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CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

"NO MAN THAT WARRETH ENTANGLETH HIMSELF IN THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE, THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM WHO HATH CHOSEN HIM TO BE A SOLDIER."
II TIMOTHY 2:4

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THE TRUE WORK OF MINISTRY PART 3

EPHESIANS 4:11-12 AND HE HIMSELF GAVE SOME TO BE APOSTLES, SOME PROPHETS, SOME EVANGELISTS, AND SOME PASTORS AND TEACHERS, FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY, FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST,

Notice the phrase in verse 12: ... the work of ministry.... In this Christian Soldier, I'm going to share with you the final four of the seven works

of true ministry, as found in the New Testament. If you want to maximize your time, energy and effort in ministry, pay attention to what God tells

us in His Word about what the true work of a minister and ministry would be. Let's get started!

1 TIMOTHY 5:17 LET THE ELDERS WHO RULE WELL BE COUNTED WORTHY OF DOUBLE HONOR, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO LABOR IN THE WORD AND DOCTRINE.

4. THE LABOR OF STUDY

Notice we're told to honor our leaders, and especially, those leaders who labor in the word

and doctrine. This is the labor of study! 2 Timothy 2:15 tells us to study to show ourselves

approved before God, workers who don't need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of God.

HOSEA 4:6 MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE. BECAUSE YOU HAVE REJECTED KNOWLEDGE, I ALSO WILL REJECT YOU FROM BEING PRIEST FOR ME; BECAUSE YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN THE LAW OF YOUR GOD, I ALSO WILL FORGET YOUR CHILDREN.

Most of us know a part of this verse; the part talking about God's people perishing for a lack of knowledge. That's true, but don't stop reading there. It also says in this verse that when we reject knowledge, God rejects us from being priests for Him. In other words, He won't anoint or use us as leaders if we fail to develop the labor of study!

Ephesians 4:14 says that we're not to be children any longer, carried about by every wind of

doctrine, by the trickery of men, and the cunning craftiness of their deceitful plottings! That means we're to study to protect ourselves from all the erroneous ministers and ministries who seek to lead us astray with their false doctrines and teachings. This is why many of God's people end up "perishing for a lack of knowledge", making this labor of study all the more critical to our success as ministers of the Gospel. Remember this: all false cults and false doctrine uses Bible verses

to support their error. The devil even used scripture when he tempted Jesus (see Matthew 4:6,7). You have to know the Word to be strong and stay strong, and that takes work. The Bible does not throw itself at you, and read itself to you. You have to make time for it. Your flesh won't want to cooperate, but that's where the labor of study comes in. Make yourself study! Force your flesh to obey. Make time and find time to study, and be a doer of Joshua 1:8!

MARK 16:19-20 SO THEN, AFTER THE LORD HAD SPOKEN TO THEM, HE WAS RECEIVED UP INTO HEAVEN, AND SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. AND THEY WENT OUT AND PREACHED EVERYWHERE, THE LORD WORKING WITH THEM AND CONFIRMING THE WORD THROUGH THE ACCOMPANYING SIGNS. AMEN.

5. THE LABOR OF POWER

When the disciples went out to preach the Gospel, it says the Lord was working with them, confirming their message with miracles. This is what I've come to call the labor of power. What is that? It's our ability to stay flexible when we minister, and let the Lord manifest His confirming power in fresh and exciting ways. You see, if you don't have God's power to confirm your message, it's not the gospel! It's just another religious message – no different than that of the Hindu, Muslim, Catholic, New Age guru – or anyone else out there claiming to speak for God. The

difference for us as Christians is that we serve a living Jesus, the same yesterday, today and forever (see Hebrews 13:5), who wants to prove our messages with confirming miracles. This openness and flexibility to His confirming power takes work to achieve, and protect. Why? Because human nature is such that without any effort at all, we tend to gravitate towards that which is comfortable, predictable and habitual. It's hard for most people to stay on the edge, and stay fresh with anticipation concerning the power of God, because that's always uncharted territory.

God loves to do things in unique and different ways, and He seldom does the same thing the same way twice! A study of Jesus in action proves this. If you look at the miracles Jesus did, and how He did them, you'll see He never administered healing or miracle power the same way twice, and in many cases, His methods were strange, unconventional and borderline weird – at least to those unfamiliar with God's tactics and methods.



ISAIAH 55:9 FOR AS THE HEAVENS ARE HIGHER THAN THE EARTH, SO ARE MY WAYS HIGHER THAN YOUR WAYS, AND MY THOUGHTS THAN YOUR THOUGHTS.

Work at being flexible when it comes to flowing with the Holy Spirit. I guarantee if you do, your ministry will be cutting edge and exciting! Don't box yourself into the methods and miracles of

yesterday. Stay current with God, and let Him have the freedom through you to express His eccentricity! Look at the miracles throughout the Bible, and see the different and never-before-

seen ways He worked in the lives of those who believed Him for their miracles. He's the same God today, so don't be afraid of the unknown! Let God be God, and excel in the labor of power!

2 THESSALONIANS 3:8-9 NOR DID WE EAT ANYONE'S BREAD FREE OF CHARGE, BUT WORKED WITH LABOR AND TOIL NIGHT AND DAY, THAT WE MIGHT NOT BE A BURDEN TO ANY OF YOU, NOT BECAUSE WE DO NOT HAVE AUTHORITY, BUT TO MAKE OURSELVES AN EXAMPLE OF HOW YOU SHOULD FOLLOW US.

6. THE LABOR OF EXAMPLE

Paul had a job! I know this is news to many believers, but Paul actually had a side occupation he worked at whenever he wasn't somewhere preaching the gospel. Acts 18:3 says he had a trade – and worked side-by-side with others of the same trade – tent making! On Saturdays, he went to the synagogues and tried to witness to the Jews. During the week, unless specifically assigned to ministry by God, he worked as a

tentmaker. The reason I bring this up is because we must set examples for others to follow. In this case, Paul used his work ethic to set an example for hard work against laziness (see 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12). For us as believers and leaders, we lead others by example. This takes hard work.

Paul told Timothy to be an example to other believers (see 1 Timothy 4:12). We must be

the same. Paul rebuked the Jewish believers in Romans 2:1-3, because they were telling others to do things they themselves weren't doing. Paul also rebuked Peter publicly for this same kind of hypocrisy. In Galatians 2:11-16, Peter was rebuked for being a hypocrite, or in other words, for not setting the right example for others to follow.

JOHN 13:13-16 YOU CALL ME TEACHER AND LORD, AND YOU SAY WELL, FOR... SO I AM. IF I THEN, YOUR LORD AND TEACHER, HAVE WASHED YOUR FEET, YOU ALSO OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET. FOR I HAVE GIVEN YOU AN EXAMPLE, THAT YOU SHOULD DO AS I HAVE DONE TO YOU.

Jesus set the tone for all of this when He washed the feet of His disciples, and used that event to teach all of us the importance of being servants to one another. He said He gave us an example

of what we should do, and you and I must do the same today. As an example for us today: do you forgive people the way God forgives you? Do you set an example by forgiving others like

you've been forgiven by God, or are you like the wicked servant in Matthew?



MATTHEW 18:32,33 THEN HIS MASTER, AFTER HE HAD CALLED HIM, SAID TO HIM, 'YOU WICKED SERVANT ! I FORGAVE YOU ALL THAT DEBT BECAUSE YOU BEGGED ME. SHOULD YOU NOT ALSO HAVE HAD COMPASSION ON YOUR FELLOW SERVANT, JUST AS I HAD PITY ON YOU?'

EPHESIANS 4:32 AND BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER, TENDERHEARTED, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, EVEN AS GOD IN CHRIST FORGAVE YOU.

This takes work! Its not easy to be the example when your flesh wants to extract it's pound of flesh as payment! But, that's what we're to do

– be examples to other believers, as Paul told Timothy, and as God tells us all. John 14:9 says that when people saw Jesus, they

saw God. We should be able to say that when people see us, they see Jesus. It's the labor of example!

2 PETER 1:15 MOREOVER I WILL BE CAREFUL TO ENSURE THAT YOU ALWAYS HAVE A REMINDER OF THESE THINGS AFTER MY DECEASE.

7. THE LABOR OF LEGACY

Legacy defined: *Something handed down from an ancestor or a predecessor or from the past.* The seventh and final work of true ministry is your labor of legacy, which is the work of leaving

something behind to those left behind after your departure and home going to heaven. Its what people remember about you. Its what you did to make them better people, and stronger

Christians. Ask yourself this question: What have I done to leave people better off for having known me?

PSALMS 71:18 NOW ALSO WHEN I AM OLD AND GRAYHEADED, O GOD, DO NOT FORSAKE ME, UNTIL I DECLARE YOUR STRENGTH TO THIS GENERATION, YOUR POWER TO EVERYONE WHO IS TO COME.

One generation needs to make the next generation better, just because we were here! This is legacy, and it takes work to see this on a constant basis. Proverbs 27:21 says a man is valued by

what others say of him. Day after day, you must always remember your life is not about you, but about you helping others in Jesus' Name, thereby giving Him glory through your labors of love,

faith, prayer, study, power, example and legacy. This is the true work of true ministry!



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