

## **FELLOWSHIP FOR FULL-TIMERS**

**By Titus Chu**

### **MESSAGE NINE: PRINCIPLES IN SERVING THE LORD FULL-TIME(2)**

In our whole Christian life we cannot get away from life, truth, and operation. When we are young, we grow fast and are manifested fast. When we are old we do not know that we are growing. It is much harder for the older ones to be in life than the younger ones. It is also much harder for those who have served the Lord for years to be in life than the younger ones. Younger ones know how to pray; older ones know how to make decisions. When the older ones make decisions, there is often no life involved. They just use their experience.

When we are young, we should be very careful about the matter of life. We must realize that the Christian life is a matter of the divine life. Christian serving has so much to do with our maturity of life. This will decide whether our serving is healthy or not. Life has its operating principles, its laws, and its signs. To play politics is against life, and to be opinionated is also against life.

We should learn to take care of life, equip ourselves in truth, and care for our operating abilities. Otherwise we will have no choice but to become an administrator. Many brothers are very faithful administrators, but that doesn't mean they know how to develop the Lord's work.

Then we must take care of three frustrations: time, disposition (self), and the work. The self-life is with everyone. Actually, the Lord desires our identity. If the self were completely gone, then we all would become robots. On one hand we should be aware of our self, be very careful about our self, and realize our self is a frustration. We should not overly love our soul-life, appreciate our soul-life, or worship our self-existence. But on the other hand we should realize that God has made us in a certain way.

We should be very careful about our self, and we should take care of our disposition. Eventually it is our disposition that will decide how far we will go, and not our talent. A fully-developed one-talented brother is much more useful than a “floating” five-talented brother. If someone has more than one talent, but never learns how to take care of his disposition, his work will have almost no effect throughout his life. Disposition will decide our future, not the Lord’s calling, and not our gift or talent. We might think, “Oh Lord, I surely regret that I am only one-talented. I can do so little.” But with a very disciplined disposition that one talent will be able to do so much. If someone is five-talented but with an improper disposition, then he will just cause problems again and again to the church life. So even if we are limited, we must take care of our disposition.

If we are just doing the things that a brother who has a job can do, then we know there is something wrong. A full-timer has to put himself in a place where if he is not there, something will be short. We may minister on the Lord’s day morning, but a brother who has a job can also minister on the Lord’s day morning. We may have a good home meeting, but a brother with a job can also have a good home meeting, and be just as successful. We should ask the Lord, “In what way can I learn so that I will not be satisfied with the common things? Lord, I would like to strive for the specific commitment that You would commit to full-timers.” We must learn to handle our disposition. We should realize, “I have to take care of who I am. I must be industrious, I must be productive, I must labor diligently, and my time must be counted.” That is all disposition. Some dispositions work, and some dispositions do not work. As full-timers we should become very disciplined. We should learn never to give ourselves a day of restfulness.

We must be willing to face challenges. If we are always trying to get out of the frustrations in our environment, we will not have the genuine, solid growth. If we are too “wise” in our serving and just serve according to our convenience, we will not grow. That is why to stay in the same place for many years is a high virtue. No matter how pure we are in serving the Lord, our disposition is afraid of things, and our disposition takes advantage of things. Even when we say, “The Lord has led me to do this,” our disposition is involved. Some things we like, and some things we don’t like. When we are very young, we must learn to take care of ourselves. We will always have the self-life. But some go along with their self-life, and some go along with the Lord. It is all based on how we build ourselves up when we are young. This is why, when we are young, we must take care of our disposition.

As full-timers, how can we serve properly? We must have three things in our serving life:

1. The freshness of the Lord’s presence
2. A healthy charge
3. Relatedness and companionship

We have to learn to ask, “Do I have the freshness of the Lord’s presence?” As full-timers, how is the Lord to us today? It is so crucial for us to have the freshness of the Lord’s presence. Many times we can be industrious in our disposition, but we don’t have a freshness. We should realize that no matter how able our disposition is, still the Lord has to work through it. We must have the freshness in our spirit. This should become our life-long practice. Freshness becomes so crucial in our following and serving the Lord. When we read the Bible, the Bible must give us freshness. If we labor in truth, the truth must give us freshness. If we try to deal with something before the Lord, the dealing experience must give us freshness. While we are young, we should practice to have our person so fresh before the Lord. If we have this, then the Lord can do much more in us. We will be alert to the Lord’s leading, the Lord’s burden, and the Lord’s desire, because we are so close to the Lord.

Then we also need a healthy charge. Our prayer, our consecration, and our labor alone are not adequate. Only the charge decides everything. As full-timers, when we are not charged, we cannot serve. We often ask the questions, “Where should I serve? How should I serve? What should I do?” Remember that the Lord Jesus was raised up in Galilee, not in Jerusalem. He was not raised up in the right location by famous rabbis. No, the Lord Jesus was raised up in an unknown and despised place. Yet He operated so well. His operation was so prevailing because of His charge. The same was the case with the apostle Paul. But the brothers who were involved with a lot of institutional things (such as James) were a frustration. We should be careful. When our mind is so set on something, eventually we ourselves can become a law.

Instead, we have to learn, “Lord, in my life, give me mercy, that I would be so charged before You.” When we have a charge, when we are burdened, then location or assignment makes no difference. A person who is charged really doesn’t care where he is. To be in one location or another, to serve one group of saints or another, what is the difference? The question really should be, “What is in me?” If we are charged, then whatever comes to us will become something to fulfill our charge, and not just a thing for us to do.

The third thing we must have is companionship. If we want to follow the Lord properly, we have to be very careful that we are not individual. We must be related to others. Strive to be with companions. People like to have their own territory, their own “kingdom.” We should not play politics, but we should not be alone either. To be alone, to be by ourselves, is a serious matter. We like being individuals. But in serving the Lord, we need to be desperate to put ourselves in limitations, in confinement, and even in frustrations. How? Just by holding the principle, “I must be related to others. I don’t want to be by myself.” We should try to be very closely related to one another, even when it takes a lot of effort. May the Lord grant us mercy.

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