



Diligence Produces Results

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1

God Remembers Your Labors of Love

For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Hebrews 6:10-12

God rewards your effort. He rewards your work. He sees it, and He credits it to your account. He is thankful for the work you have done, and He demonstrates it by the rewards that He gives to those who work and serve Him. He's not unrighteous. He's a righteous God, and when you work and serve Him, He remembers it. He won't forget it. There's a reward that comes from diligently serving God.

The Spirit of God, through the writer of Hebrews, says that as you minister to God's saints, you show love to His name. In other words, you love God by loving those whom He loves.

Some people want to love the Lord, but they don't love or relate to the people who are on the earth; yet, the two are tied together. That's why the first and second commandments are always spoken together. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and love our neighbor as ourself, because the love for God produces love for people. John said we can't say we love God if we don't love our brother.

Verse 11 essentially says, "We urge, admonish and entreat you that you would show the same diligence in your

life all the way through. As you started and as you are doing now, show the same diligence all the way through your life until you receive the hope that has been laid up for you."

In Verse 12, we're given a pattern: that you would follow those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises. He says, "Don't be slothful or lazy, but be diligent to follow those who have already gone ahead."

I like the way the writer of Hebrews expresses these verses in the J. B. Phillips Translation of the Bible. It relates more closely to the conversational tones of today.

God *is* not unfair; he will not lose sight of all that you have done nor of the loving labour which you have shown for his sake in looking after fellow-Christians (as you are still doing).

It is our earnest wish that every one of you should show a similar keenness in fully grasping the hope that is within you, until the end.

We do not want any of you to grow slack, but to follow the example of those who through sheer patient faith came to possess the promises."

2

Inheriting God's Promises Through Faith and Patience

A lot of people have idols and heroes who are not inheriting the promises. We should be sure that those we exalt before our children are people who are inheriting the promises of God. The heroes we talk about and identify should be "heroes of faith." The greatest people you should look up to aren't those who have sold a million records, won the Super Bowl, or stormed Wall Street, but it should be those who are inheriting the promises of God through faith and patience.

What is patience? It means consistency, steadfastness, endurance, longsuffering, not wavering, not staggering and staying with it. Through faith and patience, they inherited the promises.

A lot of people want to pray three times and receive the manifestation of God's promises. They want instant everything. Too many people have this attitude about inheriting the promises of God.

They want them instantly, but God's Word says we will receive them through faith and patience.

God rewards the labor that you are doing. He won't overlook it, so stay with what you've been doing. Be diligent as you have been all the way through your life. Keep your eyes on Jesus, and if you're going to follow anyone, follow those who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises, not emulating them as people but emulating their faith. Follow Peter, Paul, David or Joshua in their faith walk as they obeyed God.

There were times when Abraham struggled with how his promised child was going to come. We remember Hagar through whom Ishmael was conceived. We remember Abraham saying that his wife was his sister, which was

deception. Most of all, what we're to remember about Abraham was that he kept on giving glory to God and through faith and patience, he inherited the promise that God had given him. That's the part we're called to follow.

This word diligence in the Greek is SPOUDE, which means "earnestness, speed, haste, zeal or carefulness." Webster defines diligence as "steady application in business of any kind; constant effort to accomplish what is undertaken; exertion of body or mind without unnecessary delay or sloth; due attention; doing what is required to be done with earnestness; applying yourself in a steady exertion."

Many people wonder why the promises of God aren't being realized in their life or why they aren't blessed like other people are. They cannot understand the discrepancy between their life and what they see in the Word of God.

It's not because they don't believe God. It's not because they haven't been baptized in the Holy Spirit. It's not because they don't praise in church. It's not because they don't pray or read the Bible. It's simply diligence that many people lack. They will hit it a lick or two and then slack off. They get fired up and then cool off. Every now and then they get excited spiritually and do the things spiritually that it takes to be a success. But for lack of diligence they go backward.

It's through diligence that we begin to see the continual results that God intends the Gospel to produce in our lives.

3

Steady in Application to Business

Where people lack diligence in the natural, they often lack diligence in spiritual things. People who aren't diligent to be to work on time, who aren't diligent to fulfill a job or requirement they are given are usually the same way with God.

God tells them to do something. They might do it or they might not. It depends on how they feel, what the weather is like that day, what someone says about it or doesn't say about it. They struggle with why they aren't being blessed more. I'm saying to you, this is an hour for diligence and steady application to the business at hand.

You may be questioning, "What business are you talking about?" I'm talking about the greatest business on earth—the Father's great Kingdom business! Jesus said, "**...I must be about my Father's business**" (Luke 2:49).

4

God Wants You to Bear Fruit

And beside *this, giving all diligence*, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:5-8

This indicates that it is possible for a person to have the knowledge of Jesus, yet be barren and unfruitful. People can have the knowledge of God, know about the Lord, and even know about these truths, but Peter says these things must be diligently added to your life.

Verse 9 says, "**But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off...**" Many people just live in the here and now. They live in a matchbox. They don't perceive eternal things. They live only for the temporal. Peter says the person who doesn't see the addition of these things in his life "**...is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins**" (Verse 9).

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and your election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall (Verse 10).

5

God is a Rewarder of Those Who Diligently Seek Him

Hebrews 11:1 and 6 say:

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

These two verses tie together. Faith is the title deed to the things we do not see or perceive in the natural, but we have the assurance of them inside of our heart. When we come to God, we must do two things:

1. Believe Him.
2. Believe that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

What are we called to be diligent about? At this point, I'm speaking specifically about spiritual diligence. Hebrews 11:6 says God rewards those who diligently seek Him. Are you into the rewards of God? Many people aren't. They don't think about God's rewards. People who don't think about rewards don't have any motivation to live any better than they are already living. They say, "God, take it or leave it. This is the way I am. I'm not going to make any effort. I'm just going to be the way I am. I love You, I like You, but..." This kind of an attitude causes a lack of diligence.

In speaking to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, Jesus said through John that there are rewards to the overcomer.

For example, in Revelation 3:12, Jesus said:

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I

will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Why did Jesus write all those things? Because God is a God of His Word. He rewards those who diligently seek Him. He is seeking to motivate us to be all we can be. The greatest reward anyone could receive is, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

If we are faithful in what the Lord calls us to do, those rewards will manifest, because they are for those who please the Lord.

6

Ways to be Diligent

I want to share with you six ways you can be diligent.

1. Be obedient and diligent in reading and meditating the Word of God.

One of the reasons we have adopted a "Through the Bible Reading Plan" at Victory Christian Center is to discipline people in diligently reading the Word. The average American spends a lot more time reading the newspaper, *Life*, *Time*, *Newsweek* and *Business Week* than reading the Word of God.

The key to receiving God's rewards is found in John 15:7, which says, "**If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.**"

Jeremiah said, "**Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart...**" (Jeremiah 15:16).

David said, "**The entrance of thy words giveth light: it giveth understanding unto the simple**" (Psalm 119:130).

As you hear God's Word, you will reap the rewards of spiritual strength, refreshing, encouragement, light and insight into your life. You multiply these qualities every time you are diligent in the Word of God.

In the natural, soldiers are required to do things whether they feel like it or not. They're not moved by their feelings. True soldiers in the Lord need to be motivated to have this same track record. "I'm going to put God's Word in my heart whether I feel like it's working or not, or whether I feel like doing it or not. I'm going to focus on the Word, read the Word and study it."

Paul said to Timothy, "**Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to**

be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

2. Make a commitment to God's plan in your life through prayer.

Many people aren't diligent to fulfill God's plan for their life, because they're not hearing God speak to them and they're not talking to the Lord on a diligent, regular basis. A diligent, consistent time in daily prayer will produce results in your life.

I want to encourage you about conversational prayer with God. Conversational prayer is simply talking and listening. Many people have a prayer declaration. It's a one-sided affair all the way. That is, they tell God everything and when they're through, they hang up the phone.

We do not serve a dead God. We serve a living God. If He talked in days gone by, He's still talking today. Just as He walked with Peter and John on the shores of Galilee, He still walks with us. This means we can talk with Him and listen to Him.

The more we commune with Him, the more clearly we will understand His plan for our lives. It's not just a master plan for all of life and eternity. It's a daily plan, 24 hours a day.

3. Be faithful to the Body of Christ in regular church attendance.

Many people feel they can be good Christians without going to church. Scripture says we are all members one of another. The eye can't say to the ear, "I have no need of you." The hand can't say to the foot, "I have no need of you." This means that all of the body is dependent on all the rest of the body. Each member is dependent upon the other members.

When people say, "I don't have to be a part of a local body or be a part under the God-given authority of the oversight of a pastor," it's like saying, "I can cut my finger off, lay it to one side, and it will do just as well without the rest of my body." Just try that for a while. Cut your ear off,

and see how it does without being attached to the rest of your body.

Do you know what happens when people get pulled away from the rest of the Body of Christ? They dry up. They become dead, dry Christians. That's the same way with an ear. It's still an ear, but it's a wrinkled up one! There's a lot of wrinkled, dried up Christians who have lost their connection with the other members of the body.

We need each other. You need to be stirred up like coals in a fire. The members of the Body of Christ stir one another.

4. When you are diligent, you will have a generous, Christlike spirit of giving tithes and offerings.

Diligent people are consistent with tithes and offerings. A lot of people aren't blessed financially, because they give every now and then. They're not diligent and consistent in their giving to God. There's not a steady exertion or effort in their sowing to God, so there's not a steady, regular harvest.

It's like a farmer planting a crop every third year, and he can't figure out why he doesn't get a crop the other two years. If he doesn't plant, work that field, fertilize it and keep the weeds down, he's not going to receive a harvest. So it is with your giving. There must be a diligence in giving.

5. Be diligent in having a servant's heart.

Find a place where you can give yourself on a regular basis to the ministry of the Body of Christ. Some people will serve the Lord for a little time and then quit serving Him. They don't stay with it. Victory Christian Center has been in existence for ten years now, and we've got some people in this church who have faithfully served the church since it started.

I think of Virginia White who works with our Missionettes. Every Wednesday night she works with up to 200 girls. We now have teenagers and girls in their early 20's who have gone through the Missionettes Program under her guidance. Virginia has been diligent, and she has paid a price. God is blessing her.

She wrote me a note and said, "Pastor, I raised my hand believing God for extra money to give for the Russian *This New Life* books. Within one week after making the commitment, I received the entire amount of my pledge." Then she said, "I'm going to give more toward the *This New Life* books you are giving out in Tulsa."

Virginia's life is a demonstration of faithfulness and diligence. God is blessing those who diligently serve Him. He is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love. He will reward you.

6. You need to have a world vision for witnessing, soul winning, sharing and giving out of what has been invested in you.

As you give away your faith and love to others, you will receive more back into your life.

Jesus said, "**...Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men**" (Matthew 4:19). If you are following Jesus, you will be witnessing to the lost. Your diligence in soulwinning will produce great joy as you see others born again.

7

Results of Diligence

People who are diligent in their financial matters will be rewarded.

Although some people aren't diligent on their job, you should be diligent. You should be the best worker in the company. Be there early, stay over the time you are required and do what is asked of you. If you don't understand your tasks, be sure it is clarified so you will have a good report in the business where you are working. Be diligent in all the things you are called to do.

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO HAVE THE BEST RESULTS OF ANYONE IN THE BUSINESS WORLD!

Proverbs 10:4 says, " **...the hand of the diligent maketh rich.**" The diligent person will be a rich person.

Proverbs 12:24 says, "**The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.**"

It's the diligent person who will be in charge. Slothful people will not be promoted. Hit and miss people won't get the next opportunity. Those who are diligent will be promoted.

Proverbs 13:4 says, "**The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall he made fat.**" In other words, those who are diligent shall be abundantly supplied.

Proverbs 22:29 says, "**Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.**"

Proverbs 4:23 says, "**Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.**"

There's a spiritual and a natural relationship. It's possible for some people to be diligent in their business, but

negligent in spiritual matters. Other people are diligent in spiritual matters, but they're slothful in natural matters. We should be diligent in every area that concerns our *lives*, because we're going to reap the benefits and the results more than anyone else. The results of diligence will bless you more than any other person.

8 Examples of Diligence and Slothfulness

Let's examine some Biblical examples of the results of a lack of diligence or slothfulness.

Adam wasn't diligent in obeying God in the garden, and it cost him his relationship with God and his place of dominion on earth.

Noah was diligent to build an ark. He didn't twiddle his thumbs and put his hands in his pockets and say, "Well, I wonder if it's going to rain or not." He got with the program, did what he was told to do and as a result, he and his entire family were saved.

Abraham was diligent to leave his homeland and go and do what God told him to do. Because of his diligence, he became the father of our faith.

Lot's wife heard the angel say, "Don't look back," but she wasn't diligent in little things. This perhaps would be minor in most people's minds. "What's wrong with a backward glance?" But the angel said, "Don't look back." Because she wasn't diligent in obedience, she was turned into a pillar of salt.

Esau didn't cherish his birthright. He wasn't diligent to respect that which God had given him. He knew about the covenant God had made with his father, Isaac, and that through Abraham's descendants, all nations of the earth would be blessed. He was the firstborn, so he had the birthright, yet he wasn't diligent to guard and cherish it. He sold it for a pot of stew and lost the blessing of God.

The New Testament (not the Old) speaks of Esau weeping with tears of sorrow. Why? He wasn't diligent. He

didn't value that which God had imparted into his life.

Think about Joseph. Even though he was rejected by his brothers, sold as a slave, slandered, betrayed and ended up in prison, he was diligent to be a servant and to maintain a heart of forgiveness. The day came when Joseph was promoted. Any person who is diligent will not stand before obscure men, but will stand before kings. Hallelujah!

9

Your Rewards are Coming

It's time to take courage and believe the promises of God because your 30-fold, 60-fold and 100-fold returns are coming. Most people want the 100-fold return immediately. They want all of God's blessings now. God says, "Be faithful."

Think about the story Jesus told of the man in Mark 4:26-29 who sowed seed. The seed refers to the Word of God. The man went to bed at night and slept. He arose the next morning, tilled the ground, and after a full day's work, he went to bed and slept. First came the blade, then the ear, then the full corn and finally he received his harvest. He didn't really know how it happened, but he was diligent.

Many people give up because they don't see anything happening. They don't see people changing. They don't see all the things they envision. God says, "Just be diligent."

Paul said:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Galatians 6:7-9

The anointing of God will break the yoke of slothfulness, laziness, or any other negative thing that has been dominating your life—in your home, your business, your family, your prayer life, in your giving, in your serving and in your time in prayer and in the Word.

Your rewards are coming, and the 100-fold return is on its way to you. As you tithe and give your offerings according to Malachi 3, God will rebuke the devourer from

your life. As you give time, He will multiply time back to you.
As you put the Word in your life, abundant life will flow to
you from the Throne of God.

My Prayer For You

By the authority of the name of Jesus, I thank the Father for breaking the spirit of the world, of laziness and slothfulness off of you. I ask the Father to stir you up and let the fire of the Holy Spirit sweep through you and burn up the dross and the chaff (everything that is unproductive), the wood, hay and stubble in your life.

I pray that you will have diligence and new energy in the things that count in God's eyes and that you will begin to see the manifested rewards of your diligence.

I thank God that He will never forget your work and the labor of love you have given in ministering and serving others in the name of Jesus.

I come against every lying thought of confusion, turmoil and torment. Let it be gone now by the name and blood of Jesus Christ. Where you have lacked diligence, repent and thank God for His mercy and grace. Receive forgiveness right now in every area of your life where there has been a lack of diligence.

I thank the Lord for a fresh start in your life today.
Amen.

Personal Prayer of Commitment

Father, I've heard enough about Jesus Christ, Your Son, that I know that I want to be like Him. I know the first step to becoming like Him is to accept Him, not only as Savior, but also as the Lord of every area of my life.

Lord Jesus, I do believe You are God's Son and that You died, You were buried and then You were resurrected on my behalf.

I renounce every form of evil and ask that You cleanse me with Your shed blood. I do accept You now as my Lord and Savior.

Holy Spirit, empower me to be a witness of diligence and faithfulness, first to my own family and then to others.

Let my life shine with Your love and faith, Lord, and help me to be pleasing to You.

Today I commit myself to a fresh walk in You, Lord—a walk of diligence that produces results! Amen.

Signature _____

Date _____



BILLY JOE DAUGHERTY is founder and pastor of Victory Christian Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Victory has a Christian school, Bible Institute and Missions Training Center. Other Victory outreaches include taking the gospel via radio and television to North America, along with shortwave radio and television to other nations, plus the distribution of books, tapes, and videos. He and his wife, Sharon, minister God's healing, saving, and delivering power as a team. Their family works alongside them in the ministry.