

“BALANCED LABOR”

James 2:18-26

Martin Luther: People are like drunken peasants – they are always falling off one side of the donkey or another. Ancient debate: Faith vs. works. Some want to make it either/or. James says it must be both working together. Successful ministry involves balanced labor.

I. IT'S ALL UP TO ME

A. Some people have a misunderstanding that ministry is all up to them

1. If I work hard enough – I will be successful/I will be fruitful/people will change
 - a. They can be very driven people – and they often are hard-driving people
2. They are guilt-based in their approach to life
 - a. *I feel guilty: I'm not working hard enough* b. *Try and make others feel guilty: You're not good enough/work hard enough*
3. They feel a huge weight of responsibility
 - a. *I am singlehandedly stopping revival* b. *It is my job to change people*
 1. So they pressure/try and force people to change...
4. Invariably they wind up frustrated – because we're not God
 - a. *Jacob: Am I God? No.* b. *I can't get these people to change!*

B. This goes hand in hand with a wrong idea that our labors obligate God

1. Mentality/how they view God: He doesn't want to help me – so I'll force Him
 - a. This is the basis of all false religion: Impressing through sacrifice - paying for/earning God's favor
2. We can become angry at God: I worked – and you didn't do anything
 - a. *11th hour laborers: upset at the owner; They didn't feel their reward lined up with their labors*
 - b. **Romans 4:4** *When people work, their pay is not given as a gift, but as something earned. (a debt)*
3. This heart often gets angry at other people: *Not fair! Why them? I work harder than they do!*

II. IT'S ALL UP TO GOD

A. Some people go the other way: They don't use common sense:

1. They are so-called 'believing God' – but they don't do anything
 - a. Waiting for God: *Timing/alarm clocks in heaven. Simply because it's time!*
 - b. Magic thinking: *Somehow it will just happen*
 1. *I wish more people came to the revival. Did you advertise? No. Outreach? No. Fast? No.*

B. The common Bible pictures of farming and harvest:

1. Results/crops come from labor and seed sown
 - a. *Sower went out to sow...send out laborers...*
 - b. **1 Corinthians 3:8** *Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.*
2. So there is wisdom involved
 - a. I have a part to play in the miracle that only God can do!

III. BALANCED LABOR

A. Successful ministry has a balanced view of both God and yourself

1. **James 2:18** *But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

a. **Faith in God: He wants to help me!**

1. **Luke 12:32** *Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

2. **Matthew 7:11** *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*

b. **Labor that cooperates with God:**

1. *Hard work* 2. *Pastor in UK: Went out witnessing/passing out flyers 4 hours a day*

B. The balance is why: Why are you working hard?

1. To impress God/earn His favor/obligate Him
2. Or Because I know my Father wants to help me/He operates by the principle of harvest – I work hard
 - a. I do my part – but believe God to do His part
 1. *Work like everything depends on you, and pray like everything depends on God*
3. This kind of balanced heart often sees great blessings/miracles
 - a. **Mark 4:27** *And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knows not how.*
 1. *Mo Timbo: Given a car. Great fruitfulness. Sent 25,000 pounds*