



The Lost Foundations – There is Work to be Done

Introduction

“Eighty percent of the work is done by twenty percent of the people” has been a complaint of Christian leaders for decades. By the time I became a leader, it was being said with resignation: This is our lot; we will have to deal with it.

On the one hand, this bothered me. On the other, it was satisfying to think that I was a part of the twenty percent. I have been a part of the twenty percent most of my Christian life.

Looking back, I see that my motivation was good; and bad. I was genuinely grateful for having been saved; and for God’s patience with me in my years of wandering. I guess you could say that I wanted to pay Him back.

At the same time, I was subconsciously motivated by my soulish desire to please and impress – both God and man. What can I say? I was an immature Christian leader. My resignation and my satisfaction were self-centered, even egotistical. Consequently, there was a lot that I got wrong.

By God’s grace, I have matured as a leader. My following after Jesus is less about me, and more about Him. I have learned, and believe, that without Him, I can do nothing.

Somewhere along the way, I came to realize that God’s perspective is the only perspective that matters. This includes the matter of who is doing the work; and who isn’t.

God has not resigned Himself – and He is not satisfied – with the 80/20 rule. He has commanded all of His children to do the work of the kingdom. This is not as much for His good as it is for ours.

I imagine many of you reading this are saying, “No kidding, Rob; tell us something we don’t know.” I agree; this seems like obvious stuff.

But there has to be more, right? If this is so obvious, why have so many been left walking in disobedience. There just has to be more!

I believe that the “more” we are searching for is found in a foundation (or two). So, I encourage you to resist your resignation and search deeper with me. Together, we will find the secret to God’s purpose, plan and power for kingdom work.

Being Made that We Might be Used

In the previous lesson, we discovered that the internal work of the Holy Spirit prepares us for the external expression of His exceedingly great power – in the grace of His fruit and gifts.

The internal and external works of the Holy Spirit are inextricably connected; and that connection runs deeper than we might expect. It is both dependent and proportional.

Therefore, when we say “there is work to be done”, we find that we cannot talk about the visible work of the Holy Spirit without reflection on the Father “working in you to will and do to His good pleasure”.

Sadly, many in the church struggle to make this connection. There is perhaps no greater example than the maligned relationship between our faith and the good works in which we were made to walk.

Our Faith and Good Works

One of the most devastating attacks on Biblical truth, by the reasoning of man, is the divorce of faith and works. Denominations – and their leaders – are divided and at odds with one another over two Biblical principles that God never intended to separate.

In many parts of the church, faith and work are like oil and vinegar. If you start talking about works to the faith crowd – or faith only to the works crowd – you’re going to stir up somebody’s ire. It is an incredible and tragic irony that these two, very important Biblical concepts have caused such division in the church.

The truth of the matter is this: Faith and works cannot be separated from each other. You simply cannot have one without the other. Work without faith is dead work (Romans 14:23). Faith without work is dead faith (James 2:26). Each one brings life to the other.

Consider, if you will one of the most famous verses in the Protestant movement:

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:8-10

I find it interesting that the verses declaring our salvation to be “not of works”, are immediately followed by one of the most encouraging verses for good works. Coincidence? I think not. God knew what He was doing when He wrote the Bible. Good works must follow the grace that saves through faith.

It may help to understand that “dead faith” is not “non-existent faith”. That is not the Bible’s meaning of dead in regards to mankind’s spiritual state. For example, putting to death the deeds of the flesh does not mean to kill them. That is not possible. What is possible is that we make them of no effect.

The same is true with “reckon yourselves dead indeed to sin”. We are to reckon (i.e., accept as true) that sin no longer has an effect – or power – in our lives.

In the same way, having dead faith does not mean that your faith is annihilated. It is simply of no effect for the purpose God had in giving it to you.

Faith is God’s gift for our appropriation of His grace. Therefore, if the faith we have been given is not followed by the accompanying good work, then it will not be effectual in appropriating the grace God has offered. This applies to grace for our salvation, sanctification and transformation.

Furthermore, it is also God’s grace that empowers the good work we are called to walk in.

Good Works

God has a number of good intentions for good works. Some of these are quite practical.

Command those who are rich... that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. 1Timothy 6:17-19

And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful. Titus 3:14

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you... that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; Colossians 1:9-10

From these passages, we find that good works include giving, sharing and meeting urgent needs. As we might expect, they are quite beneficial to those on the receiving end.

We also see that these activities are beneficial to those walking in them: Storing up a good foundation for eternal life, increasing in the knowledge of God, and becoming fruitful. God's intention for good works is clearly for our eternal good.

As leaders, we are in danger ourselves of underestimating what this means to God and those we love.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. James 1:21-25

How can we stand back and allow our brothers and sisters to fall into self-deception? Can we justify our disinterest and inaction, while they are forgetting who they are (e.g., overcomers, followers, children, even Christians)? How much do we care that they are missing out on the blessings of God?

James follows this warning with an even more sobering one.

Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. James 2:22, 26

The penalty of dead faith is devastating to the individual that carries it around. To God, it is a terrible stench (think road kill). The alternative is a faith made perfect. Who wouldn't want that for everyone in their fellowship?

But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall. Matthew 7:24-27

You don't have to know the full meaning of "...and it fell. And great was its fall" to know it is a significant and tragic thing; a thing that happens to fools.

If God left us here – to do the impossible commands found in the Sermon on the Mount – we would be understandably dejected and despondent, even overwhelmed, in our weakness and confusion. How could He command such things? How could anyone live up to these requirements?

The truth of the matter is this: That is exactly how He wants us to feel. That is exactly what He wants us to recognize. Why? Because He has another way; a way that is awesome in its simplicity and magnificence.

Whose Work is It?

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. John 5:19

Very early in His ministry, Jesus said that He could do nothing of Himself. The Son watches what the Father is doing, so the Son can do them. As we will soon discover, this is more than doing as imitation. It is doing in participation – where the Father does the work.

For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. John 5:26-27

Why did the Father grant life to the Son? Because He, the Father, has life to give. Why did He give him authority? Because He is the Son of Man.

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. John 5:30

Again Christ says, of Himself, that He can do nothing apart from the Father. He also said that His judgment was righteous; not because of anything He had done and not because of who He was; but because He sought the will of the Father. His mission was about the Father's will and work, not His own.

If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him. John 10:37-38

Jesus is saying that our belief in Him should be based on Him doing the works of His Father. Whose works were they?

They were the Father's works. It was the Father's works that proved the Father was in Him. In other words, the Father was doing His works through His Son.

The works prove that the Father and He are one, because only the Father in Him could be doing the work that they are seeing. And that is why He could immediately say...

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. John 14:12-14

The Father's works that Jesus did are to be the same works that we do. More so, now that He has gone to the Father, the works will be greater. How can this be? The secret is found in what Jesus had to say about His disciples.

So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." John 20:21

One of Jesus' primary missions was to show us how to be disciples that make disciples. He did exactly what He expects of us. If we are to be productive disciples in the kingdom of God, we must become like Him. He made this clear in a number of ways. First, He told them directly:

It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. Matthew 10:25a

We must not confuse "disciple" for "student". "Disciple" is much closer in meaning to our understanding of "apprentice".

For example, a disciple spends considerable time with his teacher (versus visiting a classroom once a week). A disciple's intention is to become like his teacher – to take on the teacher's lifestyle and character.

You will recall that Jesus said, "I can of Myself do nothing." He said the same about us in the Parable of the True Vine:

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. John 15:5, 7-8

It is in this abiding – "without Me you can do nothing" – relationship that our desires are met, the Father is glorified, we are productive fruit bearers, and we become His disciples. Furthermore, in our abiding, we must walk as Jesus walk:

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. 1John 2:6

Repeatedly throughout the Gospels, the very thing that Jesus proclaimed of Himself, He affirmed in His followers. Here is another example:

*I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.
John 12:46*

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Matthew 5:14

It is here, in the light, that we discover a mystery that will radically change our work in the kingdom of God.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

First, it is important to note that this verse contains a command of our King. Second, that command is not, “Go do good works that will glorify God”. God will glorify Himself. The command for us is to “let your light so shine before men...”

Furthermore, we are not the one’s glorifying God. Men will do that as a witness to “your good works”. This raises a few compelling questions:

1. Would God take credit for work done by His children?
2. If our Father in heaven is to be glorified in the “good work”, who do you think will be doing the work?
3. Why does Jesus call it “your good work”?
4. If it’s God’s work – and somehow our work – what part of the work is His; and what part is ours?
5. Just what is our responsibility in a work that glorifies our Father in Heaven?

I don’t have all the answers to these questions. It is a mystery that I am continuing to search out. The point here is that there is more to our work than we have imagined. The point is that the eighty percent – the people we as leaders are responsible for – are missing out on something incredibly awesome (and only God is).

Consider that for a moment, and we will move on.

Who is Serving Who?

When I first determined to be a “good Christian”, my chief desire was to serve God. I really thought He needed me to serve Him. The truth is, He really doesn’t need me for anything.

*The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell therein. Psalm 24:1*

*If I were hungry, I would not tell you;
For the world is Mine, and all its fullness. Psalm 50:12*

The LORD owns all He needs and, as much as we might think differently, He is not in the habit of telling us when He needs it. Seems like one of those “duh!” things once you think about it. However, most of us would have to admit we really want Him to need us. We want to give back to the One who has done so much for us.

But what would we do? Wash His car? Buy Him dinner? Shine His shoes? There is a humbling aspect to this whole matter of serving God.

Once we accept the fact that He really doesn’t need us, we can begin to experience just how much He wants us – and how much He is willing to do for His children.

*For since the beginning of the world
Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear,
Nor has the eye seen any God besides You,
Who acts for the one who waits for Him. Isaiah 64:4*

Our God is different from all other gods because He intends to act for us – after we wait for Him. Let that sink in. Instead of waiting on us to act, God is waiting on us to wait – so He can act for us. Why would He do such a thing?

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. 2Chronicles 16:9

The LORD is looking to show Himself strong; and He knows that we are the ones that need His help – not the other way around.

*Even to your old age, I am He,
And even to gray hairs I will carry you!
I have made, and I will bear;
Even I will carry, and will deliver you. Isaiah 46:4*

In God's economy, it is the strong that serve the weak. This is the heart of a God that is *agapē* – God's sacrificial love. It was also the heart of His Son; for He is a good King.

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. Mark 10:45

And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” Luke 4:17-19*

The Father sent His Son to serve His subjects. I hope this encourages you as it has me. If there's a lump in your throat right now, don't resist the urge to praise our Father and our Savior King. Go ahead: Give Him praise!

As the Father has Sent Me...

Now that we are beginning to understand who is serving who in our relationship to God, let's turn to the question that is niggling at the back of your mind; something like, “We **are** suppose to be serving, right? Doesn't the Bible say something about that?”

Of course we are; and, of course, it does.

So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” John 20:21

We have been sent by our King exactly as He was sent... to serve others.

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 1Peter 4:10

And the King will answer and say to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” Matthew 25:40

God’s way in serving is for His children to serve each other (i.e., love one another). In doing so, we minister to Him – completing the circle and satisfying our desire to love Him as He first loved us.

It is important to recognize that serving others is harder than serving God. As someone has said, sheep are ornery, smelly animals. They bite and they wander off. And they don’t regularly return favors.

Looking back at my early years in leadership, I recognize that I wanted to serve God, but not at the cost of serving others. I enjoyed being a leader that gave directions, but I resisted serving the ones I was called to lead. Consequently, I was resisting the leading (and example) of my Master.

It is for this reason that we must regularly and intentionally commit ourselves to the sacrificial service of others. It is a battle against Satan, the world and our flesh. It is a battle that we must aggressively fight with the grace of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the life of Jesus Christ.

Once again, we are faced with the simple truth that our effectiveness as God’s instruments for good works is directly proportional to the work of God, by the Holy Spirit, within. This is simple, but not easy. Jesus did not promise easy. In fact, He promised quite the opposite – a uncomfortable topic for many.

The Way is Difficult

Every time a large following would gather around Jesus, He would share something that would drive most of them away (e.g., eat my flesh, drink my blood). Did He do this because He hated large crowds? Did He desire that only a few be saved? Why did He share such difficult things so early in His ministry? Is this a pattern worth imitating?

Based on current church growth programs, the answer is: Apparently not. Not only have we failed to help potential converts count the cost, but we have hidden the cost from them. We will get them in the door, get them committed, and then (maybe) explain the sacrifice that is required. Does that sounds a little like bait-and-switch to you?

Forgive my brutal honesty for a moment: In some streams it has gotten so bad, seeker friendly has become seeker deceptive. The truth of the difficult way is never shared. You know what I mean. You may not believe it happens in your church, but you know it happens somewhere.

Jesus shared the hard truth, because it was the truth. He was not interested in recruiting volunteers that would desert Him when the going got tough. He was – He is – recruiting an army.

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. 2Timothy 2:3-4

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Ephesians 6:10-11

He is recruiting you; and those in your spheres of influence. He has not hidden the cost. He has been brutally honest about the way that leads to life.

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to [the] life, and there are few who find it. Matthew 7:13-14

There is a wide gate and a broad way that leads to destruction. Then there is His way: The narrow gate and the difficult way.

Your favorite translation may use the word “narrow” to describe both the gate and the way. This is (unintentionally) misleading. The Greek words are different. The one used to describe the gate does mean “narrow”.

However, the Greek word used to describe the way – *thlibō* – means “press (as grapes); press hard upon; a compressed way; and metaphorically, to trouble, afflict, distress”. *Thlibō* is translated as afflicted, troubled and tribulation in several other passages. Perhaps even “difficult” is an understatement of the way which leads to life.

It is important to recognize that the “it” that few will find is not the gate or the way, but “the life”. Few will find eternal life. That may be hard for many to accept. God desires that all men be saved.

So why doesn't everyone find the life? What is their problem?

Strive to Enter

And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then one said to Him, “Lord, are there few who are saved?” And He said to them, “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Luke 13:22-24

Sometime after His Sermon on the Mount – probably after running off another less than committed group of followers – Jesus was asked by one of His disciples about the effectiveness of His ministry. In answer, He once again referenced the narrow gate. This time, He used a word we don't hear much in Christian circles: Strive.

The Greek word for strive – *agōnizomai* – means “to enter a contest; to contend with adversaries, fight; to endeavor with strenuous zeal”. Entering the narrow gate – just to get to the difficult way – is not what we like to think about, or share with others. But it is the truth.

We will not be saved if we do not endeavor with strenuous zeal to enter the narrow gate that leads to the difficult way. And we will not find eternal life if we do not walk the way of trouble, affliction and tribulation. This is a hard saying; but, really, we should not be surprised.

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Mark 8:34

And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. Matthew 10:38

Being a follower of Jesus Christ means just that: Following the way He chose to walk. We know His walk was one of denial and sacrifice. Do we think we can follow Him by taking a different road – a broad and easy road?

In case you were wondering, there are only two roads. There is not a sort-of-hard road, or a little-bit-wider gate, that leads to life. That way is just another on-ramp to the way that leads to destruction.

Back to Our 80/20 Resignation

This brings us back to the problem (shall we say sin?) of our 80/20 resignation. Now that we understand: 1) That faith and work are inseparable; 2) that the work belongs to Him for His glory; and 3) that God wants to show Himself strong on our behalf; we conclude that our resignation inhibits God's work and glory, and seriously endangers those that are not walking in it.

So, before we submit ourselves to the 80/20 resignation, we should consider the matter of work in God's kingdom from His perspective. If eighty percent of the children of God under your watch are not doing the work of the kingdom, what does that say about the work you are doing to edify and encourage them?

While we are asking hard questions: What percentage is acceptable? Do you know the percentage – even roughly? If not, what does that say about its importance to you? Shouldn't it be one of your measures?

I know these are hard questions. They are convicting me, too.

Conclusion – God's Solution for Our Weakness and Confusion

I'm guessing that, if you have made it this far, you are feeling a bit overwhelmed; even confused – some by the weight of God's expectations; and others by the mystery of God's approach to accomplishing His good works. Consequently, you may also be struggling with how God will – in a practical sense – pull this off with you.

You may be asking, as I often have, "What is my part, and what is His? How do I find myself in the center of His will in this matter of faith and good works?"

I have recently been introduced to another book by William Law (you may recall the one recommended at the end of our previous lesson). This one is titled, "Dying to Self – A Golden Conversation"; and includes commentary by one of my other favorite authors, Andrew Murray.

Here are some excerpts that shed much profound light on our participation in God's work.

... the Spirit of Love (Law's label for the normal Christian life) can only come into us as a divine birth, by which it becomes our very life, making love natural to us. The great hindrance in the way of those who are in earnest in seeking it is that they get deceived and delight themselves with what is not the actual possession of that which they admire. A beautiful picture of a landscape on our wall may be a daily feast, while we never think of possessing the property. Even so, beautiful views and impressions of heavenly things, and specially of a life in the Spirit of Love, may occupy and gratify us, while in practice we are very far from possessing them.

It is only by God's direct operation, waited on and allowed to work in us, that the original of the picture, the substance and reality of which the image was a shadow, can become an actual possession. Beware of thinking that when you understand and approve of and enjoy the teaching, when it brings you light and pleasure, and calls forth new sentiments and energies—beware of thinking you possess it. All this lies in the region of thought and feeling. It is only by a divine birth ruling your very being and nature that you really can possess it.

The Spirit of Love is a new life; nothing less than giving up all our own life is the price to be paid. We have here, at the very opening, the dying to self made the one condition of the actual enjoyment of the life of God.

If the redemption in Christ is to be appreciated, we need to know the depth of the fall from which it delivers us. We need to know the inherent evil of our own nature.

... self can hide himself under all forms of goodness, and gets a more unmovable abode in these forms of virtue than he has in publicans and sinners. This thought ought to alarm us all. Self can watch and fast, pray much and preach long; self can become religious, take pleasure in its duties, and be exceeding diligent in its services. Self will even offer to lead and to help us in dying to self.

All failures of the Christian life are due to this one thing, that we seek to do in our own strength what God himself by His Spirit alone can work in us. Let us weigh well Law's words: To die to self, to come from under its power, cannot be done by any active resistance we can make to it by the power

of nature. To exchange the life of self for the life of God, to come out of the darkness of self into the light of God, is a work we cannot do.

If you ask what this one, true, simple, plain, immediate, and unerring way is, it is the way of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God.

The very moment the soul lets go itself and its strength and sinks down in its nothingness into the humility and meekness of Christ, it is at once made whole. His humility and meekness become our life and our hope and our rest.

As sure and immediate as was the power that went forth out of His earthly life to anyone who but touched the hem of His garment is the help that comes from His glorified life in the power of God's throne into the spirit that trusts Him. As a soul sinks down in humility, meekness, patience, and resignation to God, it proves that it consents to the death of self as utterly sinful and impotent, and sets its hope on Christ alone.

God must do all, or all is nothing. God cannot do all till all is expected from Him.

It was so with Christ. He humbled himself; therefore God has highly exalted Him.

Oh, begin and honor the Holy Spirit and Triune God, as they dwell and work in you, by never thinking of your heart without believing and rejoicing that God is there.

... when we speak of the death to self, we must beware of not confining it to our relation to God, and using strong language about our nothingness before Him, while in our communication with our fellowmen self seeks and has its own way.

We begin to see that in every prayer, in every thought, in every moment of our life, we need just one thing—to take the place of humility and dependence before God, of a meek and patient resignation or giving up of ourselves into God's hands.

And if the fear comes that all thy longing for Him and turning to Him and believing in Him is too feeble, just remember, it is His own Holy Spirit who has wakened these desires and this love of humility, who is moving and drawing thee towards himself.

The work of the Lamb of God is not only to die and atone for our sin. By no means. But it is to be our leader in that path of submission and obedience in which alone the creature can be blessed.

Let every lesson of this book, or of any book, or of God's Book, make us turn to the Holy Spirit, who is secretly dwelling and working in us to lead us in the true and living way, and to work in us what is needed, that the death to self and the life unto God may be our experience.

In a nutshell, God's solution for our weakness is to do the work Himself. This is the incredible truth that lies at the foundation of the New Covenant: God has committed to not only do His part, but ours as well.

He only requires, in William Laws words, "by a true and good despair of every human help, we have no hope, or trust, or longing after anything but a patient, meek, humble resignation of all to God." In this true and only way, we surrender to His will for our lives, find the courage and love to sacrifice for His plan, to walk in the good works for which we have been created.

Working it Out

By this time – if you have understood, believed and committed yourself to obey the truths found in the Lost Foundations – you are qualified to lead. And so, I ask you: Do you and those in your spheres of influence

understand and believe that the way to life is a difficult way? Are you willing to live the difficult life? Have you embraced it as the only way to be saved?

Leadership is hard work. Conflict is an essential part of leadership. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Take courage; all things are possible with God. Take a step. The best place to start is with those directly responsible to you. Encourage, edify and equip them to do the same for others. Select a particular portion of the non-workers and lovingly lead them into the good work they were made to walk in.

If we do not warn them, many will choose the compromise. Many will choose it, anyway. But we must, for God's sake, be brave enough to warn them. We must encourage them to strive to enter the narrow gate. We must edify and equip them for the difficult way. We must walk in it with them.

Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered. Luke 11:52

Sometimes we decide to ignore the most obvious and critical things. Sometimes we decide to deceive ourselves. Sometimes we choose, by not clearly sharing the truth, to deceive others. We are not intentionally trying to harm ourselves or them. Deception is like that.

I think it is safe to say that you have now been warned. The truth will make you free. Deception is no longer an excuse. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Faith without works is dead. Please don't let your faith in this die.

Recommended Reading

The following are some of my favorite books on this subject. Most can be found at your local Christian book store, or at one of the many online distributors.

Crazy Love; Francis Chan

Radical; David Platt

The Cost of Discipleship; Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Humbly yours and forever His,

Rob