paul endured and mentions them as motivations to continue to be faithful in service to the Lord. He refers to those again in Philippians 3:10. “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.” He also refers to these in Colossians 1:24, “Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.”

The above list of motivations all have a similar goal, which is to enable us to be productive in the Lord’s ministry. This ministry, which He has given to us, is described in II Corinthians 2:14 - II Corinthians 6:13. In this section of scripture we are called “ministers of a new covenant” (II Corinthians 3:6). It is in this passage that we are introduced to “the ministry of the Spirit” in II Corinthians 3:8, the “ministry that brings righteousness,” (II Corinthians 3:9) and the “ministry of reconciliation” (II Corinthians 5:18). The new covenant is the ministry of the Spirit through us that brings righteousness and reconciliation to many others. It is my prayer that the Lord will use these motivations richly in your lives to both increase and multiply His eternal harvest!

In Christ, Richard Spann

““Today is mine. Tomorrow is none of my business. If I peer anxiously into the fog of the future I will strain my spiritual eyes so that I will not see clearly what is required of me now!” —Elizabeth Elliott, Missionary, Author, Speaker