

8. Ahab's Pattern of Busyness or Christ's Pattern of Effectiveness

In our lives, it is possible to be very busy, yet not be effective. Ahab was a king in the Old Testament that was busy. However, he was not effective at doing what God told him to do because he did not even want to listen to God. God sent a prophet to speak to Ahab about his failure to do what God told him to do. That prophet disguised himself and waited for Ahab to pass by the place where he was. When Ahab passed by, the prophet used himself as an example of what Ahab had done. We will see that Ahab was busy, but he was not effective, because he did not do what God had told him to do.

We have the words the prophet spoke to Ahab in 1 Kings 20:39-43. Those verses say, “Now as the king passed by, he cried out to the king and said, ‘Your servant went out into the midst of the battle; and there, a man came over and brought a man to me, and said, “Guard this man; if by any means he is missing, your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver.” While your servant was busy here and there, he was gone.’ Then the king of Israel said to him, ‘So shall your judgment be; you yourself have decided it.’ And he hastened to take the bandage away from his eyes; and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. Then he said to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Because you have let slip out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people.”’ So the king of Israel went to his house sullen and displeased, and came to Samaria.”

First, in verse 40, we see Ahab was, “Busy here and there.” Ahab found many things to keep himself busy. Every person is given the same number of hours in a day. Some people will be very busy doing things that are not important. Others are busy doing things that are sin. We do not know what Ahab was doing, but we do know that he was busy. God has also given us instructions in His Word, but we can become very busy doing lots of other things.

Second, verses 41 and 42 show us that Ahab had not done what God had told him to do. God had given Ahab a specific commandment. Ahab had failed to do what God had commanded. In this series of topics, we are focusing on how to help developing leaders develop the attitudes of Christ. We need to help developing leaders realize that even though they may be busy doing the right things, if they do those things with the wrong attitudes, they will not be effective for Christ.

Third, verses 41 and 42 show that the prophet of God rebuked Ahab. God had told Ahab to destroy Benhadad because of his sinful actions against the nation of Israel. Instead, Ahab had made a covenant with Benhadad and allowed him to go free. The prophet was faithful in telling Ahab what God had told him to say to Ahab. Instead of listening to the prophet of God, Ahab showed no repentance when the prophet rebuked him. In contrast, we need to repent when we have sinned. In Luke 17:3, we see that Christ gives us, as Christians, a three-part instruction regarding rebuke. That verse says, “Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.” If a Christian sins against us, we are to rebuke him, give him an opportunity to repent, and then forgive him if he repents.

Fourth, verse 43 shows that Ahab became sullen and resentful when the prophet told him what

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God had said. People, that are busy satisfying themselves, do not like to hear when the Word of God is shared with them. Ahab developed the attitudes that eventually lead to bitterness.

Fifth, verse 43 shows that Ahab became displeased, because he did not get his way. Ahab was busy, but he was busy trying to get his own way, instead of doing what God had commanded him to do. As a result, he became displeased when he did not get his own way. Today, we see that even many Christians can become displeased when they do not get their own way.

Sixth, verses 39 and 40 show that Ahab pronounced his own judgment. In verse 39, the prophet had said that the specified judgment had been a life for a life. In verse 40, Ahab said that the judgment of a life for a life should be carried out exactly as the prophet had mentioned. He did not realize that he was pronouncing his own judgment.

In contrast to Ahab, Christ shows us how we can be effective and finish the work that Christ has given us to do. First, in John 17:4, we read, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” Here, we see that Christ chose to glorify the Father in all He did. Since Christ has called us to follow His example, we will be effective if we make it our goal to glorify the Father in all that we do.

Second, we see that Christ was effective, because He finished the work the Father had given Him to do. Since this statement was made before His crucifixion, this makes it clear that His work was to equip the men who would carry on His work when He returned to heaven. We will be effective if we develop replacements who will carry on the work Christ has given us to do when He takes us to heaven at death.

Third, we see that Christ shared with the disciples what the Father had told Him to share. John 17:8 says, “For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.” Here, we see that we will be effective if we share the Word of God, instead of sharing our own words with those the Lord has given us to lead.

Fourth, we see that Christ prayed that the Father would keep the disciples from the evil one. John 17:15 says, “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.” Here, we see that one of the things we want to teach developing leaders is the importance of praying regularly for those they will be leading. We do this by our own example as we pray regularly for those we are leading. As they hear us pray for them, they will begin to realize the importance of praying regularly for those they lead.

Fifth, we see that Christ prayed for unity both among the disciples and us. John 17:20-23 says, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved

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Me.” Christ knew that the unity of the body would be a great part of the impact of that body on the world around it. Just as Christ prayed for unity among Christians, we also need to follow the example of Christ and pray for unity among Christians.

Sixth, Christ saw the disciples reproduce themselves. In Acts 2:41-42, we read, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” The disciples knew how their lives had been transformed as they spent time with Christ. As a result, they immediately began to spend time with the new believers and do the same things Christ had done with them.

The disciples knew that they would help the new believers become effective if they spent time sharing the Word of God with them. They knew that the new believers would become effective as they spent time fellowshiping with one another as they shared the Word of God together. The disciples realized the importance of helping the new believers learn to pray just as Christ showed them how to pray.

The disciples also realized the importance of eating together and remembering the Lord's death as they shared communion together with their meals, so that is mentioned in both verse 42 and verse 46. Acts 2:46 says, “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.” Christ had shared many meals with the disciples. They realized the many lessons that He had taught them as they were eating together. John 13 through 15 provides a good example. As a result, they helped the new believers see the importance of sharing meals together.

We see that the disciples became effective just as Christ was effective. Acts 6:7 says, “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Here, we see that the disciples were effective and the number of disciples multiplied greatly, because the disciples of Christ did the same things Christ did to finish His work. Acts 9:31 adds, “Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.” Here, we see that the disciples had followed the example of Christ and reproduced leaders who had developed other leaders and churches. Their ministry had also been effective.

Today, we will also be effective if we show developing leaders how to reproduce their lives in the lives of others. May the Lord richly bless you as you follow the example of Christ and the disciples by helping developing leaders learn how to reproduce their lives in the lives of the next generation of spiritual leaders.