

Investigation



Just Show Up

One of the keys to the Christian life, in fact to any successful life is to just show up. Avoiding things and running from things leads to failure.

The first time I was “*On Call*” is a good example. The alarm industry is a service industry. I try to teach those that work with me that we don’t sell a product. We provide a service. People want safety and security. Our job is to install a system that works like it is supposed to, but part of the job is to make sure that the customer is comfortable with it, knows how to use it, and feels safe and secure. The importance of feeling safe and secure has led to us providing 24-hour service. If the fire alarm or security system is not working at two o’clock in the morning they can’t feel safe and secure. So there is always a man on call to respond to problems that invariably happen in the wee hours of the morning. There is a benefit to doing service. You learn that the mistakes of a faulty installation sometimes cause service problems. It is always better to do a quality installation and then there are less service calls to fix the

problems. It is my conviction that people will pay extra for quality because they don't want the problems associated with junk. The Christian life is also a life of service. I have found that happiness is found in serving God by serving others. When I started taking care of the Fire Alarms and Access Control at the University of Arkansas, my boss told me something that I have never forgotten and try to obey. He said that I should take my job seriously, and that I should treat these buildings like my daughter was living there. I must make sure that the fire alarm works like it is supposed to and that the access control keeps the bad people out and allows the residents to be safe and secure.

Anyway, I was on call for the first time. I was nervous and excited about it. I had moved back to Fort Smith and still didn't know my way around very well. Sure enough, I got a call at two o'clock in the morning. Someone's alarm was going off and they couldn't shut it off. I got the address and started toward the area. I wasn't sure where the place was but headed in the general direction. I was a little lost. I rolled down my window and heard the siren going off so I deduced where the house was. I drove up the driveway and there was an old woman standing outside in her housecoat. She led me to a closet where the alarm panel was. I had never seen one like this before! I opened it up and there was a small switch with a sign that said, "Press to Reset." I pressed the switch and the siren quit making noise. The woman thanked me and I drove home. I wish all service calls were that easy! They are not. But I learned a valuable lesson that day. The main thing to do is to show up. Sometimes

people ask me about a problem over the phone. I usually tell them that I can't troubleshoot long distance. I need to come and look at the problem to properly fix it. Which leads to another character trait of the maintenance tech as well as the Christian. That is availability. It has been said that the two greatest abilities are dependability and availability. These are so closely related that you can't have one without the other. A good maintenance man and a good Christian needs these abilities. People need to be able to reach you and know that you will help them with their problems! Before I started working for the University, I worked for a vendor that serviced the University accounts. One of the University techs told me one time, "We like the fact that you answer your phone and try to help us." I was amazed but learned a valuable lesson. I may not always have the answer they need, but if I talk to them and try to help them it goes a long way in restoring confidence in the systems we installed and maintained. I couldn't believe it when he said that for most of the vendors, you had to leave a message and that they hardly ever called back!

"Be there or be square" is the vernacular expression. It is amazing what you will get out of life if you just show up. It is also tragically destructive in what you miss by either avoiding things, ignoring them, or running away from things!

When it is time to pray, just show up. When it is time to read the Bible, just show up. The Bible backs this action up. In Proverbs 4:1 and 20-23 are the following admonitions: "Hear, ye children, the

instruction of a father and attend to know understanding. My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” Did you notice the word “attend”? When it is time for church, just show up. When it is time to witness to others, just show up. When it is time to eat, just show up. When it is time to work, show up. When it is time for school, again, just show up. I have found out that the most important thing in marriage and in raising children is to just show up. It is the absent husband, wife, father or mother that is the ruin of the family and the nation!

Do you know what pure religion is? According to *James 1:27* it is just showing up at one place and not showing up at another!

***James 1:27* “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”**

Notice the two things of this verse. A person must stop doing one thing and substitute something else in its place. I have found this to be the key to victory over sin! Stop showing up at worldly things that are against what God is for and start showing up to help people that really need help, orphans and widows!

I learned another valuable lesson when I was in the hospital dying from a fungal infection. I know I was dying but then God started healing me and I was trying to get better. There were three

things I needed more than anything. One was for God to show up. He did. At night I would remember verses I had memorized as a young man and as I lay in the dark and quoted them, I felt God's presence. I never saw a physical person, and I never heard an audible voice, but I know that God was there and He let me know that everything was going to be alright! It is amazing that my memory was so bad that I couldn't remember what the date was after being told several minutes earlier, but I could remember Bible verses! God proved to me that He loved me and cared for me. He showed up and comforted me!

The second thing I needed was for my wife and daughter to show up. They did. Every day they were there. The nurses called them "*the evil twins*", but I knew them as "*the double angels!*" Amy became a caregiver and made sure I did my therapy. Pam made sure the nurses did their job and made sure the paperwork was correct. She also took over paying the bills. They really shined during this time and I will always be grateful for their love to me.

The third thing I needed was for my Christian friends to show up. I am sad to report that many of them did not. I really needed some Christian fellowship. I know this may seem weird to you but I needed to know that God was still working in their lives and that they were still serving God. I learned from this. I did not get bitter at them. I knew that they were trying to serve God in the way that they knew how. I learned that even if I don't have the answers, I need to show up just to let that person know that I love them, that God loves them, and is still wanting to fellowship with them!

In the Bible the word for “just showing up” is **faithful**.

Proverbs 20:6 “Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?”

1 Corinthians 4:2 “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

1 Corinthians 10:13 “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

A great Bible truth is expressed in **Proverbs 25:19** “Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.”

In my life, I have had both a broken tooth and a sprained ankle! Thank God that it wasn't at the same time! Neither of them kept me from working, but they were a nuisance and tough to endure. Very painful. The broken tooth always hurt but even more when I tried to chew food. The broken ankle caused me to hobble around to do my work. I couldn't even climb a ladder without pain. An unfaithful person is like that. You get to the point that you can't depend on them. Many times, you just avoid them because you can never trust them. You don't know if their advice is sound. You can't count on them to do what needs to be done.

Back when I was installing fire alarms, many times the main office which was several hundred miles away would send me some men to help me finish the job. Invariably, they would send their worst

people. The work that I was doing is in a college town next to the Oklahoma border. These men would volunteer to come up, not to finish the job, but so that they could go “Bar-hopping” and go to the Indian run casinos across the state line! They would show up about ten o’clock each day, hung over and with bloodshot eyes. Installing alarms is a lot like factory work. You do repetitive tasks like installing smoke detector bases. After about 20 of them it gets rather boring. This is when I developed “Spaghetti Logic” and “The Smiling Cyclops” scenarios to teach people how to properly do the job. But still, many times, they would install the devices wrong and I would not find out about it until “crunch time” when we were trying to finish the job. By then, they had departed, and I had to go back and fix all the mistakes. Sometimes it would have been easier if the help had not even come. However, ever so often, someone would show up that wanted to learn and work hard. These people were teachable and very helpful. I am sure that they went on and became successful in life. They had learned how to show up, prepared to do the job. **2 Timothy 2:21** “**If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.**”

The maintenance world is a lot like the Christian world. In fact, for me they are the same world. If I will show up and be faithful, and if God will show up, and be faithful, then something good will be accomplished.

Of course, the greatest example of faithfulness and just showing up is when God the Son left His home in Glory and came to

this wicked world. He just showed up in a manger as a baby! He later just showed up in the temple as a teenager and amazed the scholars. Even later He showed up on a donkey to be the King. He was rejected and died the horrible death on the cross. He didn't have to just show up. He could have taken care of it some other way, or could have sent someone else, or just left it to be destroyed, but no, the God of the Universe, the Creator of this world, showed up to redeem mankind from the awful penalty of sin: eternity forever in Hell! Not just for all of mankind but for you and me personally. Because He showed up, we will show up in Heaven. One day He is coming back and with trumpet sound He will show up and we will go up! Then the world will blow up! That will be just the beginning!

Showing up is vitally important to be successful in life!

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