

The Need for All Our Service to Be Initiated by God

We need to petition the Lord of the harvest that he would thrust his laborers into the great harvest. Harvest implies that **work**, **labor**, and **service** are required both in the work of the Lord as well as in all the local churches, home and small group meetings, and in our personal contact with people... For all of this we need **life** principles and guidelines to help us, lest we go astray in our service and unconsciously commit *"the iniquity of the sanctuary"* (Num. 18:1). According to 1 Peter 2:5 and 9, we all are priests in the holy and royal priesthood. We all serve according to our function in the sanctuary of God. Because of this we are touching the most holy matters, it is possible to unknowingly commit the iniquity of the sanctuary, that is, to commit sins in God's work and thereby offend God. Part of the burden in this message is to prevent us from committing the iniquity of the sanctuary, which is a sin of rebellion, presumption, and contemptuousness. By contemptuousness we mean disregarding God and treating God with contempt... We pray that such a word would ensure that our work in this age would not be consumed by the fire at the judgment seat...

Romans 11:36 says, *"Because out **from** Him and **through** Him and **to** Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen."* According to this verse, to serve without sin, without committing the iniquity of the sanctuary, requires that our service, work, labor, and even prayers be out from the Lord, through Him, and to Him. This means that the initiation of the work or service must be out of God and not out of us, that the advance and execution of God's work must be by God's power and not by our own strength and ability, and that the result of God's work must be for God's glory and not for our boast. **These three** crucial requirements must dictate our work. As such, these requirements are severely restrictive and without compromise. We must follow these ironclad principles if we are to serve the Lord in a pure way. Furthermore, we should not judge other saints or fellow workers and serving ones but only judge ourselves by these principles.

Serving God According to God's Appearing, His Command, and His Instructions

As believers in Christ we love the Lord and desire to serve Him, but we need to realize that our service has to be according to God's appearing and command, following His instructions according to the pattern He shows us. **Noah** didn't serve God out of his own zeal or opinions; he served God according to God's command and according to His instructions. **Abraham** didn't serve God or do things for Him because he was so zealous or full of love for God, but he served God, moved where He wanted him to be, and built an altar as God appeared to him again and again. **Moses** tried to serve God according to his opinion and zeal but failed; then later God called him and instructed him to deliver the children of Israel and build the tabernacle according to His pattern, and Moses did as God told him to. **Abel**, the second generation of mankind, offered God sacrifices by faith according to God's revelation; in contrast, Cain offered God a sacrifice based on his opinion and zeal, and God disregarded it.

When we are unbelievers, we don't care for God or His purpose, so we don't really want to do things for Him. But after we become believers, we may be **full of zeal** to do things for God, and many times we initiate the work, we carry out the work, and others may even appreciate our work for God. But it seems that, according to the Bible, God doesn't appreciate our working for Him or in His name unless

He initiates the work, He in us is doing the work, and He gets all the glory. God doesn't need us to work for Him; He simply needs our cooperation. He initiates the work and we co-operate to work together with Him. If we do things for God – even good things such as serving God, preaching the gospel, visiting the saints, and others – that He Himself didn't initiate but rather we out of our good heart for Him or feeling of responsibility initiate, we merely perform **religious activities** “in God's name”, without Him being part of it. There has to be the genuine leading of the Spirit, God's commandment, and Christ in us doing everything.

Our problem is that we still have a lot to say, suggest, and offer as an opinion; our God is quite able to remain silent and patient as we speak, waiting for us to finish and come to an end. The unique prerequisite to receiving God's revelation is to **stop** our speaking, our opinion, our view, and our self. However, it is not easy to stop; it is easy to say the word “stop”, but it is not easy to stop – for us to stop is for us to die, for when we die, we stop. Our opinions and suggestions darken God's counsel; we are not God's counsellor, and He doesn't need our suggestion and opinion. Man wants to be God's advocate and counsellor, but God doesn't need such ones; He needs man's cooperation and not man's suggestion, opinion, and initiation.

Service from man has man's natural enjoyment, preference, and flavor; **service from God** enables man to worship the Lord and advance even when facing difficulties; service from God enables man to not be anxious or quarrelsome. When a service has man's natural enjoyment, preference, and flavor, it is a sign that the service is from man. God's work is not for our enjoyment or our preference. When there is anxiety in our carrying out of the work, it is a sign that we depend on ourselves. Likewise, when there are quarrelsomeness and debate in the work, it shows that the work is for man's pride rather than for God's glory...Although all our service is initiated by God, we must learn to bear responsibility and be absolutely faithful before the Lord; we need to rely on the Lord, carrying out our service by being joined to the Lord and being in fellowship with Him. **This does not mean that we should not do anything**. To be sure, we must do much with the Lord, especially in these days when the whole world is open, the work is plenteous, and the fields are white. May we be pure and faithful by relying on and being joined to the Lord in our work.

We need to learn to rest in the Lord, **be at** peace in Him concerning the work, trust in Him, and sleep peacefully as we experience being one with Him. At the same time, if someone hands over a certain matter for us to take care of it, we need to be **faithful** to the Lord in the Body to serve in the church. When we rely on the Lord, carrying out the service by being joined to Him and being in fellowship with Him, our service builds up the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem, and also such a service prepares us to serve God in eternity and for eternity.

Lord Jesus, may our service in the church life not supplant God's authority, not supersede God's power, and never rob God of His glory. May all our service be initiated by God. We just want to rely on You, carrying out our service by being joined to the Lord and by being in fellowship with Him, one with Him. Lord, we want to learn to bear responsibility in work and be absolutely faithful in service before the Lord. May our service build up the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem! (Excerpt from the Ministry of the Word)