

*Psalm 16:7 NIV*

*I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand,  
I will not be shaken.*

A Minister's wife said to me, "I don't know what I bring into this ministry." Every minister's wife feels that way at some point. Our primary role is a supportive one, which means that the accolades most usually go to our spouse. It makes us proud to assist our spouse and know that they are reaching the Kingdom of God with the Gospel. However, we are human and we crave knowing that we are making a difference in the lives of others, as well as our spouses.

Let's give this some thought: In your experiences, you have learned to laugh in spite of your circumstances; you have learned to comfort someone else when your heart is also grieving; you have learned to count your blessings every day. You have unselfishly given of your time and giftings to the work of the Lord. You have worked in the nursery, the youth group, the Sunday School classroom, and the kitchen. You are making a difference with your love for the Lord and His people.

How do we measure our contribution to the Kingdom? Our tendency to measure our accomplishments is the lives of those we minister to on a daily basis. We can honestly point to a few people that are serving the Lord and know that we participated in their walk with the Lord. Unfortunately, we don't always get to "see" the results of our labors. On a normal day in our lives, we give without expectation of praise and we sacrifice with joy—but how do you measure it? We cannot put our self-worth in the hands of other people. Judging ourselves by how others respond to us will leave us empty and feeling worthless. People are a mystery. God gave all of us a freewill to decide what choices we make in life—and some make bad choices. I personally do not know how anyone can live this life without God. It is simple, yet it becomes complicated by wayward people. Again I say, "People are a mystery." Therefore, we cannot put our self-worth in the hands of others.

That leads me back to the statement, "I don't know what I bring into this ministry." I've had to ask myself that question many times, and the answer becomes different every time I ask it. It all depends on the circumstances I am currently experiencing. Each time I am faced with that question, I search for a new way to make a difference. Ministry evolves over time and it changes with the current climate of our world and our daily opportunities that we are presented with. I've have had to STOP gauging my accomplishments by the outward results that I can see in others, and continually look for new ways to minister.

Here is the key—gauge your results on what you are doing for God. The Lord does not call us to a task and not expect there to be a positive outcome. Only He can know what the ultimate results will be of your ministry. This requires the following actions on your part:

1. Talk to the Lord as your friend every day. He cares about EVERYTHING in your life and He will listen and guide you. This can be a difficult thing to do on some days. Not every day is a “gift” of living, because we experience sadness and hurt. Those are the days that it is the most important to talk with the Lord and share your heart with him. We are emotional beings and God created us that way—He is a relational God and wants us to talk to Him.
2. Be sensitive to opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus. No act of kindness is too small. No thoughtful word or deed is insignificant. It is sometimes the “little” things that make a “big” difference. The danger of these small acts or deeds is that they cannot be measured. You may never see the results or hear words of praise, but trust that God will use it to bless a person with His love and peace. Let God be the measuring stick. You have done what the Lord has ask of you and He is pleased with you.
3. Use your giftings to find new ways to initiate a ministry in the local church. Decorate, clean, teach, send cards, make visits to the elderly, design a website, learn how to use a computer and a projector, build a safe place for nursing mothers, and the list goes on! Be creative. Do something that is your gifting and you will feel rewarded. Before you start a new ministry of your own, be sure to study and read and know the ins and outs of that ministry. Prepare yourself. It is never a good idea to just jump in feet first before you know what is “under the water.” Set yourself up for victory and not defeat. Don’t be afraid, just be prepared. Remember to let God be the measuring stick. What is done for God will live on forever.
4. Learn to laugh. Try not to be so serious all the time and laugh at the simple things. Laughter is a replenishing of the soul’s inspiration. You will feel renewed and strengthened by a good belly laugh! There is a reason why God says that “laughter doeth good like a medicine.” Just laugh.
5. The most important thing you can do for your husband, children, grandchildren and congregation is take care of yourself. Take time to rest and do something you enjoy on a regular basis. There are times in our ministry that we must say “no” in order to say “yes” to our self-care. Do not allow guilt to attack your mind when you need to take time to drink a second cup of coffee or go shopping. Drinking coffee and going shopping may not be what refreshes you, but find the thing that replenishes you and enjoy it!

The key to ministry is letting God be our measuring stick. He is the One that called us and He is the One that equips and sustains us. You and your spouse are a team because you became one on the day you were married. God called both of you into the ministry. He will use you in ways you never expected. You may not get to see the results of that personal ministry; therefore, remember to let God be the measuring stick, because it is He who calls you and uses you. Ministry cannot be measured by physical results because there is not always an outward evidence of the work of the Lord. God knows all and sees all and He is pleased with you!

In conclusion, I want to go back to my opening thought: *In your experiences, you have learned to laugh in spite of your circumstances; you have learned to comfort someone else when your heart is also grieving; you have learned to count your blessings every day. You have unselfishly given of your time and giftings to the work of the Lord.* You are a vital part of ministry and everything you do is noticed by God.

Thank you for your dedication to the work of the Kingdom! You are appreciated.

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