

## LABOR FOR THE LORD

### (1 Corinthians 15:58)

#### I. The effort needed.

- a. The word “therefore” points back to what has been stated about the resurrection.
  - i. There is an incorruptible body that awaits the resurrected Christian.
  - ii. There is a victory over death that has already been won by Jesus.
- b. Therefore, or because of that, we need to labor for the Lord and not just any effort will suffice.
- c. The first term that is found is steadfast.
  - i. Thayer says that this word means “firm, immovable, steadfast”.
  - ii. It is found only three times in scripture.
    1. The first time is earlier in 1 Corinthians when discussing the role a father plays in whether or not to allow his virgin daughter to get married (1 Corinthians 7:37).
    2. The other, besides 1 Corinthians 15:58, is Colossians 1:23.
  - iii. The one who labors for the Lord cannot be moved off the hope of the gospel is the idea both in Colossians and our verse.
  - iv. Faithful laborers for God cannot be faithful for a time and then awol for a time and then back, rinse and repeat.
  - v. The one who is truly a laborer for the Lord is one who isn’t going to be moved from faithful service to God, whether that be worship, evangelism, good works, or whatever labor for the Lord that is necessary.
- d. The second term is unmovable.
  - i. Thayer says this word carries the idea of “firmly persistent”.
  - ii. The true laborer for the Lord is one who keeps doing what he or she can do.
  - iii. There must be a realization that what one can do changes during the course of a lifetime of service.
  - iv. When we are younger, there are some things we can’t do because of lack of knowledge, or not yet being qualified.
  - v. As we age, there are more works for which we become qualified to do.
  - vi. As we move into older years, there are things we can’t do that we once did.
  - vii. God is aware of that and simply asks us to be persistent in laboring for Him.
  - viii. As we mature and life changes, keep finding efforts to which we can give our labor.
  - ix. There is no Christian retirement, which idea seems to be fairly prevalent in the church.

- x. The Christian retirement benefits kick in at death.
- e. The third term is “always abounding”.
  - i. Always means at all times.
  - ii. Abounding, according to Thayer means “excelling”.
  - iii. We are to be excelling in the Lord’s work.
  - iv. This can only come through commitment to God and knowledge of His word.
  - v. It’s not just putting in time but truly giving effort to be better and do more for the Lord.
  - vi. Simply punching the clock at the door of the church building is not at all what this phrase entails.
  - vii. We are to constantly give effort for the Lord.
- f. Something that is interesting is the word “labor”.
  - i. Thayer tells us this word means “intense labor united with trouble, toil”.
  - ii. The labor of a Christian is not easy.
  - iii. It takes effort to grow oneself.
  - iv. It takes effort to fight the battles against Satan.
  - v. It takes trouble and toil to keep your family spiritually safe.
  - vi. It takes trouble and toil to help brethren battle against Satan.
  - vii. It takes effort to make it to be the laborer the Lord needs in His kingdom.
- g. This verse begins by telling us the effort needed to be God’s worker is tiresome in that we can’t be moved, but we keep plugging along, always striving to excel at the task before us.

## **II. The eminence of the work.**

- a. God has commanded us to work to provide for our families.
- b. A Christian should be the best worker an employer could hire.
  - i. We work, not for men, but for the Lord.
  - ii. Ephesians 6:6-7.
- c. We should be those who are promoted in our secular works because we are the best workers.
- d. But we must remember that whatever secular work we do fails to rise to the level of eminence as our work that is of the Lord.
- e. The phrase “work of the Lord” means a work assigned by and to be done for His sake.
- f. There is no greater work that a person can undertake than the Lord’s work.
- g. This work carries the overall idea of anything God has tasked His people with doing.
  - i. We are not saved by works but there are works we must do.
  - ii. In fact, Christians are described by inspiration as those who are created for good works (Ephesians 2:10).
  - iii. We are to be those who are eager to do good works (Titus 2:14).

- h. Such is the case because of what God, through the sacrifice of Jesus, has done for us.
- i. How can we help but be active for the One who purchased us with His own blood?
- j. It is a work that makes all other works pale in comparison.
- k. Yet, today, we have a shortage of preachers, elders, deacons, and Bible class teachers.
- l. There are parents who call themselves Christians who discourage their sons from preaching or their daughters from marrying preachers.
- m. There are men today who simply refuse to be elders despite the need for it and God's command that the local congregation be overseen in this manner.
- n. Both are difficult works, but as we've noticed, God has made us aware that the work in which we should be engaged involves difficulty.
- o. Paul describes the work that he and Peter and Apollos were doing as being laborers together with God (1 Corinthians 3:9).
- p. Who greater to work with than God?
  - i. The God who will supply your every need (Philippians 4:19).
  - ii. The God who strengthens you in Christ (Philippians 4:13).
- q. You and I can't be involved in a greater work than that of the Lord.

### **III. The effect of the work.**

- a. Have you ever worked on a project at work, given effort, then have it discarded?
- b. All your effort on it was in vain.
- c. Inspiration informs us that when we labor for the Lord, it is never in vain.
  - i. Vain means empty or useless.
  - ii. True work done for the Lord is always useful.
- d. Notice 1 Corinthians 3:11-15.
  - i. Inspiration had Paul write about evangelism and laboring for God.
  - ii. Some of our work will produce gold, some stubble.
  - iii. Either way, our efforts are noticed and appreciated by God.
- e. We may baptize someone and is faithful and remain such, or he may fall away from the church.
- f. While we may be upset because he fell away, God still appreciates and notices the effort we made to teach that person the gospel.
- g. We may teach a children's class and not one child seem to be involved at all, but the Lord appreciates and notices the work you we put into the class.
- h. The effect of our work is that it is never in vain when done for the Lord.