

PERSONAL WORK ---MY SOULS RESPONSIBILITY

Intro:

- A. I firmly believe that every child of God can see the great danger on not doing personal work.
 1. Not only to the growth of the church but also to one's own soul.
 - a. I heard this extraordinary conversion story many years ago. It is true. It began with an Ocala, FL policeman pulling over a Christian woman on I-75 for having windows too dark...the tint shaded too much. The policeman asks, "May I see your licence." And, "Do you know why I pulled you over?" She did not know, so she asked why? And he told her...to which she replied, "Maybe it is in God's providence that you did this, that I might lead you to Christ." His first thought was to tell her not to get smart or call it a lot of mularky, but something made him respectful and let it go. -- After his shift, he went home and told his wife this wacky story and she said, "You know we have been looking for something in our lives" and asked him to give her the lady's particulars...and she called...and that lead to a home bible study...and eventually her baptism...and nine months later the policeman's baptism...and then later others of his extended family..and they remained faithful. -- The ways of the Lord are marvelous!
 2. So let me state for the record that I firmly believe that **ONE CAN NOT BE A CHILD OF GOD AND NOT BE A PERSONAL WORKER.**
 3. I believe that there are many scriptures that teach the truthfulness of this statement but these three will suffice for now.
 - a. **Gal. 6:1-10** ... provides a good study in individual Christian responsibility towards others and self.
 - (1) Galatians 6:1-10 (NKJV) ---- 1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load. 6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.
 - b. **Matt. 28:18-20 ; Mk. 16:15-16** although commissioned to the Apostles it is seen as a good work..cf **James 4:17.**
 - (1) **Matthew 28:18-20** (NKJV) ---- 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.
 - (2) **Mark 16:15-16** (NKJV) ---- 15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.
 - (3) **James 4:17** (NKJV) ---- 17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.
 - c. **Ezek. 33:8.**"If we do not warn the wicked from their ways their blood will be held

- accountable towards us."
- B. Here we need to realize that the GREATEST motivation for doing personal work is a sort of selfish reason --- the salvation of ONE'S OWN SOUL.
1. If we are not concerned with others souls we in fact are displaying a dis-concern for our own souls safety.
 2. **I Tim. 4:16**"Save both yourself and those who hear you"
 3. **Ezek. 33:9**"IF you warn ... you deliver your own soul."
- C. The question that I pose today, UPON ALL who feel in some way or another that they do not have to engage in active personal work is:
1. Are you concerned about the condition of your soul?
 2. Do you realize that Personal work is a good work and by not doing it you are sinning according to **Jas. 4:17?**
 3. Do you realize by not doing personal work you rob God and others and yourself of the greatest joy one could have while on this earth...**Psa. 126:5-6 ; Acts 8:39.**
 - a. **Psalm 126:5-6** (NKJV) ---- 5 Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy. 6 He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him.
 - b. **Acts 8:39** (NKJV) ---- 39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.
 4. Do you realize by not doing personal work that you **ROB GOD OF ANOTHER PRECIOUS SOUL THAT HE COULD CALL HIS VERY OWN?**
 5. Brothers and Sisters in Christ can you see how vitally important it is for each one of us to be involved in active personal work for the kingdom of God!
 - a. Listen to the proverb writer concerning this:
 - (1) **"The fruit of the Righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise."** **Proverbs 11:30**
 - b. Listen to Daniel concerning this:
 - (1) **"Those who are wise shall shine. Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness, Like the stars forever and ever."** **Daniel 12:3**
- D. With this in mind let us now consider just for a short time the necessity and Urgency of Personal work.

II. THE NECESSITY AND URGENCY OF PERSONAL WORK.

- A. There are many needs in the church today, however, one of the greatest needs of ALL is that of SOUL WINNING.
1. When a congregation stops winning souls to Christ, it loses it's primary purpose for existence.
 - a. Christ's mission was not to come into this world and condemn this world but rather to seek and save that which is Lost....**John 3:17 ; Matt. 1:21 ; Luke 19:10.**
 - b. **John 3:17** (NKJV) ---- 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.
 - c. **Matthew 1:21** (NKJV) ---- 21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
 - d. **Luke 19:10** (NKJV) ---- 10 for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."
 - (1) Form this standpoint it is evident that the mission of the MASTER is also the mission of the church His body.
 - (2) The "church" is the spiritual body of Christ...**Eph. 1:22-23** and is given the task of carrying

- forward the great work which Christ Himself began while here on earth in the flesh.
2. Thus we can see by NOT getting personally involved in soul winning today, one limits the task that Christ has given His spiritual body.
 3. But let us consider a further point concerning the necessity of doing personal work and that is found in the very word "Evangelism".
 - a. This word comes from the very same Greek word which we get the English word "Gospel" or "Good News".
 - b. Christians we have the good news of Christ...**Rom. 1:16 ; John 14:6 ; 17:17.**
 - c. **Romans 1:16** (NKJV) ---- 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.
 - d. **John 14:6** (NKJV) ---- 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
 - e. **John 17:17** (NKJV) ---- 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.
 - (1) As with any other good news that we receive in life we want to share it with others.
 - (2) Yet when it comes to the greatest news anyone could ever have we want to keep it secret...."WHY?"
 - f. I can not tell you why this is so except for possibly one main reason:
 - (1) We are ashamed of Christ and disbelieve that the Gospel is the power unto salvation!
 - (2) But notice the severity of such:
 - (a) **Matt. 10:32-33**deny Me before Men, and I will deny thee before My Father.
 - (b) **Rev. 21:8**"unbelievers are in the lake that burns with fire also."
 4. Listen to this poem and then think about the work you are doing...(display overhead)...Living the way we pray.
 - a. "I knelt to pray when day was done, And prayed: O Lord, bless everyone: Lift from each heart the pain, And let the sick be well again." And then I woke one day, And carelessly went on my way, The whole day long I did not try, to wipe a tear from any eye. I did not try to share the load, of any brother on the road; I did not even go to see, the sick man just next door to me. Yet once again when day was done I prayed: "O Lord, bless everyone." But as I prayed, to my ear there came a voice that whispered clear: "Pause hypocrite, before you pray: Whom have you tried to bless today? God's sweetest blessings always go, by hands that serve him here below." And then I hid my face and cried: "Forgive me God for I have lied, Let me but live another day And I will live the way I PRAY." (Author Unknown)
 - b. How many of us here today are in exactly the same position that this author was.
 - c. Praying one thing but doing nothing about it?
- B. Let us now consider the Urgency of Personal Work.
1. Many use the excuse..."But there is just nobody who will listen to the word of God anymore!"
 - a. I Want you to consider this as a direct contradiction to what Christ said in **Matt. 9:37-38.**
 - (1) **Matthew 9:37-38** (NKJV)----37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."
 - b. Here we see that the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few.
 2. Every minute 156 people die around the world without Christ and without hope.
 - a. That is 224,640 per day and 81,993,600 per year.
 - b. This great fact should show us the urgency of the work, but notice the results of survey work done on 184 congregation with a membership of 300 or more:
 - (1) Only 5% of the annual membership is baptized - if you remove the children of the members this figure drops to 2%.

- (2) Elders, Deacons ; Teachers and Members averaged - ONE VISIT TO AN OUTSIDER PER WEEK PER CONGREGATION.
 - (3) Members gave less than 4% of their estimated income to the work of the church.
 - (4) But the most shocking of all --- less than 5% of all the members combined converted a lost soul to Christ.
- c. It is no wonder that scholars such as F.R. Yeakley writes..."the church is baptizing only one convert per year for every 80 members of the church and about 50% of these converts drop out of the church with in 5 years after their baptism." He goes on to say that .."The survey work that I have continued to do has clearly demonstrated that in 1980 the church of Christ in the USA did stop increasing and started decreasing in total membership. It is clear that if this tend continues the church of Christ as we know it today will cease to exist in the USA in less than 50 years."
(Taken from **WHY CHURCHES GROW**)
- 3. Can anyone not see the urgency of doing personal work.
 - a. In 1945 the church of Christ was the fastest growing religious order in the USA. By 1965 it slipped back to the 12th position and in 1980 it did not even register as growing at all. (USA Census bureau)
 - b. Brethren I use these illustrations not to scare you into doing personal work but rather that you might realize the great urgency for the Need to do this good work.
 - C. The question I'm sure that you might be asking yourselves at this time is Why is this happening?
 - 1. Here is believe is possibly one good reason.
 - a. **"This is the story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody would not do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody, when Nobody did what Anybody could have done."**
 - 2. And Ladies let me remind you also that when we speak of Personal work this is not only the mens work but is the work of each and every Christian.

III. **PERSONAL WORK IS BENEFICIAL TO ALL THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE.**

- A. Apostolic example shows that such a practice is acceptable in the sight of God.
 - 1. Andrew brought Peter ...**John 1:40-42** (NKJV) ---- 40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).
 - 2. Philip brought Nathaniel...**John 1:43-51**(NKJV) ---- 43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46 And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" 48 Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." 49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" 50 Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." 51 And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter

- you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”
3. Christ our Example:
 - a. Taught Nicodemus at midnight...**John 3.**
 - b. Taught the woman at the well...**John 4.**
 - c. Taught at Zaccheus's home...**Luke 19.**
 4. Philip Taught one on a chariot...**Acts 8:26-28.**
 5. The early Christians worked from door to door...**Acts 5:42 ; 8:4 ; 18:24-28 ; 20:20.**
 - a. **Acts 5:42** (NKJV) ---- 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.
 - b. **Acts 8:4** (NKJV) ---- 4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.
 - c. **Acts 18:24-28** (NKJV) ---- 24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. 27 And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; 28 for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.
 - d. **Acts 20:20** (NKJV) ---- 20 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,
- B. The Spiritual motives which should compel us are found in **II Cor. 5:9-14.**
1. **Of the Judgment to come vrs 10.**
 - a. All will give an account of the work we have done...**Eccl. 12:14.**
 - b. Also we will give an account of how we have used our talents...**Matt. 25:14-15.**
 2. **Because of the Terror of the Lord...vrs 11 ; II Thess. 1:6-9 ; Matt. 25:46 ; Rev. 21:8.**
 - a. **2 Thessalonians 1:6-9** (NKJV) ---- 6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,
 - (1) **Matthew 25:46** (NKJV) ---- 46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
 - (2) **Revelation 21:8** (NKJV) ---- 8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”
 - b. Knowing this to be true - does not mercy compel us to try and help people escape such a fury....cf. **Matt. 5:7** (NKJV) ---- 7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.
 - c. If we really believe in Eternal Punishment - what excuse will justify out failure to at least .."Rescue the Perishing".
 3. **The Love that Christ has for Us...Rom. 5:8 cf Rom 1:14** we are truly indebted to Christ.
 - a. **Romans 5:8** (NKJV) ---- 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
 - b. **Romans 1:14** (NKJV) ---- 14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise.
- C. How effective is Personal work?

1. Harris J. Dark in his track on the church says..."IN order for every person on the earth to hear the Gospel of Christ, it would only have to be repeated 31 times by everyone who heard it.
 - a. 31 times and 2,147,483,648 people would have heard it.
 - b. If we allowed ONE MONTH to repeat the word given to you it would take 31 months to teach the whole world.
 - c. Given ONE YEAR it would take 31 years. That is within most of our life times.
 2. But in contrast to this in 1966 the Brown St. church of Christ, TN. took 17 members to convert ONE PERSON to the Lord in One year.
- D. Brethren can anyone truly leave here today and say that personal work is not for me considering all these facts?

IV. **Conclusion:**

- A. I Leave you with this last two thoughts and the lesson is yours.
- B. The infidels challenge to us:
 1. **"If I firmly believe as, millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of Christianity in this life influences destiny in another world, Christianity would be to me, everything. I would cast aside earthly cares as follies and earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity. Christianity would be my first waking thought, and my Last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness. I would labor in its cause alone. Earthly consequences should never stay my hands or seal my lips. I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a lifetime of effort. I would go forth to the world and preach Christ in season and out of season, and my text would be "for what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul."**
- C. Daniel Webster once said.."If we work upon marble, it will perish, if we work upon brass, time will efface it, if we rear temples, they will crumble into dust ; but if we work upon immortal minds, if we imbue them with principles, with the fear of God and the love of fellowman, we will engrave on those tablets something that will brighten to all eternity."
- D. Brethren I believe this as well as I hope that you do too.
- E. Will you not become actively involved in doing your part of the personal work here in this community, helping other lost souls to see the Light.
- F. If you are here today and have not named the name of Christ you need to do so in H+B+R+C+B = Salvation

(Acknowledgments go out to Connie Adams, Harris J. Dark and numerous others who have help me in ideas in putting this work together.)