

Let's Be About Our Father's Business

Marlin Fannin—May 11, 2013

It's certainly has been a busy week; we had a good conference and we discussed many things. One was about the work of God, the Gospel being preached and how to handle certain problems we face and also new people.

We know that when Christ was only 12-years-old that his parents—after they had gone to Jerusalem for the Holy Days and they were on the way back—missed Him. They couldn't find Him so they went back to Jerusalem and found Him there with the religious leaders, the doctorates of those days, asking them questions and also giving them some answers. When His parents asked Him, 'Didn't you know we were concerned about You?' Christ replied, 'Didn't you know that I should be about My Father's business.'

We should also, daily—as Christ did—be about our Father's business. 1-Corinthians 15:58: "So then, 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."

I'd like to go over some responsibilities and things that we have.

Responsibilities as ministers:

James 3:1: "My brethren, do not many of you become teachers, knowing that we will receive more severe judgment." If you desire to be a teacher that's not wrong, but it has a lot of responsibility that comes with it. As teachers we know that God holds us more accountable for what we say, what we do and how we act; what kind of example that we set.

We know that we are to be imitators. Here's someone that we need to imitate, Ephesians 5:1: Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor" (vs 1-2). We are to be imitators of God as His children, to imitate Him.

It also talks about imitators of leaders if they are setting the right example as Paul did. It says to, 'follow him.' The main thing is we want to imitate our God—our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ—by walking in His laws and commandments and doing the things that pleases Him just as Christ was pleasing to the Father. He said, 'I do the things that the Father teaches or tells Me to do. I always do the will of the Father.' That's Who we want to imitate.

John said, 'There is no greater joy than to hear that those that he had taught, that he had

worked with, were called *his children* and there was no greater joy than that I hear that my children are walking in Truth; continue to walk in Truth.' It's a walk that we have to continue walking all of our lives. We cannot turn and walk back.

1-Corinthians 4:14: "I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but as my beloved children I warn *you*. For you might have ten thousand tutors in Christ, but *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I did beget you through the Gospel" (vs 14-15). He says that 'through Christ I did it through the Gospel. It wasn't any great effort on his part. It was God using him.

Verse 16: "Therefore, I am exhorting you to be imitators of me." As he walked in Truth, as he taught them the laws of God, he's exhorting them to then be imitators of himself [Paul]."

Verse 17: "For this cause I sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved son, and faithful in *the* Lord... [he was faithful] ...who will remind you of my ways that *are* in Christ, exactly as I teach everywhere in every church." The things that they were teaching were the Word of God. He said that he would send Timothy to remind you of the thing that 'I have taught and that I teach in every church'—not just one church but in every church where he traveled and where he taught.

Philippians 3:17: "Brethren, be imitators together of me, and bear in mind those who walk in this way, as you have us *for* an example."

I was talking to one of the brethren at breakfast and he kept mentioning *the way*. I said, 'I like that, because that's exactly what it is and that's what it talks about.' *The way! It's a way of life!* That's the way we walk everyday, and we climb. Whatever the obstacles are, we, with God's help, overcome them. It is a way of life that we walk in.

As ministers we know that people look to us. We have a greater responsibility. We're not perfect people. We're like everyone else, we have faults, we have weaknesses. Someone once told me—a minister, years ago—that ***God uses the strength of people, not the weaknesses!*** God does truly use the strengths of people. You may see weaknesses there; we all have them, but if all of us are striving to walk in the way of God, to keep His laws and commandments, strive to be an example then, it says, you can imitate us, because we're striving to imitate Christ and God the Father and do what His will is for us.

Responsibility as a group or church:

We also have, as ministers and as individuals, and also the Church—the called out ones; the 'ekklesia'—have a responsibility as well.

1-Thessalonians 1:4: "Knowing your election, brethren, *as you are* beloved by God. For our Gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in *the* Holy Spirit... [that's the power of the very Spirit of God coming on Pentecost, reminding ourselves each year about the Spirit of God] ...and with great conviction; even as you know what sort of men we were among you for your sake. became imitators of us and of the Lord, having accepted the Word in much persecution with *the* joy of *the* Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all those in Macedonia and Achaia who are believers. For the Word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every *other* place also your faith toward God has spread abroad, so that there is no need for us to say anything" (vs 4-8).

Here's a good example of a church or a fellowship if you want to call it that. They were setting an example that their faith, their activity, their zeal, their joy began to spread around, became contagious, some of the other began to catch on and begin to be inspired as well.

We, as a group, a church—the called out ones—have a responsibility also to set an example. If that's a right example then other churches can follow that, just as we follow Christ, follow God, that others can see that example and follow that as well and be inspired and encouraged.

Handling new people:

Hopefully, at some point, we can get a lot of the things out of our system regarding the past and the church wars, especially for those of us who have been around a long time and with CBCG.

People come in. Why do they come? *To hear the Truth!*

- they're not here to hear a lot of gossip
- they're not here to hear a lot of things of the past

Their minds have been pricked and are eager and full of zeal in many cases. We need to watch what we say, how we act and what we do, because, again, it goes to example. *We want to be examples of God and Jesus Christ, and set a right example for them!* Not to start bringing things up that's going to discourage them or make them think, 'what in the world have I walked into,' and not come back anymore.

They've had their minds pricked by some literature or something they've heard from the Church at Home program. A lot of new people that

are coming in are from Church at Home. It tells us—and I remind myself as well—that we need to watch what we say. They're there to hear the Truth and to be encouraged. Our example is one of the best things we can do, as well as our words of encouragement, the words of the Scripture.

We know we've been 'recycled' many times. There's Asian cardboard, and in recycling they do not want Asian cardboard. The reason being is it has already been recycled. USA cardboard is still good quality and hasn't been reprocessed. Asian cardboard has already been processed one time. You can tear it very easily; not very good quality. We need to realize that a lot of us have been recycled and getting pretty thin and tear pretty easily. We need to become stronger than that.

We need to listen to those that God is calling and bringing in and just remind ourselves that we need to be an example of encouragement and be able to answer the questions that we should be able to. It's just like my youngest son was recently in Romania for a couple of weeks and he was tell about while he was there the hotel where he ate at night, this one waiter was asking questions: Do you believe in the pope? *He said no!* Are you Catholic? *He said no!*

Conversations went on and he told the waiter a little bit about what he believed. They talked about all these new gadgets. I don't know how to work them, but he knows how to work them. He was actually able to pull up the Bible on that and show him a few Scriptures. This person told my son, 'I like what you believe. I like the things you're telling me.'

Again, not to go out and preach, because sometimes that can get us in trouble if God is not really opening that door. But be able to give an answer for the hope that lies in it. We should be familiar enough with the Scriptures where we can. If not, say, 'I will look that up and I will get back to you.' That's how we need to do it.

If I don't have a concordance it's hard for me to find anything. A lot of stuff is up there, but I just can't pull it back. I'm glad I have a concordance. The best thing to do, if you don't have the answer, is say, 'I will get back with you.' Then be sure that you do get back with them and then give them the answers.

We see an example of Priscilla and Aquila; they knew the Scriptures; they knew about Jesus Christ; about His resurrection. And there came one who was knowledgeable about God's Word, but he didn't understand some of these other things only having learned from John [the Baptist].

Acts 18:24: "Now, a certain Jew named

Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man who was **skilled in the Scriptures**, came to Ephesus. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John” (vs 24-25). His information, his knowledge was kind of limited.

Verse 26: “And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. And after hearing him, Aquila and Priscilla took him and expounded the way of God to him more perfectly. And when he was determined to travel to Achaia, the brethren wrote to the disciples, exhorting *them* to welcome him; *and* after arriving, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace, for he powerfully refuted the Jews publicly, showing by the Scriptures *that* Jesus was the Christ” (vs 26-28).

Here's an example where they were able to take Apollos—a very learned man, an very eloquent man, a good speaker—and give him and tell him a little bit more knowledge because he had only had the understanding of John the Baptist.

There are times when we can help others. Sometimes you think you can't tell this guy anything; he's highly educated and on and on. But there are things they don't know and we can certainly tell them and help them out.

1-Thessalonians 5:11: “Therefore, encourage one another, and edify one another, even as you are already doing. Now we beseech you, brethren, to acknowledge those who are laboring among you, and are overseeing you, and are instructing you in *the* Lord” (vs 11-12). We do need to recognize those who are truly striving to oversee properly the love.

We [ministers] go through the same problems and trials that you go through. We get down! We get discouraged! We need your prayers and your help. As we pray for you, you need to be praying for us and all the brethren, not just us, *all* the brethren.

Verse 13: “And to greatly respect them in love for the sake of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. Now we encourage you, brethren, *to* admonish those who are irresponsible, console the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient toward everyone. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone; but always be pursuing what is good, both toward one another and toward all *men*”(vs 13-15).

We need to be praying for one another, encouraging one another. There are some that need to be instructed or taught or corrected in some way, and we need to be able to do that as well.

We need to learn, as it says here, to be responsible. We need to learn how to solve problems. That's part of it—solving problems.

You're going to have problems. Learn how to solve those problems, and pray for one another.

We should always be abounding in the work of the Lord, and however that applies to us and whatever function we're in or whatever office that has been given to you, we need to always be abounding in that work and doing it toward God and Jesus Christ. Doing it as either elders, ministers, deacons, a church or individuals.

Let's us then, brethren, be about our Father's business.

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 15:58
- 2) James 3:1
- 3) Ephesians 5:1-2
- 4) 1 Corinthians 4:14-17
- 5) Philippians 3:17
- 6) 1 Thessalonians 1:4-8
- 7) Acts 18:24-28
- 8) 1 Thessalonians 5:11-15

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