



Week 4: Working for the Father

Submission

Ministry is full of opinions because it is full of people. If a group of people are halfway intelligent, they will have different thoughts about things from time to time. This isn't a bad thing, but can be dangerous when these opinions turn into "missions." Read the following scripture very carefully:

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Hebrews 13:17 NASB

The pastors and leaders God has put in our lives should be obeyed and treated with respect. That is what true submission is; getting up under the mission and supporting it. This doesn't mean that you can't disagree with church leadership, but if it is not illegal or immoral, you must submit to what your leaders tell you. However, in the event of major abuse or sinful actions, refer to the apostle Paul's admonition about when to follow someone:

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:1 NASB

If something your leader told you to do is not Christ-like, then you should follow the higher authority of Jesus. But in everything else that pertains to the church, submission to your leaders is vital.

Saved by Grace

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Ephesians 2:8-10 NASB



From the scripture above, it is clear that our works are not what save us. Though practicing spiritual disciplines (see week 1) are important, they are not what bring us salvation. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The works that come from our lives are proof of this salvation, not the cause. This is important to remember while focusing on spiritual disciplines as well as serving in church because, without this knowledge, we can be tempted to rely on our personal habits and ministries as the source of our salvation. We can't work hard enough to be saved, but when we are saved we work hard through the power of God's grace (see 1 Corinthians 15:10).

Grace and Place

When it comes to serving in the church, being in the right place is vital to success. The scripture below illustrates this point:

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12 NASB

There have been many ministers who failed in a specific area of ministry only to be successful in another area. For example, Pastor Joe may be a bad youth pastor but a great worship pastor because he is *graced* to be a worship pastor. In the same way, it is vital to follow the Lord's will concerning where you will serve in the church.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. "You are witnesses of these things. "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Luke 24:45-49 NASB

The call to ministry is one we cannot answer on our own. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to help us be bold and accomplish the things we are



assigned to. The Bible says the kingdom of God is through the Spirit (see Romans 14:17), so if we are going to advance His kingdom we must be connected to the Holy Spirit.

The Weight of Ministry

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Jeremiah 1:5 NASB

Jeremiah was called to serve the Lord before he was born. Does this sound like a small thing? Is ministry a minor issue or should it be given a major amount of weight in our lives?

"For *it is* just like a man *about* to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. "To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. "Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. "In the same manner the one who *had received* the two *talents* gained two more. "But he who received the one *talent* went away, and dug a *hole* in the ground and hid his master's money. "Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. "The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.' "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' "Also the one who *had received* the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.' "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. 'And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. 'Then you ought to have



put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my *money* back with interest. 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' "For to everyone who has, *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. "Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 25:14-30 NASB

The servants in this passage are judged based on what they did with what the Master gave them. In the same way, we should view our ministry through the lens of eternity and give it the weight it deserves.