

Walk Worthy

“Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.”

EPHESIANS 4:1-5:21

LESSON 6 – FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY– EPH. 4:12

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The Work of Ministry

- ▶ Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,
- ▶ Christ has given spiritual gifts in the form of gifted and qualified men to lead the church so that the church then might be equipped. We learned what it means to be equipped, being taught and led to maturity and completion. But the question remains, for what are we being equipped? Well, since the question has been asked, the answer is given in the very same verse. Ephesians 4:12 tells us that these men have been given to the church as a free gift of grace from Christ so that we, the saints, might be equipped for the work of ministry.

Ministry - Service

- ▶ “Ministry” can also be translated service, as it is the Greek word *deacinos*. This is the same word translated elsewhere as “deacon” and as we know the root of this word is the act and attitude of service. John MacArthur said regarding this word, “The entire church is to be aggressively involved in the work of the Lord.” And that work is a work of service.
- ▶ Is it really that simple? We are to be equipped by our teachers and leaders so that we might effectively and efficiently serve one another? Then what has gone wrong in the church today? So much of the programs and activities are built around meeting my needs instead of giving me the necessary resources to serve others! Let us take the time then to look at how the church should be working, and see whether it is or isn't.

Why Serve?

- ▶ The first question we must ask then is, “Why serve?” Why it is that we are to be equipped to serve others in the body? Here is what the Word of God tells us:
- ▶ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. – 1 Cor 15:58
- ▶ ...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. – 1 Peter 2:5

Why Serve?

- ▶ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. – 1 Peter 2:9
- ▶ As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. – 1 Peter 4:10-11

Why Serve?

- ▶ The contrast to service of course is found in 2 Thessalonians 3:11, which states, “For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.”
- ▶ This then is our choice. Service to God and others or self-service. Sacrifice on behalf of others, or self indulgence.
- ▶ If we are to walk as He has taught us to walk, to walk in unity, then we must be walking a walk of service to each other within the church. In fact, no service to each other equals no church, for if we do not serve then we have become only a religious club, a social group of religious people motivated by pride and self gratification.

Focus, Function, and Fruit

- ▶ So how do we serve one another? To understand this we must have the right focus, function, and fruit.
- ▶ **The Focus**
- ▶ The focus, the motivation, the attitude necessary for service to one another is simply put a right perspective toward God, self, and each other! Here is what the Bible tells us about our motive for service within the Body: Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment.”

Focus, Function, and Fruit

- ▶ Above all else in this world we are to love God with all that we are. This is the greatest command. And when we add the second greatest command to it, we see plainly why service is necessary in obedience to and love for God.
- ▶ “And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”
- ▶ And then as we expand our search and look at the rest of the testimony of Scripture it becomes difficult to miss what God expects of us in relation to one another. Take a few verses from Philippians as an example: Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Focus, Function, and Fruit

- ▶ We are to do nothing with a motive of selfish ambition or pride. We are instead to do everything from a perspective of lowliness, esteeming others as better than ourselves. We must look out for the interests of others. We truly are members of one another and as such we are responsible for how we interact and even how we think about others in the church. There is no room in a sound and growing church for condescension, pride, arrogance, or contempt.
- ▶ So to serve with a right attitude we must first have the right focus, that being a focus on God and on others.

Focus, Function, and Fruit

▶ **The Function**

- ▶ The focus leads us to the function then. To living this out in day to day life. How is it that we serve one another?
- ▶ Here are a few verses that make the point about our responsibility to one another in the church. Just read the verses and think about the lesson being taught here – these all focus on our function – serving one another:
- ▶ Romans 12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

Focus, Function, and Fruit

- ▶ Romans 15:1 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. 3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.”
- ▶ Romans 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

Focus, Function, and Fruit

- ▶ 1 Thess. 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. 15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.
- ▶ In this text in 1 Thessalonians we are given a list of 4 things we are responsible to do for each other within the body. They are:
- ▶ 1. Warn the Unruly – to “reprimand” those “out of ranks” (in Greek this refers to one who does not show up for work! We are to admonish those not doing the work!)
- ▶ 2. Comfort the Fainthearted – to “speak calming words” to the “discouraged”. Discouragement speaks of a small mind in matters of faith; in other words, discouragement is often a lack of faith!

Focus, Function, and Fruit

- ▶ 3. Uphold the Weak – “support” (pay attention to) the “newborns”. This refers to weak, young, immature believers. Support them.
- ▶ 4. Be Patient with All – Patient here comes from 2 words, “macro” which means big, and “thumia” which means sacrifice! We are to make big sacrifices for all!
- ▶ How often do we fail to obey the command to esteem others as better than ourselves? Often we look at others at church and try to figure out if they measure up to us instead of seeing them as better than us in the first place. Doing the work of the ministry means being humble and setting aside self no matter the cost!

Focus, Function, and Fruit

▶ **The Fruit**

- ▶ Romans 1:8 gives us an example from the life of Paul, where he writes to the church in Rome and tells them, “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all.” His first thought was that of thankfulness to God for them. This is the fruit of gratitude. It is a motive and a reality – Paul loves the church.
- ▶ In Phil. 1:1-11, 27-30, we see a similar truth. What fruit do you see in what Paul writes here?

Focus, Function, and Fruit

- ▶ Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; 7 just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. 8 For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Focus, Function, and Fruit

- ▶ Philippians 1:27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, 28 and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. 29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.

Focus, Function, and Fruit

- ▶ And then in Col. 1:1-8 we read: 1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; 7 as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

Focus, Function, and Fruit

- ▶ We really do not even need to take the time to explain this, do we? It is here in all of the Scripture we have read. God's program, God's plan is a plan of self denial, self-sacrifice, and service to others.
- ▶ The reason so many churches are full of people starving for truth is that too many pastors are not equipping the flock for service. We think the ministry is something others do for us, but in reality true ministry is something we are all called and being equipped and prepared and taught and motivated to do. Ministry is service, to God and His Church.
- ▶ So to do the work, to minister effectively, to serve, we must have the proper focus, proper function, and we must be bearing proper fruit. We cannot do any of this without the help of the Holy Spirit or without abiding in Christ.

Are You Serving?

- ▶ Today, where is your focus? Are you serving? Is your day structured around service to others?
- ▶ If not, have you been equipped for this work or not? If not, you need to talk to your pastors. Their primary responsibility is spending time in prayer and the Word so that they might equip you to serve God and others.
- ▶ Next week: Lesson 7 - For the Edifying of the Body – Eph. 4:12