



HOW DO EVANGELISTS MAKE FULL PROOF OF THEIR MINISTRY?

Chidiebere Nwachukwu
Anambra State Nigeria

In **2 Timothy 4:5**, the Apostle Paul instructs the evangelist Timothy, to “do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” or as the King James Version renders it, “make full proof of your ministry.” This instruction is similar to the one given to another evangelist, Archippus (**Colossians 4:17**).

What, therefore, is the ministry of evangelists? Vine says ‘evangelist’ (Greek: *Euagelistes*) literally means “a messenger of good” and denotes “a preacher of the gospel.” The work evangelists do is a fundamental part of the church’s effort to deliver on the divine mandate to make known the manifold wisdom of God (**Ephesians 3:9-10**). Paul underscores the indispensability of the work that evangelists do (**1 Corinthians 1:21**).



The gospel is the only means by which God saves (**Romans 1:16**). When evangelists therefore, discharge their responsibilities effectively, they become, like the apostles, not only God’s ministers but also His co-workers (**2 Corinthians 6:1**), in saving souls. This challenge is the reason the Holy Spirit instructs them to “make full proof” of their ministry.

While all Christians have a shared responsibility to preach the gospel, evangelists do it at a level unmatched by others. They are paid by the church (**1 Corinthians 9:13-14**) and sent (**Romans 10:14-15**) to preach the gospel. If they are to be successful, they must be willing to commit to the work totally. Paul teaches Timothy that an evangelist must preach both in season and out of season (**2 Timothy 4:2**). The evangelist is not making full proof of his ministry if he is not committed to making disciples of all nations (**Matthew 28:19-20**).

Jesus’ apostles served as examples of how to commit totally to the work. Paul desired to preach the gospel in places where Christ was not known (**Romans 15:20**). To him, even court trials and imprisonment were opportunities to preach (**Acts 24:24-25; 26:19-29; 28:16-31; Philippians 1:12-14**).

The work of an evangelist, however, does not look only outward (taking the gospel to the lost); it looks inward equally. He is required to teach the saints (**1 Timothy 4:6, 11**). As well, he has a duty to ensure the spiritual health of the church by opposing false doctrines (**Galatians 1:6-8; 1 Timothy 1:3; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 1:9-13**). The goal of congregational teaching is to equip the church for the Lord’s service and nurture the saints to maturity (**Ephesians 4:10-15**).

An evangelist realizes the deleterious impact an unchristian lifestyle can have on him, the church, and the gospel. He is one whose life must coincide with the gospel he preaches. While he teaches, commands, rebukes, and exhorts others (**1 Timothy 4:11; 5:20; 2 Timothy 4:2**), he must be careful to avoid the pharisaic attitude of saying and doing not (**Matthew 23:1-3**). He must live the gospel, serving as an example to the saints (**1 Timothy 4:12, 16; 6:13-14; Titus 2:7-8**).

Moreover, training church leaders is part of the ministry of evangelists, thus ensuring the church is never short of needed manpower. An evangelist who refuses to train leaders betrays his ministry. Paul instructs in **2 Timothy 2:2**, “What you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” And to Titus, he says, “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you...” (**Titus 1:5**).

The evangelist who desires to fulfill his ministry needs to have the discipline to keep his eyes on the ball (**2 Timothy 2:4**). He must, therefore, avoid distractions. Evangelists can get so distracted by other good works that they leave undone the work to which they have been called.

The apostles would not leave the ministry of the word and prayer to serve tables, not because it was sinful to serve tables but because it was not right for them to give up their main calling for a task that other saints could perform (**Acts 6:1-4**). Sometimes, evangelists get so involved in church administration that they become a “one-man bishopric” and allow the ministry of the word to suffer.

Sundays at 6:30 AM



7/3 Sermon #1363
Immutability of God

7/10 Sermon #1364
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Is God’s Love Unconditional?

7/24 Sermon #1366
God is Just

7/31 Sermon #1367
God is Holy

JULY 2022 NEWSLETTER

Evangelists should engage in regular introspection and evaluate their work. An evangelist who realizes he has a Lord to whom he must render account cannot accept remuneration from the church and then fail to labor hard to make full proof of his ministry.

OVERCOMING FAILURE

Aaron Boone

Church of Christ on Green Oaks Arlington, TX

As Peter warms himself by the fire, surrounded by Jesus's accusers, he makes a quick decision to deny the Lord. Not long after Peter's third curse-filled denial, he looks through the crowd and meets Jesus' gaze. Remembering his boasting in Matthew 26, Peter's heart breaks because he realizes he has failed.

And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times" (Matthew 26:75).

Earlier that same night, the betrayer Judas begins his downfall by leading the soldiers to take Jesus into custody, ultimately resulting in His death. When Judas realizes what he has done, guilt overwhelms him.

Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-5).

Both Judas and Peter sin. Both apostles are remorseful; but while Peter turns back to God, Judas does not. Overcome with grief, Judas takes his own life. The difference between Judas and Peter: one looks beyond failure while the other views failure as final.



Learning to face failure like Peter and not like Judas requires an awareness that God is a God of second chances. Scripture highlights the lives of men and women who choose the onward and upward path when facing failures; and, in doing so, they provide us with a path for overcoming our own failures. We change our minds and transform our actions; then, our example influences others to triumph over failure.

As is true with many of our obstacles, the ability to overcome failure begins in our mind. Failure will immobilize us if we are unable to get past it mentally. Peter's and Judas' responses to their failures started in their minds. Peter could see beyond his mistake, knowing God's willingness to forgive and move forward. Judas was unable to see beyond his errors. To him, his betrayal of Christ was unforgivable. The only escape he could see was to take his own life; so, he will forever be known as the one who betrayed Christ.

The guilt and shame over failure drive people to do things they would not normally consider. Friends have walked away from the Lord and ended lifelong relationships because they could not visualize an escape mentally from their failures. Being like Judas is easier than being like Peter. But accepting that our mistakes do not define us, unless we allow them to, is our first step in overcoming the failures we face in life.

When we can free our minds from the stranglehold of failure and continue living faithfully, we can help others avoid the bumps and bruises we have experienced. Paul pronounces a blessing upon God "who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:4).

We should never shy away from our imperfections. By embracing them, overcoming them, and sharing them, we allow our failures to be productive and not crippling—we can provide others with tools they need for spiritual success. Paul's openness about his failures was to demonstrate to the world that Jesus saves, yes, even the worst of us:

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life (1 Timothy 1:15-16).

As we create a healthy mindset, we are in a position to transform our actions. Peter faces his failure head-on, realizes God will forgive, and decides to turn back to God who wants to help. Likewise, we can allow our failures to help us attain spiritual success. Growth leads to freedom—freedom from the guilt of our failures and the crippling anxiety about possible future failures. Peter keeps on praying, Paul keeps on teaching, Moses keeps on leading, and Abraham keeps on obeying. God's people do not stop trying to be faithful just because they make mistakes.



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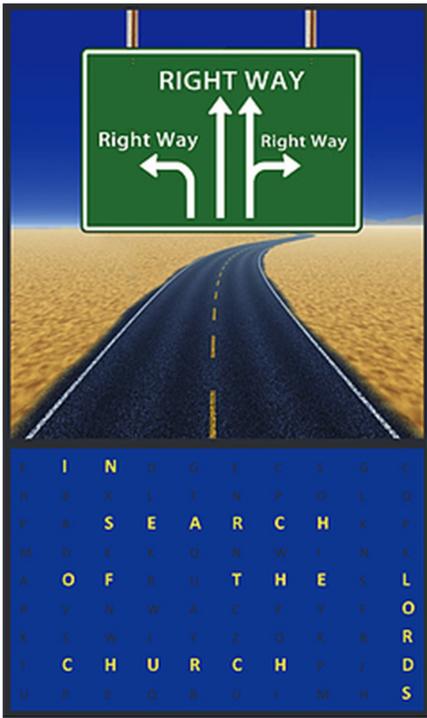
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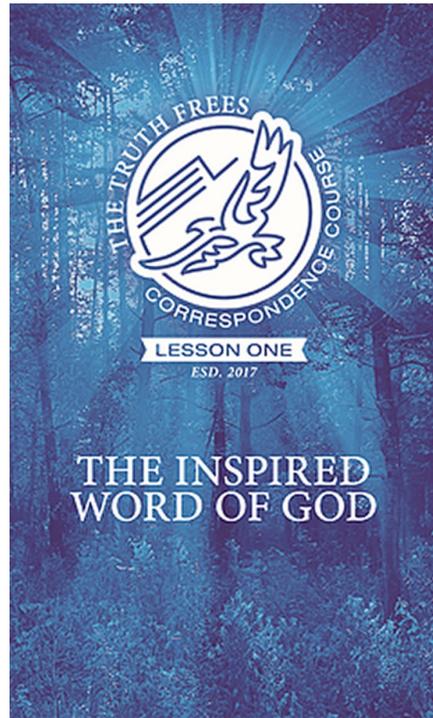
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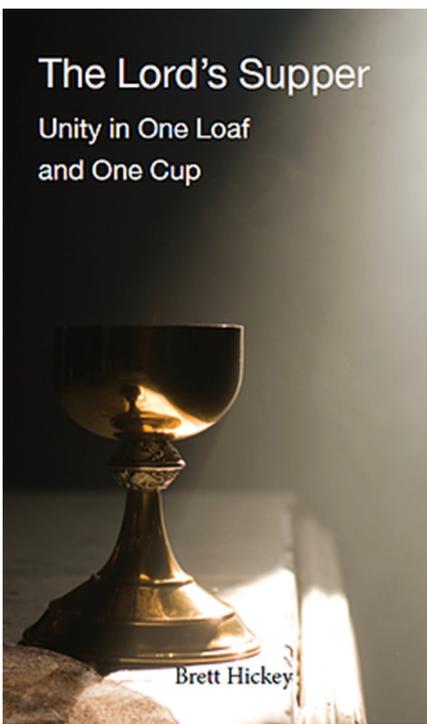
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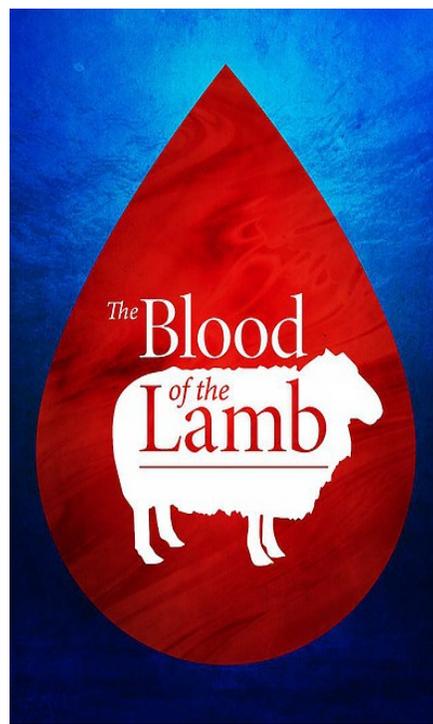
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