

Our Christianity should be an "on purpose" habit.

Written by Josh Winslett

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Paul had a manner (Acts 17:2). Simply stated, Paul had an evangelistic habit that he typically performed when he went into a new town. As Paul traveled, his general plan was to first visit the synagogues and preach to the Jews from the Old Testament. He then would use this resource to branch out to the Gentiles. Even his messages seemed to form a basic pattern. This can be evidenced in his many epistles as he typically transitioned from doctrine to devotion.

Why do I mention Paul's planned habit? It is generally observed that much of our life has some type of schedule and planning. Yet, many times we leave our Christian service and discipleship very sporadic and unplanned. This should not be so. We should plan to pray. We should plan times to study God's word. We should plan times for family prayer and worship. We should plan at the beginning of every month to set aside finances to give to our local assembly. We should make preparations to be in worship on the Lord's day. We should even take planned times of rest so our body and mind are better suited for serving God. I once heard someone say that you should not schedule your prayers or giving because that could make it legalistic. Therefore, if you give legalistically, you should just stop your scheduled giving. I disagree. You shouldn't stop fulfilling the commands of God's word, you should simply repent of your legalism.

As a minister of the gospel, I equally try to lay aside certain scheduled times to pray, study God's word, call the sick, etc. I have learned that when I have failed to plan, I typically plan to fail. It's true that, just like Paul, the Spirit may forbid some of our plans (Acts 16:6). We most certainly should only follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. My personal studies are blanketed with a prayerful heart hoping that God guides every motion. Nevertheless, we should, like Paul, continue to purpose in our own hearts as we follow God's guidance (Acts 19:21).

Consider this, God purposed to save you in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). Our God spent almost 1,500 years both inspiring written prophecy and fulfilling it. Our purposeful God continues to fulfill his will today. Having a purposeful habit certainly falls within the realm of a Christian discipline.

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We are soon to enjoy the beginning of a new year. This marks a wonderful time to start anew with more purposeful habits. Thank God for his overruling providential will of this past year and look to the new with an "on purpose" effort to pursue more disciplined godly habits.