



Stand Up and Go to Your Corner: Living in a Results Based World  
by Kris Swiatocho

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I have been working in singles ministry for most of my adult life, post college. I have had the honor of working with several churches, teaching, leading, guiding and consulting on every topic imaginable.

As I travel, I visit so many churches and simply do not have the time needed to get know all of people I am there to help. So one quick way to help me with this is an exercise I love to do called "a continuum."

A continuum challenges the minds of my participants while allowing me to know them a little better. It's an exercise whereby I ask a serious of questions, allowing the people to move to different corners of the room (or in some cases hold up the answers on cards) that have a yes, no, maybe, sometimes, never, etc., posted on the wall. In most cases it's not only fun, but surprising to each other at the answers people give. I am also amazed at people's willingness to be transparent.

Continuums can be used as an icebreaker with silly questions, such as your "your favorite place to go is the beach," to deeper questions, such as "I love being single," to even deeper, "I have no idea what I am doing in life." It can also sometimes open up a can of worms, exposing strengths and weakness in a ministry, including those of the leaders and pastors.

Recently I decided to do a continuum at my church where I am the singles director. I am also the teacher of a group of singles from the ages of 25 to 35. This class has the most diversity in backgrounds, so I thought it would be interesting to see where they came together on things and where they were apart. I asked them questions about where they were spiritually, if they felt they had made change in regards to sin in their lives, if God expected change. I asked over 20 questions. Almost all the answers were on target with where I felt they were until the last question. I asked them if they thought God expected a lot from them and over 80 percent of my class said "Yes." Hmmm. Why would they say this? Why would so many say this?

I immediately put this to prayer and some serious thought.

For myself, my struggle has always been in what people expected from me. I have always felt I was a mouse in a wheel running a race to nowhere. That no matter what I did it didn't seem to be enough to please people. I am sure a lot of you can relate to this. I have learned over the years that we do not get our value from man, as man will always let us down. Our value is in Christ. As long as He is OK with what you are doing, saying, achieving, etc., then you are good.

But what if you think God expects more? Then what do you do? There didn't seem to be a corner to go to. My singles just sat there. I could see the dazed look in their eyes as most of them struggled with God approving of them. Approving of their choices, their lifestyles, their work, their friends, and their desires. That they felt they were on the mouse wheel when it came to God.

I needed more prayer on this subject as well as time to think. I moved on into the lesson I had prepared for the class, allowing discussion of the topics of pleasing God. Sure, I sometimes let God down. I don't always do what I say I am going to do. I sin. I fall short. But what I think my singles were really saying is they think God expects more from them than they can produce.

Then it dawned on me. They are making this decision based on a results-focused world. EVERYTHING in our world is based



on results. Even with going to church there is the pressure to get numbers up, tithes up, members joining, etc. Our secular jobs require a certain amount of production or you're fired. Why would you keep a car salesman if he didn't sell any cars or a teacher who fails more students than passes them or a doctor whose patients don't get well?

OK, I got it. How in the world do you begin to understand God's grace on our lives when every part of our lives on this earth is results oriented? Sure, God does love results, especially if they are due to making healthy changes. Especially when we let Him make the changes in us.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:2, NIV).

Praise the Lord in that He loves us so much that He doesn't keep us where He found us. But, get this: if we didn't do anything—nothing—and if we were the ONLY ONE on this earth, He would have still died for us. He would have still died for us where we are, for the results are from Him—not us. Be obedient and leave the results up to God.

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Hebrews 13:20-22, NIV).

Do the best you can with where you are. And when you fail, and you will, it's OK. He is still the same God, Abba Father, and Lord Almighty that made every part of you. His expectation is not our expectation. His expectation is not our bosses' or pastors' expectation. He just wants us to choose Him and leave the rest up to Him.

God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace. All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay (1 Peter 1:2-4, NLT).

Stand up ... are you ready to go to your corner?

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Her second Bible study, From the Manger to the Cross: The Women in Jesus' Life, was published last fall and is available on her websites. Her first book, Singles and Relationships: A 31-Day Experiment, was co-authored with Dick Purnell of Single Life Resources.

TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership development conferences and seminars. Click here to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.