

Why Jesus was so effective

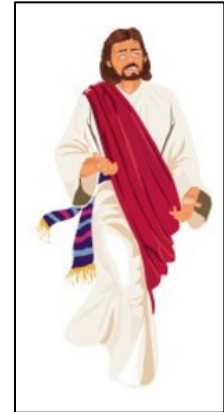
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Jesus said that we would do the same things that He did, and that we would do even greater things!

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things because I go to the Father. John 14:12

If this is to happen we need to see how Jesus exercised His ministry, find the secrets of His effectiveness and exercise our ministries in the same way. We'll explore eight key principles that made Jesus so effective:

- Jesus came as a result of God's initiative
- Jesus lived in a close relationship with God
- Jesus only did the will of God
- Jesus operated in the power of the Holy Spirit
- Jesus was motivated by God's love
- Jesus dedicated Himself to equipping others
- Jesus delegated responsibilities to others
- Jesus was a wonderful example.



1. Jesus came as a result of God's initiative

Jesus came from the Father. (Not from Joseph and Mary)! He came at God's initiative. He came because God sent Him.

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman... Galatians 4:4

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed - not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Philippians 2:5-13

God is sovereign. He has His purposes, His will, His ways, His timing, His direction. Jesus came (and lived) in obedience to the Father's will. We will only be effective if we do the same: when we 'will and act' in accordance with God's 'good purpose'. That's when it will be 'God working in us'.

Basically it comes down to:

- God has His will for a particular situation.
- We find what God's will is for the situation.
- We act in obedience: doing what God wants us to do in the situation.
- God's will is done.

The most fruitful thing we can do is to find the will of God, then do it.

How does this affect common prayer approaches like:

- 'claiming' things?
- 'believing' for things?
- telling God what to do?
- asking God to bless our ideas?
- putting out fleeces?

In all of these the initiative is from us, rather than from God.

Always remember that only "whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world". 1 John 5:4

.... for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Philippians 2:5-13

2. Jesus lived in a close relationship with God

Jesus continually drew aside to spend time with the Father.
eg. Mark 1:35 *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went to a solitary place, where He prayed.*

All that he did came out of relationship with the Father.
I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. John 5:19

These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. John 14:24

Similarly for us. Fruitfulness in the Christian life only comes out of our relationship with God.

.... *for apart from me you can do nothing.* John 15:5



3. Jesus only did the will of God

Out of His relationship with the Father Jesus knew what God wanted Him to do and then lived out His life in obedience to God's will. What Jesus said and did was what the Father told Him to say and do!

For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. John 12:49, 50

Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. John 14:10



I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. John 14:31

This is the key for effective ministry. Just as Jesus lived in obedience to God's will, we must too. We need to be such a close relationship with Him that we hear His voice, know His will, and obey His will. When we say and do what God wants in any situation that's when wonderful things happen!

This is what it means to be 'led by the Spirit'. (See Romans 8:1-17). The Holy Spirit communicates God's will to us and we act in obedience. It's all about God being God! He is sovereign. He is Lord. He is King of kings and Lord of Lords! Let's allow Him to be Lord of all that we say and do.

What if you don't know God's will in a given situation?

Don't go ahead and do what you want to do! Much better is to pray 'Thy will be done'
Matthew 6:10

4. Jesus operated in the power of the Holy Spirit

How was Jesus able to do the miraculous things he did?

It wasn't just because He was God. Jesus did these things in the same way that we can do miraculous things (or anything effective in our Christian lives!). By the power of the Holy Spirit!

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." Luke 4:18,19

Just like Jesus, we need the power of the Holy Spirit to be effective in ministering to others.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

That's how we can do the same things Jesus did, or even greater things! By the power of the Holy Spirit.



I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things because I go to the Father. John 14:12

5. Jesus was motivated by God's love

Wherever Jesus went people experienced His love. He radiated God's love, and this drew people to Him. If we are to be effective in ministry we must to be like that!

...and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:2

Remember that God loves the world, not just Christians, or the Church!

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

Loving people is not always easy, especially when they are very different from us or are not very nice! Jesus love reached out to all: sinners, adulterers, prostitutes, publicans... If you love people regardless of what they are like God can send people to you who need His love, knowing that you won't turn them away.

A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13:34, 35



6. Jesus dedicated Himself to equipping others

Jesus' was committed to the growth and development of just a few disciples. He chose them, worked alongside them, taught them, encouraged them, disciplined them, celebrated their victories, supported them when they were rejected, invested in them and gave Himself for them. His commitment to the disciples was complete.

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13

Jesus multiplied His ministry through equipping others! When the disciples had matured (and received the power of the Holy Spirit) they were able to go out and fulfill the Great Commission.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
Matthew 28:18-20

If we are to be effective in our ministries we also need to equip others so that the message of the Gospel is continually passed on from one generation to the next.

Down through history Christians have faithfully shared the Gospel with their generation; and equipped the next generation to do the same. We are the fruit of those who have gone before!



7. Jesus delegated responsibilities to others

As Jesus was equipping His disciples He delegated tasks and responsibilities to them. He trusted them to do the work He was called to do.

See Luke 10:1-24

- The Lord is the one who sends out the workers, and they are to do His work.
- They were to go to 'every town and place'.
- If they were not accepted they were to move on to the next place.
- They were to heal the sick, and proclaim the Kingdom of God.



- If their message was rejected the responsibility was laid on the hearers. Their task was to proclaim the Gospel.
- When people rejected them, they were actually rejecting Jesus and the Father who had sent Him.
- They saw wonderful things happen and were filled with joy.
- Jesus emphasized that the purpose was not to make them feel great, but so people would be saved and receive eternal life.
- Whether people would be saved or not was over to God. He is sovereign.
- Their job was to share the good news; God's was to convict and save.
- The disciples were blessed as a result.

The Great Commission is all about making disciples, not just converts! We need to share the Gospel with others, lead them to the Lord, train them, equip them and then release them into their own ministries.

Many Churches are filled with talented Christians with nothing to do, while the 'faithful few' are overworked, and burnt out. What a waste! How much better it would be if Church leaders delegated their ministries to others and spent their time 'equipping the saints for the work of ministry.' Ephesians 4:11

8. Jesus was a wonderful example

Jesus was the greatest example of what real humanity can and should be like. He practiced what He preached. (But this didn't necessarily mean He was popular, liked or even appreciated). Being a great example gave Him credibility and authority (even for those who rejected His message). People were never disillusioned when they met Jesus. He was authentic, real and genuine. He cared!

Jesus good example brought out the best in His followers, and He calls us to follow that example.

I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. John 13:15

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 1 Peter 2:21

It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. Matthew 10:25

Jesus experienced what we experience; He knows what we are going through.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet he did not sin. Hebrews 4:15

Jesus has shown that a human being can live God's way! He now calls us to follow His example and do likewise.

If we are to be effective in sharing Christ we must be a good example.



Being a good example

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practicing what we preach | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing the Gospel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doing what God wants us to do | <input type="checkbox"/> Having Jesus as Lord |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being genuine | <input type="checkbox"/> Being caring and compassionate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being patient | <input type="checkbox"/> Loving sacrificially |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accepting people | <input type="checkbox"/> Standing against unrighteousness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being unconcerned about popularity | <input type="checkbox"/> Focusing on truth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being just | <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting people's needs |

One of the things Jesus condemned most was hypocrisy.

Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me". Mark 7:6

If we are to be fruitful in our ministries we need to be 100%, 24 hours a day living for God, as genuine Christians. People should notice us because we are so different!

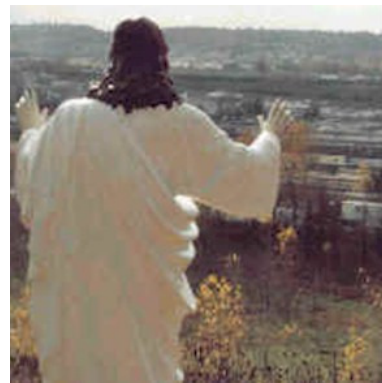
By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13:35

They will scrutinize every move we make so let's give them something wonderful to think about! Let's lead society by our Christ-like example.

Typically people get disillusioned with Christianity because they are disillusioned by Christians. Let's not give them anything to get disillusioned about!

So why was Jesus so effective?

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He says to us: **Go and do likewise.** Luke 10:37

Discussion questions

I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. John 5:19. Really! Jesus had the most effective ministry of all, yet He says that He could do nothing by Himself! How do you think Jesus operated in relation to the Father? What do you learn from this about how you can be effective in ministry?

Whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world. 1 John 5:4. What are the implications of this verse on all aspects of Christian ministry?

Why do so many Churches have the 'faithful few' who are doing most of the ministry (and are often wearing out) and so many who feel frustrated because they don't have opportunities to share their ministries? How does this frustration show itself? How can Churches sort out this critical issue.

Full time, paid, professional Christians are often called 'ministers'. Is this a valid use of the term? What effect does use of this term have on other Christians when all are supposed to be ministers?

What was there about Jesus that made Him so effective:

- in His relationships?
- in exercising power?
- In delegating to others?
- In fulfilling His calling?
- In relating to God?
- In staying focused on His mission?

How can you develop in your Christian life and ministry so that you are more like Jesus?