

# Sticking to One's Calling

by J.R. Miller

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*J.R. Miller emphasizes the importance of sticking to one's calling and the benefits of a settled life for personal growth and lasting impact.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 9:24

**Topics:** "Commitment", "Purpose in Life"

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## Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the importance of sticking to one's calling and forming settled habits in life. He contrasts the restlessness of a wandering lifestyle with the strength and influence gained from dedicating oneself to a single purpose. Miller illustrates that while some may travel extensively like Paul, their focus remains on a singular mission, unlike those who flit from one interest to another without making a lasting impact. He advocates for deep-rooted commitment in friendships and church life, warning against the dangers of a transient existence that leads to superficial connections and a lack of true holiness. Ultimately, a settled life allows individuals to contribute meaningfully to their communities and relationships.

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## Transcript

The wandering habit is not a good one. It is apt to breed restlessness of mind, which is not a wholesome spirit in any life. Besides, one never can do one's best work, as a nomad. Going from place to place gives, no opportunity for leaving a deep and abiding impression anywhere. At the end of such a life, however long it may have been, there is but little left to tell the story.

Another disadvantage of such a career, is its effect upon the person himself. He does not grow into strength of character. He never achieves the capacity for endurance, for long-continued and persistent effort. He never wins in the confidence of his fellows, the quality of dependableness. He never becomes a man to whom others turn for a wise judgment. He never acquires a strong and wide influence.

Far different is it, however, with the man who forms settled habits, and devotes himself to one great purpose with undeviating persistence. He is like a tree planted. He takes root and grows. He becomes a feature of the place in which he is rooted. This may not always mean, either, that a man lives all his life in the same house. The work of some men requires them to go from place to place. Paul was a missionary to the whole world, eager to carry the gospel to every land. He would preach a little while in one city and then press on to another. He was restless with a passion for souls. Yet he could say and truthfully, "This one thing I do." His aim was single, and there was one great purpose filling his heart in all his journeying by

land and by sea. Other men, in like manner, travel much and yet never take their eyes off their life's goal.

But there are some men who never settle down to anything. They begin one thing and are enthusiastic in it for a little time -- until they hear of another place or occupation which seems more promising. They then try this for a short while, until they are lured from it by something else yet more attractive. Thus year after year, they are continually moving on, and when the end of life is reached -- they have nothing to show for the time they have been in this world.

There are many advantages in a settled life. It enables a man to put all his energies into one occupation, to sow all his life in one field. That is all the average man can do, with any hope of success. Not many of us are versatile enough to succeed in two or three callings. Most of us have but light enough to brighten one little corner of God's great world. If we try to scatter our light more widely, its shining will be too dim and diffuse to be a blessing to anybody. A man who lives in a dozen different towns or cities during the forty or fifty years of his active career, has made but slight impression anywhere, however good a man he may be. On the other hand, one who spends most of his life in one town or neighborhood, giving it the best of his wisdom, his energy, his thought, his love, his influence -- has wrought himself inextricably into all the life of the place.

This principle has wide application. There is a liberal education in the discipline which trains a life into a settled purpose and into persistent devotion to one thing. Such a habit has its influence, for example, in the matter of one's friendships. There are many who so scatter and thus dissipate their affections that they become altogether incapable of being anyone's real friends. People are to them what flowers are to bees. They fly about everywhere, and wherever they discover a sip of honey in a flower -- they descend upon it, extract the sweet, and then fly on again. Of course, one must love all in the Christian sense and be kind and courteous to all, ready to help; but that is not what friendships mean or should mean. Jesus himself poured out his love on every life, the lowliest, the most debased, as the sun pours his beams on weed and bog as well as on the flower and garden; yet he had his few personal friends who were admitted to the inner circle, and to whom he turned for love and sympathy, and bread for his heart's hunger. If we would know the meaning and the blessedness of friendship -- we must choose our few friends wisely, and cling to them until death us do part.

The same principle applies to church life. The best and most fruitful Christian life, is the one which takes root in one place and grows there, unless uprooted by Providence, unto the end. There is a large class of people, however, in these days who go from church to church, take root nowhere, are of no use anywhere. They are gadders-about. Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll, in writing of our Lord's counsel, "Go not from house to house," has this to say about those who wander from preacher to preacher and from church to church: "Of all degraded Christian types, the sermon-hunter seems perhaps the lowest. One step higher is the religious tramp, who never stays more than a few months in any church, treating it like a casual ward. This gypsy spirit proves in the end, as hostile to true holiness as to real usefulness."

In contrast with this wandering habit -- is that of the good people who love their own church so much and are so devoted to its work and worship that they are never absent unless ill, or unless some other clear duty calls them away. Such people get the best a Christian church has to give to its faithful members, and then give to others the best that they can give.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jr-miller/sticking-to-ones-calling/>

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