

## Get After It! – 1 Cor 15:58

1 Cor 15:58; Glad you've joined us on this Memorial Day weekend . . .

And trust you'll take some time to reflect on the men and women who've given their lives in service to our country – to ensure the freedoms we enjoy  
Including the freedom to worship; We're blessed  
And it's incumbent on us to make the most of it

- Which is one of the things Paul gets at here in v58  
It's his final thought at the end of his long coverage of the resurrection  
And it serves as one of the dearest and clearest admonitions in the Bible, for how we are to live as a result – as a result of our future resurrection; our future hope

*Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*

IOW stay the course, and get after it! That's the essence his short sentence – get after it

But don't miss the loving manner in which he says it – *My beloved brothers*; My dear brothers and sisters in Christ  
After all that he's been through with them, after all the issues he's addressed – from sexual immorality and idolatry, to dysfunctional worship and a rebellious attitude . . .  
He still considers them precious; He's still *loving* in his leadership; And we s/b too

### Be loving in your leadership

Whether you lead a Small Group, Bible Study, Service Team, Student group, Children's class, compassion ministry, or just your family – be *loving* in your leadership

Really? *All* the time? I need to be loving in my leadership toward *everybody*?  
Even the ones who are continuing in sin? Even the ones who have an attitude? Even the ones who judge me wrongly? Even the “pessimistic Pete's” and “negative nannies”  
Even the ones with authority issues? Or those who show me little respect?  
Do I have to love *them* in my leadership?

Yep; Even them; *Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ* Paul said in 11:1  
Don't just consider them *brothers* – but *beloved* brothers; Be *loving* in your leadership

Like Paul says in **1 Thess 5:14** – *We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.*  
That's loving leadership; Including admonishment – as in fitting rebukes and firm warnings when necessary\*\*\*\*\*  
By way of example, be loving in your leadership

And then, by way of instruction . . .

### Be disciplined in your walk

Or as Paul says it – *be steadfast*; Resolute, persistent, diligent, dedicated, unswerving  
About what? Your perseverance in the faith; Your walk with Christ

*Be disciplined* in the way you conduct your *life* before him  
Be disciplined in how you live out your *relationship* with him  
Be disciplined in your pursuit of holiness, *like* him

IOW do the things that make for godly conduct

Things that *lead* to a close relationship; Things that *result* in Christ-like holiness  
None of which should ever be reduced to a checklist, but a checklist helps

So here's 6 ways to be disciplined in your walk

#### 1. Spend time with the Lord every day

Dedicated time, where you pray – both talking to him, *and* listening

#### 2. Study the Word – don't just read it, study it

Soak it up, think about it, connect the dots, apply it to your life

#### 3. Make Jesus the constant companion of your thoughts

Have an ongoing conversation with him; Consciously consider him a part of every encounter, every discussion, and every situation

#### 4. Go to church every week – for corporate worship and teaching

#### 5. Get involved in people's lives – like in a SG or Bible Study, for the purpose of fellowship, prayer, accountability, and sharpening

#### 6. Serve others – whether inside these walls, or outside, find an outlet to regularly serve and bless others\*\*\*\*\*

6 ways to be disciplined in your walk with Jesus; Steadfast

The only thing left, is to get after it

### Be firm in your convictions

That's *immovable* – as in fixed, set, un-swayed, firm  
Establish your convictions, plant your flag, and don't move

Which requires first of all that you know what you believe, and why

If you don't know what you believe and why you believe it, you won't even *have* convictions; There will *be* no flag to plant

Which takes us back to studying the Word and being disciplined in your walk

So as you learn, and your convictions take shape – plant your flag; As in sink it deep, and take a stand for all to see

Much like those early artic explorers did when they reached the North Pole; They drove their flag deep – for all to see, and none to move

And made sure they took a picture to forever identify with it

- I was so encouraged in this recently, by one of our college students  
His name is **Curtis Ritter**, he goes to UNI, and was involved in our youth group for 3 years before leaving for college

And the first semester of his freshman year, he was required to take a class called “Religions of the World”

During which, his professor, a woman with a PhD in the field, was talking about Christianity and the first 5 books of the Bible

And in the course of her discussion one day, she made the point that when God said, “It's not good that man should be alone” . . .

He was just addressing loneliness, and saying that it can be offset by any *manner* of friendships or relationships, same sex or otherwise

He wasn't referring to marriage as we know it

And that was *after* she said, that while the modern-day church is *against* homosexuality and same-sex marriage, the Bible isn't  
And then proceeded to use the statement in Genesis 2 to support it

- At which point Curtis could no longer contain himself, and said – “Ma’am, I don’t mean any disrespect, but if that statement in Gen 2 has nothing to do with marriage . . . Why is it in the immediate context of the very first marriage, between a man and a woman?” IOW if the sex of the partners doesn’t matter . . . Why is it that God fashioned only a *woman*, to be a helper fit for Adam?”

To which the professor responded by saying, that while she was impressed with his knowledge of the Bible . . .  
She didn’t think the passage really limits one-flesh companionship to heterosexual marriage; Really?  
It’s one of those times when you look at a person and think – “I know you *think* that what you’re saying is true, but the evidence is so *obviously* against you . . . That you seem really foolish for saying so”

- The point being – Curtis was a first semester freshman in college, and took a stand In the face of falsehood, he planted his flag in front of a class of peers and a PhD professor, and respectfully remained *immovable*  
Firm in his convictions\*\*\*\*\*

And we should be too; Whether it’s at the water cooler, the restaurant, the classroom, or your living room – establish your convictions, plant your flag, and don’t move  
You may not know the *reasons* you disagree; And you may not be able to point to the chapter and verse; But you *can* say – “That doesn’t seem right,” and stay there  
Not obnoxious, but immovable; Be firm in your convictions

### **Be active in ministry**

*Steadfast, immovable*, [and] *always abounding in the work of the Lord*  
Abounding, as in exceeding the requirements; Overflowing; Going above and beyond

Like those in our military, who’ve been awarded various medals and honors for their abounding work in battle; Their heroic feats in the line of fire  
Exceeding the requirements of their training, and going above and beyond  
That’s the idea of *abounding* here

And Paul says we should *always* do that; Referring, to the *spiritual* battle; The *work of the Lord*; Anything that advances his kingdom and glorifies his name; Anything  
It doesn’t have to be inside these walls; It doesn’t have to be a formal ministry  
And it doesn’t have to be a group thing  
It often *is* on all counts, but it doesn’t have to be

The work of the Lord is anything that proclaims the gospel, reaches the lost, disciples the saints, blesses the sinner, or serves the church; That’s the work of the Lord

- And always abounding in it wouldn’t be such a big deal, if we didn’t worship so much at the altar of *leisure* and *recreation* – two of the great American idols these days

Isn’t that true? Do we not pursue leisure and recreation as if they’re the be-all-end-all of our lives? We do; From kid’s sports and movies, to snow-birding and vacations . . .  
We often make those things the primary pursuit of our existence

Don’t get me wrong; In proper proportion, rest and relaxation are good; Very good  
They can help restore your energy, increase your effectiveness, and sharpen your focus  
Not only that, but God *commanded* that we rest; He commanded we take a Sabbath; And even built in times of jubilee – times of *extended* rest; vacations  
So in proper proportion, leisure and rest are not only good, but *necessary* in God’s design

- But oh how easily they become ends in and of themselves, don’t they?  
Demanding more and more of our time, energy, attention, and effort

But that’s not the worst part; The worst part, is that many believers have so bought in – that they’ve completely removed themselves from God’s work  
They’ve “*hobbiied*” themselves out of usefulness (Mac, 447)

Is that you? I hope not; And I’m thankful for so many in our church who haven’t  
People who are *active* in ministry and *abounding in the work of the Lord* – despite their age, or stage of life, or other options at their disposal

### **• Like Gary & Donna Lanman**

Gary and Donna have been coming to our church for about 6 years now, and I want to tell you a bit about their life

They’re in their late 70’s, they’ve been married for almost 57 years – in fact June 6<sup>th</sup> is their anniversary; And they’ve been believers since they were 9 and 10 years old  
But the thing that strikes me most about them, is that they’re *tireless* servants of the Lord; As active in ministry as you can possibly be

Which goes all the way back to decisions like Gary’s – to leave the family farm, go to college, and become a pastor  
And their mutual decision in *college*, to wake up early every Sunday morning, drive 30 miles to a nearby town, and then go door to door to wake up the kids . . .  
In order to teach them the Bible

Which lead to them planting a church in Burlington right out of college, and then coming here in 1960, to plant another  
Which Gary pastored, and in which they ministered – for the next 37 years  
10 of which required Gary to be bi-vocational; And found Donna traveling to surrounding towns to hold Good News Bible Clubs for kids

Until finally they retired in 1997, and started a sea shell collection by visiting the beaches of the world – *not*  
They continued to lead/teach a Sunday School class for the next 9 years, until they came here in the Spring of ‘06, where it didn’t take them long to pick up where they left off

So that now, they lead a SG every week; Teach Kindergarteners in CM *every week*  
Serve on the Dream Team folding and stuffing bulletins *every week* . . .

Assist in the preparing CM materials *every week* . . .  
And Donna serves as a Table Leader in Women's Ministries *every week*

On top of which, they make quilts *throughout* the week, that they donate to various ministries and organizations . . .  
And that doesn't include their *informal* work of ministry – as they interact with dozens of *people* throughout the week

I think that qualifies as being active in ministry, don't you?  
At a time in their lives when most people have wound down and quit\*\*\*\*\*

- What about you? Are you active in ministry? *Always abounding in the work of the Lord?* *Always?* As much as you can? Or just every *other* week? Or barely at all?

Are you carrying the load around here, or part of it?  
Do you say to yourself – “Somebody else can do CM; I've served my time?”  
I hope not; I hope you're as active in ministry as you can possibly be  
Not only b/c we need you; But more importantly, b/c God commands it  
And if you obey, if you go all out to be all in – you'll find it to be one of the greatest joys of your entire life; No matter how hard it is, or what it requires  
Be active in ministry

### **Be confident that it's worth it**

All of it; That's the *knowing* part; *Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain*  
It's not for naught; It has value; God will use it

Whether it's loving and teaching 4 year-olds every week – and wondering if anything is getting through; Or leading a break-out group in Student Ministries . . .  
Or serving on the Parking Team, and thinking it doesn't matter  
It does; You may not see the *fruit* of your labor this side of eternity, but you can be confident it's worth it; That your labor is not in vain

- But the key, is laboring *in the Lord*; *In the Lord your labor is not in vain*  
That is, in his strength, according to his will, as a result of his leading – your labor is not in vain; Get that wrong, labor apart from the Lord . . .  
And there's *no* assurance, *no* confidence

But *in* the Lord, that is, under his influence and for his glory – your work of ministry, your labor, is worth every bit of blood, sweat, and tears you expend  
Every bit of suffering; Every bit of hardship; Every bit of fatigue; Every bit of effort  
Every bit of time; Every bit of money; Every bit of persecution (**Summary**)  
It's worth it; Every bit of it; Of that you can rest assured; Of that you can be confident

Pray (Servers & Band) – Lord, as we come to your table and remember your sacrifice . . .  
We're so thankful for your example in all this  
So thankful that you were *steadfast/immovable* – even to the point of death on a cross  
Convict those who don't want to take up *their* cross, and get after it  
And convince those who doubt it's worth