

Principles Of A Successful Worker

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I. Six characteristics of a successful Christian worker from the life of Paul

1. Humility of Mind.

Acts 20:19 - Serving the LORD with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews.

2. Teaching the word of God.

Acts 20:20 - And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house.

3. Dedication of life.

Acts 20:23 - Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

4. Belief, faith and responsibility.

Acts 20:26 - Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

5. Sow in sorrow and Reap in joy.

Acts 20:31 - Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

6. Unselfishness of service.

Acts 20:36 - And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

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The call for every Christian believer is to know Christ and to make Him known and to be His witnesses unto all men.

The Bible talks about the great man Paul who was a successful Christian worker in the book of Acts, chapter 20. And the secrets of how a Christian worker should be, in order to be a successful Christian has been exemplified in the life of this soldier and warrior Paul. We can pick six characteristics from the life of Paul from this passage and apply them in our life to become a successful worker for Christ.

1. Humility of Mind: most important for a successful Christian worker. In verse 19 Paul says, “I served the Lord with great humility and with tears though I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews.” Paul served with the kind of humility that Jesus had.

In Philippians 2:6 Paul talks about the attitude and humility of Jesus Christ; “Jesus Christ who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of the servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death even death on a cross.” Jesus though he was rich, he became poor and came to earth leaving his heavenly glory. The great God humbled Himself and served in humility; even to the point of death on the cross. And the Bible tells to clothe ourselves in this kind of humility which Jesus Christ had.

Humility is not thinking mean or debasing one’s self. But it is thinking less and less of one’s self and more and more of Jesus Christ. True humility is, when we become so wrapped up in Jesus Christ, we will not be thinking of ourselves at all, but will be more concerned with His kingdom, work and person.

2. Teaching the word of God: in v 20 Paul says, “You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful; to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.”

The pattern of the early church was to gather every day in homes and cottages and pray for one another in times of problems; and Paul would expound the word of God and give tremendous teaching from the word of God.

When Paul founded the church at Thessalonica, he was there only for three weeks. And after a relatively short period of time, he wrote a letter back to the church of Thessalonica and in his letter he mentions almost all of major doctrines - the second coming of Christ, the doctrine of holiness; he exhorts for clean living and our position in Christ; the necessity of prayer; tracing the principles of follow up; and the principles of evangelism.

Small child can receive so much knowledge and young Christian can be taught so much. All of us know so much more than what we are doing. Our greatest need today is not for more knowledge but to apply the knowledge in our lives which we already have. We need to practice what we know and that which the Spirit of God has spoken us to do.

The president of one of Bible colleges of Canada said, “Obedience and not study is the chief qualification for further light.” If we want further light, the first step to do is to obey that which we have already received and God would show us more and more as we are willing to obey Him.

3. Dedication of life: in v23 Paul says, “I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and the hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me –the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.”

Paul dedicated his life to the gospel of Jesus Christ and later in Acts 26:19 he says, “I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven; that which God gave to me, I follow.”

Mission of Dr. David Livingstone: In the history of missionaries, one of the greatest pioneers who dedicated his life for gospel is David Livingstone. The stone at his burial place has an inscription which says, ‘brought by a loving hands over land and sea, this man David Livingstone, who gave his life in order for two things that the great open sore of the world might be healed and that the gospel might penetrate into Africa.’ Years ago in the history of Africa, slavery was at its heights. Portuguese government went into the interiors of Africa and brought thousands of people as slaves and shipped them to United States of America and other parts of the world. David Livingstone gave an account how the villagers were slaughtered in order to get them as slaves and recorded in a book that only one out of ten people was survived by the time they reached the point of destination in the ship. Yet this terrible slave curse existed for decades. Even the men and women who were supposedly Christians were willing to sell human beings to another for the sake of a dollar. And Livingstone had enough common sense to know that as long as slavery existed in Africa that Christianity would not be accepted or get very much of a foothold. So he dedicated his life and set up trade groups in order that civilization might come in and missionaries’ may follow and the slave trade might be defeated. This is the reason why he went right into Africa and stayed there for six years without seeing a white man, seeking to discover the source of the river Nile so that there would be a free water way into the Africa. Then Stanley was sent into the jungle of Africa as a rescue and he found Livingstone. Stanley tried to get Livingstone go back home. But Livingstone said, “No, I refuse, as long as we have not abolished this curse of trade, as long as the gospel is not opened up into this district, I can do nothing but to give my life for this cause.” And he stayed on for another eighteen months until the Lord took his life. It is recorded that David Livingstone died upon his knees in his tent before his mighty Lord, spreading the cause of Christ. Neither had he counted his life dear unto him that he might finish his course with joy. And this one man did more to open up Africa and predicted that in years to come there would be a man who would be able to stand up and preach and hundreds of Africans would come to accept Christ in one night. This prophecy was fulfilled when Billy Graham went to Africa and quoted the words of David Livingstone; when Dr. Billy Graham stood in places and preached the gospel hundreds of Africans came forward and accepted Christ as their personal savior. A way was opened up because a man dedicated his life.

4. Belief, faith and responsibility: in v26 Paul says, “Therefore I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men.”

We who accepted Jesus as our personal savior believe that there is eternity called heaven for those who accepted Christ as their personal savior; and a place called hell for Satan and for all those who rejected Christ. People of any religion, tribe or race should come to the saving knowledge of Christ and accept Him, otherwise they are condemned. Bible says that ‘there is no other name under heaven except for the name of Jesus that we might be saved.’ This is the basis of our faith. If this is not our faith, there is no meaning and working as missionary in and abroad. So, out of love it is our responsibility to preach Jesus Christ to every person we meet and take every opportunity to present the gospel.

5. Sow in sorrow and Reap in joy: in v31 Paul says, “So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.”

Psalm 126:5, 6 says, “Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping carrying seeds to sow will return with songs of joy carrying sheaves with him.”

Why does God bring so much sorrow and why is there so much sorrow in the world? It is because we refuse to obey God, sorrow heaps upon us. The other reason is sorrow brings us into closer relationship with Christ. The scripture says that it is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting, for the death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart- Ecclesiastes 7:2. Sorrow causes us to think. If there are no problems in life, we would not realize the need for God. In prosperity people often have the tendency to forget their creator and do what they like; and God has to chasten them with sorrow to correct and bring His children back to Himself. There is pain in sorrow, but there is joy in fellowship with Christ in our suffering because He suffered; suffering helps us to know Him better and understand the power of resurrection of Christ. Tears are a good thing if they bring us close to God. In 2 Corinthians 7th chapter Paul says that Godly sorrow brings repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world brings death. The deeper the godly sorrow, the greater will be the joy.

6. Unselfishness of service: In v36 Paul says, “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

The leader and the founder of the Navigators, Dawson Trotman can be exemplified for his character of unselfishness of his service towards fellow beings. He always had a pattern for his whole life; pattern of ‘how can I help somebody else? How can I lift some one else? How can I enable a person to get on and make little lighter the job for any individual walking along?’

Greatness is not a sign when we sit behind the desk and administer over the table when people come to us. The Bible has to say something about greatness; Jesus said, “Whosoever would be greatest among you, let him be your servant; whosoever would be the chief among you, let him be your minister.”

The way the Lord took Dawson was extremely characteristic of his life. Once while he was traveling in a boat, the boat turned upside down and Dawson along with some other person fell into the water. He could have saved his own life if he had not thought of the fellow person; but he was so concerned for the life of the other person that he did not think about his heart disease which cannot meet the extra demands of exertion; and while saving the life of the fellow person, he got a heart attack and died. Dawson had some heart problem. Before he accepted Lord Jesus, once he fell into water and cried out for help; in the water he promised and prayed God that if God would save him, he would dedicate his life for God; God saved him and he accepted Jesus as his personal savior and did wonderful ministry for the Lord for thirty years through Navigators and stood as an example and brought blessings to many lives through his life. And after thirty fruitful years in an identical situation like this, God took his life in a boat accident; but this time Dawson was able to save a life by giving his life and demonstrated the love of Christ through his unselfish attitude of service.

We as Christian believers who are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ need to think what are we going to do with our lives! Did we ever make some promises to God when we were saved? Did we keep our promises? If we are true to God and take up His word, there is no limit for what God can do through us. Nothing is as important and valuable to God as your and my life and we need to surrender our lives to His will, his service and the service of others.