

“WHAT IS THAT TO THEE? FOLLOW THOU ME!”

By Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

- A. John 21:15-22 - Exegete text briefly.
 - 1. Peter's interest in John's duty bought him a reprimand from the Lord.
 - 2. May have been smarting from having his love and devotion questioned in the presence of others.
- B. It is often easier to tell another how to conduct his affairs than to properly direct our own.
 - 1. Husbands know how to improve their wives; vice versa.
 - 2. Elders and preachers; members among each other.
 - 3. Must learn that improvement begins with self.
 - a. Jesus said, "Follow thou me!"
 - 4. Ever try to help another with a helpful suggestion or gentle admonishment and come away feeling ignored or rejected?
 - 5. Could it be because others see our own area of deficiency?
 - 6. If we make up that lack, our efforts at evangelism and edification will be more effective.
- C. As you listen to this lesson, keep saying to yourself what the Lord said to Peter, "What is that to thee; follow thou me."
- D. A serious deficiency in the kingdom today is placing personal work low on our own list of priorities.
 - 1. "If there is time after the news and chores and job, and the housework and ball game and magazine, and TV and fishing and PTA program, then if I feel up to it..."
 - 2. How much of that will we justify when the Lord says to us on Judgment Day, "I'm sending your neighbor to hell; why didn't you take the time to teach him?"
- E. The two aspects of teaching the lost under consideration are:
 - 1. Personal - What have **you** done to reach the lost & restore the erring?
 - 2. Work - What have you **done** to reach the lost and restore the erring?

I. PERSONAL

- A. Not real sure that the Lord's will is understood on this point.
 - 1. Personal means just that... for the individual.
 - 2. New Testament instructions are not done by proxy.
 - 3. I can no more do the personal work for another than I can be baptized for someone else.
 - 4. A few members here cannot do the work for the rest; no more than a few can do the worshipping for the rest.
 - 5. Voting in a business meeting to let the preacher do it.
- B. We must bear one another's burdens and work together.
 - 1. A husband can help out his wife and likewise in return during hard times, but they cannot exchange places.
 - 2. Even if the few agreed to do the work of the many, that would not excuse the others for neglecting their own tasks.

3. Eph. 4:11-16 - God did not assign tasks for all Christians merely to get the job done, but to help us grow and develop.
- C. Col. 4:5-6; 1Peter 3:15; Gal. 6:10; Matt. 28:19-20
 1. These are commands I cannot do for you no matter what my level of skill, no matter how much I am paid, no matter how hard I try, and no matter how willing I am to do it.
 2. One Christian cannot allow another to do his work for him and still expect to receive a reward in heaven for work he did not do himself.
 - a. 2Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12

II. WORK (Perfect Word, Priceless Souls, Precious Love)

- A. Not so sure that “work” is understood on this point as well.
 1. Involves time, effort, thought, sweat, sometimes tears, always sacrifice
 2. It is work; why else would God prepare heaven as a place of rest?
- B. It is not complex or arcane; it simply requires that we exert ourselves and expend our resources of time, energy, and money.
 1. Discussing the word of God with friends and acquaintances in our homes. We converse fluently on a myriad of other subjects...
 2. Giving a tract to someone, thereby sparking his interest and giving you an opportunity.
 3. Show others that you are happy with both of your lives.
 - a. Baptized in dill pickle juice and dried off with a rusty file
 - b. By evidencing Christian joy in our lives, we make the Gospel of Christ attractive to the world.
 4. Inviting the storekeeper, mailman, paperboy, meter reader to services; make yourself available for transport.
 5. Write a sincere letter telling another of your concern for their spiritual state. Everyone loves mail.
 6. Pick up the phone to show interest in a weak member.
 7. Call friends about gospel meetings or special Bible lessons.
 - a. I frequently announce my lessons of special interest.
 - b. Kitty Morgan and the JoJon in Follansbee.
 8. Gathering neighborhood children in your home to watch Bible videos or for home Bible classes.
 9. Send five personal invitations to announce the gospel meeting.
 - a. Then be there every night to support the teaching.
 10. Develop teaching skills by volunteering to help with the scheduled Bible classes.
 11. Warmly greet and welcome visitors (announcement isn't enough)
 12. Teach your own family; have Bible studies in your home.
- C. Just a dozen out of hundreds of practical suggestions to get started doing personal work.
 1. These are things everyone can do, but it involves work.
 2. If you were an employer, how many of your workers would you give a paycheck to? “Only those who work for it.”

3. How many people will the Lord reward with heaven? Only those who work for it
4. Do not discriminate; do not screen people for the Lord (Grandma Blake)

III. TOOLS

- A. A godly life
 1. Should live so as to have nothing of which to be ashamed.
 2. Ungodly living destroys folk's confidence in you.
 3. 1Tim. 4:12, 16
- B. An honest desire to see souls saved
 1. Not just to build numbers or contribution; most people can spot disingenuousness. Done to make hell empty and heaven full
 2. Rom. 9:1-3
- C. Love for souls
 1. Rom. 10:1 - What do you wish for?
 2. We must have the desire to be saved in order to stimulate it in others.
- D. A knowledge of the truth
 1. 2Peter 1:2-4 - Get in love with the Bible and get plumb full of it.
 2. Need a working knowledge of the gospel, religious error, and the way people think.
 3. We learned enough to work at our secular jobs, we can learn enough to work our life's profession.
- E. Deep faith
 1. Mark 11:23 - Don't doubt or waver; others can read this.
 2. If you are convicted by the truth, let others know it.
 3. If not, get someone to teach you until you are convinced.
- F. Courage to stand for the truth.
 1. Jude 3
 2. The truth will win in the end no matter how hard error fights.
- G. Integrity
 1. Speak consistently with yourself and especially the word.
 2. 1Peter 4:11

Conclusion:

- A. Jesus said of Peter's interest in John's future: "What is that to thee? Follow thou me!"
- B. What are you doing to enlarge the Kingdom of God?
- C. Invitation - 2Kings 6-7