

How to Work

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[0:00] How do we live the Christian life, the victorious Christian life?

What is the victorious Christian life and how are we to work for God?! How are we to live for God?

In 1 Corinthians 15, the context there is of the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour.

And it says that this corruptible, what's going to corrupt and decay away is going to put on incorruptible, that which will never decay and pass away but will be forever.

And verse 57, it picks it up, it says, But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Praise God! There's victory! Amen? There's victory for every believer. There's victory in the context of our Lord has vanquished dead and brought eternal life to life.

[1:10] We read of the victorious Christian life, a Christianity that's alive, that's living, that's relevant, that's in the day by day and it's founded on the eternal truth that holds us strong and stable in faith.

Notice that this message is addressed to everyone. It says here, my beloved brethren. He's not addressing the select few or those in leading roles or just a certain group of people.

He's saying, my beloved brethren. He's talking about brothers and sisters in Christ. He's saying, you are beloved, you are loved. It's about that family relationship that we have as God's children.

And God calls every believer to be a worker in verse 58. We are called upon to work, to be willing to go the distance, to go the second mile.

And we call to be firm, to be secure in faith. Through the word of God, God praises work. He watches what we do and how we do it.

[2:18] And he shows us how to work. In the Bible it commands those who are servants of masters. In Colossians 3 verse 22 it says that they are to serve with that singular purpose.

Not with eye service. Not with eye service. So in other words, when people are watching them as men-pleasers. But in singleness of heart, fearing God. And verse 23 of Colossians 3 it says, And whatsoever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men.

When we do something, every job deserves our best. And to do it as unto the Lord. Even everyday tasks have got an eternal value to them.

Something that God considers it, that we should do things heartily, from our heart and to the Lord.

Even the everyday things. It doesn't actually make a distinction in that verse in Colossians 3.

That there is some work that is God's work and some that is secular work. Really our lifestyle, our lives, our living sacrifices that are our lives should be heartily living to God and His glory.

[3:32] So even everyday tasks can have a value. In Ephesians 2 verse 10, we have a context that we are saved not by works, by our doing, but by His grace through faith.

And it goes on to say, For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Workmanship. You are His workmanship. It's got a sense of, you are His work of art. You are His masterpiece.

Each one of you is specially uniquely made. Not just your fingerprints are different, but your whole personality is unique to you. And you, every believer, are His workmanship.

So how are we to work? What is it that we are to do? And how are we to do it? We read here in 1 Corinthians 15 some ways to work.

[4:30] In verse 58. My beloved brethren. Firstly, be steadfast. Be ye steadfast. To be steadfast, it means to be stable.

To be persevering and faithful and consistent. To be steadfast means to be fixed. To be firm in your purpose. Galatians 6 verse 9. Paul says to the Galatians, Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we do not faint.

There is a praising of stickability there. You know, if you keep on sowing, there is going to be some reaping. There is going to be something to show for it. So we call to that intensity of how we are to live and serve God.

Don't quit. Be steadfast. Be steadfast. Be steadfast. It's got the sense here of keep on keeping on. There is a steadiness there. God's people are to go forward.

It's the sense of that going forward, of that steadiness, of that ever onwards, that constancy of approach. Let's not be an on again, off again kind of Christian in our walk with the Lord.

[5:41] Rather let us be constant. Be constant. Be reliable. Don't let up. Keep on in serving Him. There is a steadiness. There is a steadfastness. There is a strength of character.

There is a resolve, a determination that God commends here. A steadfastness that should be the mindset that we have. In Isaiah 26 verse 3 it says, Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.

Consider that the mindset that Isaiah is recording there. That God will keep in perfect peace. In the Hebrew scriptures it says, Shalom, Shalom.

Perfect peace. Peace, peace. Perfect peace. God will keep us in that perfect Shalom as we put our mind upon Him.

The peace of God. There is a steadfastness in our mind. There is a steadfastness in our hearts. In Psalm 108 verse 1 the psalmist described, O God my heart is fixed.

[6:56] I will sing and give praise even with my glory. My heart is fixed. There is a steadfastness to our mind. It stayed upon Him. There is a steadfastness to our heart.

It is fixed. And I will sing and give praise. There is an unshaken character to the Christian. A firmness of mind, of purpose, of heart, of faithfulness.

And there is a steadfastness of fellowship. In Acts 2, 42 they continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers.

There was a steadfast devotion that they had. And God blessed it. That steadfastness of character, of faith. In Psalm 1 we read of the blessed man.

The blessed man. The happy, the blessed man. The blessed one. His delight is in the law of the Lord. And He loves it.

[7:54] He delights in it. He meditates upon it. And it says of Him, He shall be like a tree planted by the river of water. That bringeth forth His fruit in His season.

His leaf also shall not wither. And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The blessed man has got a resolve. He loves and delights in the scriptures.

And He meditates in them. And He shall be like a tree. You know, the picture of a tree. You know, trees can take some knocking down.

You need some big, muscly men with big chainsaws to knock those trees down. When they're firmly grounded and their roots are securing them vastly to the ground.

That's the picture of the blessed one who loves the Lord. There's a steadfastness. He's planted by the river. There's a steadfastness that we will not be budged.

[8:51] Like the old gospel song, We shall not be moved. Amen. There's a steadfastness there that God commands. In Luke 9, 51, we see that the Lord Jesus steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.

What awaited Him there? When He went to Jerusalem? Sure enough, there was a big party as they said Hosanna to Him. But then, not long after, they were saying, Crucify Him!

Crucify Him! Crucify Him! He knew what awaited Him in Jerusalem. But He steadfastly set His face to go there. Like a flint, He set His face. He would not be deterred. Our Lord and Master would not turn aside.

He would not falter. He was steadfast. And He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. Read of Paul in 2 Timothy 4 verse 16. He says, Our first no man stood with me.

He was alone, yet He was undeterred. He was not deterred. He was not deterred. His faith was steadfastness. Had a steadfastness. In Hebrews 10 verse 23, it says, The son, they held the profession of their faith without wavering.

[10:02] They had a faith and a hope that they could hold on to. Friends, don't give up. Don't give up. Don't give up when you're facing trouble.

When you've got hardship and trouble, hang on. Hang in there. God commands the saints in Colossae.

In Colossians 2 verse 5, Paul says to them, I'm with you in spirit, joining and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

Would that be said of you, of me, of us? That people can see the steadfastness of your faith. It just stands out. God's looking for men and women like that.

Who He can work in and through. One such steadfast man was Abraham. In Nehemiah 9 verse 8, it says, The Lord found his heart faithful. Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20 verse 3, it says, He declared to the Lord, I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart.

[11:14] He had a wholehearted devotion. Hezekiah. Jehoshaphat appointed judges, charging them to serve in the fear of the Lord faithfully and with a perfect heart.

2 Chronicles 19 verse 9. So as many references we could give to steadfastness. Let's be exhorted that way. Secondly, being unmovable.

It's allied to steadfast. Unmovable. It's got the sense of not being shaken. You know, you see sometimes in these old cowboy movies, the tumbleweed blowing down the ghost town.

Blowing down that dusty street. The tumbleweed just blown by the wind every week's way. No room, no grounding there. No stability there. God wants you and I, God's people to be unmovable. Will we be steadfast unmovable? In 1 Peter 5 verse 9 it says of that roaring lion, Whom resists steadfast in the faith.

[12:18] Resist him steadfast in the faith. 1 Peter 5 verse 9. There's a sure and certain hope for you and I that trust him. In Hebrews 6 verse 19 it tells us of the hope that we have as an anchor of the soul.

Both sure and steadfast. What another picture of something that holds us sure and safe. The anchor. I know Julie and I passed a huge anchor that was like a monument to some great vessel. And it was massive. And I thought, wow, that's the kind of anchor I want. Something that's going to be sure and reliable. And that's the kind of anchor of our soul that our faith is.

Our hope in Christ. It's a sure and steadfast one. And we're called to a faith that will not be shaken. Again, that's the sense of this word unmovable. Not only are we steadfast, but we're unmovable. We will not be moved by the things that are thrown at us. We will be unwavering. We will be sure. In times of trouble.

[13:27] When temptation comes or trial. We can stand our ground and be those immovable ones. Faithful ones.

God commenced faithfulness. Friends, there's many scriptures we could cite. And there's not time to do that. But the scriptures, and I can give you the references if you'd like them later.

To faithfulness. Faithfulness. Faithfulness in service. Faithfulness in prayer. Faithfulness in love. Faithfulness in witness. Faithfulness in giving. Faithfulness in witness.

How are we to work? To be steadfast and unmovable. And thirdly, being always abounding in the work of the Lord.

God's people are abounding. Abounding. Jesus says, I'll come that you may have life and have it more abundantly. God's people are to be abounding.

[14:27] In other words, giving, ever giving. Working with his empowerment. Enabled, empowered from him. him. There's an old time song that says, give of your best to the master.

Give of the strength of your youth. Throw your souls fresh glowing ardour into the battle for truth. Jesus has set the example. Dauntless was he young and brave.

Give him your loyal devotion. Give him the best that you have. Give of your best to the master. Give of the strength of your youth. Clad in salvation's full armour.

Join in the battle for truth. Give of your best to the master. Give him first place in your heart. Give him first place in your service. Consecrate every part.

Give and to you it will be given. God his beloved son gave. Gratefully seek to serve him. Give him the best that you have.

[15:28] There's an abounding. And God desires us to pull off all the stops out. God desires us that we be abounding Christians. That there be no half measures.

Not half-hearted service but wholehearted. To be those abounding ones. Fresh, fruitful and growing. To be abounding. What does it mean? Now I could picture it by pouring a glass and making it overflow on purpose.

That's the sense of abounding. where you can't contain it. It's just overflowing. It's flowing out all around. All over. More than we can expect.

That's the Christian life. The victorious Christian life. There's a wonderful abounding quality to it. Because God wants you to overflow to others around about you. You're not blessed to just be blessed but to be blessed to be a blessing.

He's made you such that He's given you more blessings that you can't contain. You just need to share it. Always abounding. There's an abundance in Christ.

[16:34] We're not talking about material things so much as that spiritual sense of the abundant life. Because He is in us and with us and working through us.

Why are we abounding? Because the Lord is our resource. The Lord is our resource. In 2 Corinthians 9 verse 8 it says God is able to make all grace abound towards you in that ye having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work.

So the Lord will give you the resources that you need to do His will. He will make grace abound to you and He'll make you abound in His work.

And He's the ultimate source of all the empowerment that you need. In Colossians 1 29 Paul says that I labour striving according to His working.

His working which works in me mightily. When the Lord Jesus left He said I will be with you always. Always. He didn't leave us without His help.

[17:47] And He sent the Holy Spirit to empower His people. And we have that power today by His grace. Empowered to every good word and work. And as a Christian He says to you take my yoke upon you and learn of me take my yoke work while it is day serve while you can as often as able as you can.

Always abounding. Always. Now I want to tell you that word always in the Greek it means always. That's what it means. That's what it means brother.

Always means always. That's what it means. Always means always. It means continuing. It means never ceasing. Always means always. Always abounding.

That's what the Christian wife is meant to be. Always abounding. Here's some always that the Bible says. Always let your speech be with grace. Always rejoice in the Lord.

Always always obey. Always be ready to give an answer. Always the Bible says that we should be always abounding.

[19:00] Always in His work. Always about what He wants us to do. Always it means every day. Every day. not once a week.

Not first morning. Always. Always. Always means when we're being watched and when we're not being watched. When our work is seen and when it's not seen.

When we're being praised and when nobody notices. Always means always. Always abounding. always has the sense of over and over.

Sorry, abounding rather, has the sense of over and over. Of excelling. The opposite of abounding is just do the minimum. Just do the minimum.

Now sometimes we can get like that, can't we? I'm just going to do the minimum I can. Just going to do the least I can just to get to heaven and just do the minimum that I can.

[20:10] Rather, let's choose to be always abounding. Always abounding in His work. What is His work? What is that work?

The work of the Lord. It's interesting, it doesn't say work for the Lord, it says work of the Lord. So it's His work, it's the work that He gives you to do. God's desire is that His people be zealous of good works.

That's Titus 2, 14. A true and faithful servant, we can abound despite opposition, despite our feelings. So we've seen my beloved brethren, being steadfast, unmovable, always abounding. And now, we've seen the how, what about the why? Why should I bother? Why should I? Why should I want to care about God and working and serving and doing what God wants of me? It says the why in the last part of the verse, it says why? For as much as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. Your labour is not in vain when it is in him.

[21:22] Notice the word there is labour. Labour. Now I used to labour probably harder than I do now to be honest because I used to work in a factory, in a tyre factory. And I used to, my job was getting under the tyre production machines and scooping out all the gunky goo and grease and muck and bits of tyre and filth and scum underneath the bottom of these tyre producing machines.

So I used to labour a lot harder than I do now, I must say, in some respects. And yet, all labour is blessed of God, isn't it? I was glad of that job because I used to be on a rotating shift having morning, afternoon and night shifts and I was blessed to be able to apply to be the cleaner because it was a daytime shift.

That was a blessing for me to be the daytime shift cleaner and to be able to clean that factory and I made the best of that job. It was a labour, a labour and there's nothing wrong with labour.

It's a good thing. God, God says it's good to labour. Labour is a good thing. And the word labour has got a sense of exertion to it. There's a toil that prompts fatigue.

Labour, it's a word that evokes thoughts of sweat. Labour, the Bible says we labourers together with God. God is the leading hand.

[23:02] Labourers together with God. God works with us. God is a labourer. And when the apostle writes labour, he says your labour is not in vain. It's not in vain.

This labour has got a sense of everyday work that can lead to weariness, hard work. It's the same word used in Matthew 11 where he says, are some labour and are heavy laden.

It's the verb form of this word labour. It's got a sense of hard work. Hard work. In John 4 verse 6 the same word is spoken of as Jesus who is weary or tired.

In Luke 5 it's got the reference to the disciples as they toiled. They worked hard all night and they caught no fish. You can imagine sailors on a choppy sea, long hours and nothing to show for it.

That was labour. They worked hard. They worked hard. The Bible says for you, my brother and my sister today, your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

[24:11] If it's a spiritual work that you're doing, God will help you do it. He'll enable you. He'll give you his Holy Spirit power. As you work for his glory, as you do it unto the Lord, as you approach all the duties of life in the mundane secular world, if you're working in a tire factory, picking up grease and scum, God will bless you for that labour as you work heartily as unto the Lord.

If you're working in a chicken factory, as I know some of our folk do, it's grimy, ugly kind of work, and yet God will help you to do that when you're cleaning up mess, as some of you do in your jobs. God will help you as you do it unto Him, as you do it for Him, as unto the Lord, just like the servants were commanded as they served their earthly masters in Colossians 3.

So serve willingly, serve cheerfully as to the Lord. It's a high privilege that we have in serving in that way. There's an eternal dimension to the mundane everyday work that we do.

Now I'm going to tell you a story now, and I've got an object lesson too, so try not to keep it too long. But I brought my toolbox along here today, and as you can see I don't use it very much, it's coming in dust, and I want to tell you about a conference that was held, a conference that was held, now you might question whether this story is true or not, and I have to tell you most likely it's not true, but there were some carpenters' tools, they had a conference one day, some carpenters' tools, they wanted to have a conference and there was, Brother Hammer was presiding, now there's all brothers in this, that's not mean there's some sisters at this conference, but according to this reference here, Brother Hammer was presiding at this conference, but the others informed Brother Hammer that he'd have to leave because he was too noisy, Brother Hammer was just too noisy, alright he said,

[26:19] I'll go, but Brother Plain must withdraw too, and I don't have a plane to show you, but the plane must withdraw too, there's no depth to his work, it's always on the surface, Brother Plain responded, I'll go, but, I'll go, but Brother Rule will have to go too, here's a ruler, if you like, brother ruler, he's constantly measuring people, as if he were the only one who's right, brother ruler then complained about brother sandpaper, brother sandpaper, he's rougher than he used to be, he's very abrasive, and he's always rubbing people up the wrong way, who knows people like that, they help us be humble, these people, the sandpaper

Christians, brother sandpaper was annoyed by brother saw, he's a dusty old saw, brother saw, claiming that brother saw had a very sharp and cutting personality, brother saw leveled his criticism at brother level, saying he was always tended to blame others for being crooked and unbalanced, brother leveled had a major problem with brother hand drill, I don't have a hand drill, but I've got one of these kind of drills, brother hand drill was accused of coming along and sticking his long penetrating nose into other people's business, and wouldn't you know it, brother hand drill was really bothered by brother clamp, because brother clamp always seemed to be so uptight and never seemed to be relaxed, and in the midst of this bitter discussion, the carpenter of Nazareth walked in, and he spoke sternly to all the tools, rebuking them, and he told them to hold your peace, he shared with them that every one of them had a purpose, and they were all uniquely made to fulfil that purpose, he told them that every one of them was important and had a special job to do, the carpenter told them that he needed every one of them in order to do his work, he then went to his work bench to make a pulpit from which to preach the gospel, he used the hammer, the plane, the sword, the level, the hand drill, and the clamp, no one tool was untouched or unused, and after the pulpit was finished,

Brother Rule arose and said, I see now that all of us are labourers together with God, I see now that all of us are labourers together with God, the same is true with the members of his church, believers in the body of Christ, God wants to use all of us, every member is needed, every member is important, every one of us has weaknesses and character flaws and sins and many good qualities to.

Sometimes the saints rub each other up the wrong way, but Ephesians 4 verse 2 says, forbearing one another in love, in other words, putting up with one another in love.

So may the story of the carpenter's tools remind us that if we're filled with God's spirit, if he is in control, if we're about the work of the Lord pleasing him, we can build up one another and every one of us can be used of him to his praise as a shining testimony to those outside of Christ.

[30:41] So every one of you that are saved today, you are important, you have a work to do, whether it's seemingly insignificant or not. Every one of you, if you're a saved man or woman today, God has a place for you and a work for you to do.

without the hammer, the carpenter should not do the job. Without you and the church, the church would be missing one of its most important and needed members.

The carpenter of Nazareth, the Lord Jesus Christ uses every one of you, of us. And like in the carpenter's shop, everyone has a unique place in his work.

friends, we've talked about the victorious Christian life, we've talked about the work of the Lord, we've talked about labourers. Jesus says the harvest truly is plenteous, lots of it, but the labourers are few.

Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. Let us pray. Let us Thank you.