

## THE WHOLE CHRISTIAN

September 27, 2015

The greatest people to ever live have been people of God. The only begotten Son of God came to earth, not to be a carpenter, not to be a physician, not to be a motivator of people (even though He did all those things), but to be a preacher, and a godly man! He came to “seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10), and He did so by the power of preaching (Rom. 1:16)! Without doubt, the Christian is called to duty by the Holy Spirit, but through the Gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 2:14). Christianity is a ministry and that is how we should view it, it is a profession that requires great study, but more importantly it is a ministry to which we ought to give ourselves. Though all people are called by the Gospel of Christ, it takes a special person to dedicate himself/herself to God. If the Christian life is a ministry, an occupation, and a livelihood (Phil. 1:27), we should live that way. The Christian way of life is one of great diversity, and Christians impact the world in many different ways.

To better characterize the duties of the “whole Christian,” one must look into the various aspects of that life in order to better understand exactly what a “whole Christian” does. To accomplish that, we will address certain areas that are very common to every man and woman that decides to dedicate their lives to Christ. Three areas will be noticed: relationships, the work, and discouragement.

The fundamental responsibility shouldered by any Christian is to have relationships with people from every walk of life. If one is going to successfully fulfill the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20), he must have the same purpose Jesus had, which was “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10). The only way that can be possible is if the Christian can relate to those who are lost and to those that strive to maintain their Christianity.

Obviously, a relationship is a social affiliation where two or more people relate to one another in some way and on some level. The Lord Jesus and the great apostle Paul are the two best examples of being able to interact with other people on a common plane. Jesus was able to effectively communicate with the scholars of the Law (Lk. 2:46) and with the common men of His day (Mt. 9:10). Of course, Paul exclaimed, “To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:22). It becomes very clear, from a spiritual point of view, why relationships are the fundamental element of any Christians work, and why he should cultivate those relationships to the best of his ability.

The first and most precious earthly relationship any Christian has is with his own family. Even among denominations, the family is a sacred institution of the world. The code developed by the Disciples of Christ concerning their clergy states, “I will be fair to my family and will endeavor to give them the time and consideration to which they are entitled” (Oates, Wayne. *The Minister’s Own Mental Health*. Great Neck, NY: Channel Press, Inc., 1961, pg. 159.). It can be common for zealous Christians to devote most of their time

toward the lost while ignoring their own families. In most cases, this likely happens unintentionally, but it is still extremely harmful to the family over which God has made him head. How many times have, especially, a preacher lost his own children in pursuit of converting strangers to the Lord's church? Far too often!

How can a young and older Christians alike, avoid those common pitfalls that so often come their way? First, they must be diligent students of the Word of God, and implant His message into their own hearts firmly. Joshua proclaimed to the nation of Israel, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24:15). If one chooses to follow God's Word, he will undoubtedly understand how important family is to God. It was the great apostle Paul that commanded fathers in regard to their children to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Being dedicated to the spiritual and physical well being of one's family is just as important as being dedicated to saving the lost in the world.

The Christian who wants to have godly relationships with family and with others in the world must also be a person of prayer. When Jesus made important decisions in this life, they were always preceded with diligent prayer to the Father. He spoke to God before choosing the apostles, and He entreated Him in prayer before His walk to the cross. If it was necessary for Jesus to pray, it is necessary for all people to pray.

One of the foremost hurdles that any Christian must cross is the challenge to motivate people. Notice that, Christians are commanded to motivate people (Heb. 10:23-25)! Charles Schwab was an industrial genius hired by Andrew Carnegie to oversee his vast steel empire, and was the first man in history to earn one million dollars a year while in another's employment (Leggett, Marshall. *Genuine Ministers*. Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 1989, pg. 50.). A particular conversation with Schwab illustrated his great success.

"Schwab was asked what equipped him to earn over three thousand dollars per day. His knowledge of steel? His expertise in cost accounting? His contacts with high finance? NO. He replied, 'I have lots of men working for me who know more about steel than I do. I consider my ability to arouse enthusiasm among the men the greatest asset I possess.'"

The Christian life is a life of relationships, but they have to be godly relationships, and built upon the unmovable foundation of the Bible, not the feelings and desires of people. Next week we will continue our study of the "whole Christian" and notice the work that he or she is to carry out, according to God's Word.