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Living by Faith

from Forerunners4Him



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SUCCESS AT SEEKING TO SERVE

On the Job Testing

Considering the Lord's high standards, you might think it takes a long time to get ready to do "ministry." For some things, yes, a fair amount of training may be required, but for most things all you need is a heart and the willingness to jump into that sea of human need, lostness, and misery which surrounds you. Nevertheless, you will be "tested" on the job concerning these basics, so be sure you know what they are and have them in play.

see [Ministry to Others](#) to read more about this part of our New Life.

What Are the Ministry Basics?

Mastering the basics is crucial for success in any field of endeavor. Whether you want to be a

ball player, a musician, or a farmer the most important thing is how well you do it and for that you have to be good at the basics. ***That's not the way it is with Christian ministry.*** Naturally, it matters that you learn to do your tasks well, but that is far from being the most important thing. Relationships are the main thing! That's because our number one task is love. ***Relationships are, therefore, "the basics" we have to master.***



Preparing for Ministry

If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:3 ESV

Here are some examples taken from real life: If you feed a hundred hungry people, but treat five of them rudely, you set the work back in everyone's eyes. If you serve the people well enough, but harbor ill will towards a fellow minister you are a stumbling block to the rest of the team. If you treat everyone with respect and efficiency, but are drifting from the peace of Christ into burnout, you have lost your first Love.

The Lord sets the top priority on love. He really wants us to put loving others ahead of any work we are doing for them in His Name. Christian ministry is, therefore, one of the best ways in which to grow a truly loving heart. There are three main relationships that the Lord wants to help us build as we seek to be of service. If we work on these relationships the right way (His way), we will grow in love and He will be able to build the work around us and do His best work through us.

These three relationships are the people we serve, our fellow servants and the Lord Himself. The kind of love that is grown and ***the practical test of that love is different in each area.***

For more on living in peace and joy see [Keys to the Kingdom](#) at our website.

1) The People We Serve

Love to cultivate: love as compassion.
The test of love: *Are you being kind?*

God's love is not primarily a squishy emotion that we feel in our hearts. Thank goodness He



does give us feelings of immense affection for others *at times*. Jesus Washing Peter's Feet
When we experience them it is always energizing and
delightful, but they do not last. You simply cannot build a lifetime of ministry to people based
on feelings that come and go.

What we always have with us is the Example of Jesus (who is love in action) and the definition
of love He gives us in His Word. Please notice that not one of the following characteristics is a
feeling. By God's own definition, you and I do not have to "emote" at all. ***He isn't asking us to
feel love, but to "do" it!***

**Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does
not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at
wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes
all things, endures all things.** 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 ESV

Now let's turn this definition around. The people we serve won't care what we feel for them
(in our better moments), if we are treating them with disrespect or impatience (in *their*
moment)! Kindness is our prime directive. You may not feel any love or have what they need,
but if you are kind to them *they* will feel the love and be grateful.

It remains true, however, that feelings of love bring an inner release of energy, power and
delight. It is also true that God has placed His own love inside of us. Wouldn't it be great if we
could learn how to tap into the vast reservoir of love and flow in its power? Indeed we can!
There are ***two tried and proven ways of "releasing the Spirit" for loving service.***

- 1) Clear out the garbage! Cleanse your heart of any contaminants.
- 2) Focus on compassion. Keep your eyes on the suffering you want to relieve.

See more about [Emotional Healing](#) at our website.

2) Our Fellow Servants

Love to cultivate: love as acceptance.
The test of love: *Are you forgiving?*

In doing ministry we often have to work side by side with other believers. This is by the Lord's



design and it gives us wonderful moments of close fellowship. It also gives us unavoidable opportunities for being rubbed the wrong way! That also is by the Lord's doing. Jesus never causes offense to occur, or desires it to come, but He definitely will make good use of it when it shows up.

The Disciples with Jesus

We naturally hold our fellow workers to a higher standard than the sometimes raggedy people we serve. Since they are professing to be Christians, we expect them to act like it. We don't want to excuse or forgive them. We want them corrected! We didn't get on the team with them because we felt compassion for them, so we have little compassion to give. To make matters worse, because we are working closely with them, we see their flaws repeatedly.

Now take these problems with fellow workers and compound it, if the ones who offend us are our leaders. They should know better and set a better example. Their weaknesses really do hinder the work. Yet, leaders are notoriously hard to correct "from below" and seem resistant to both words and prayers. You can sometimes speak with fellow workers and they will adjust their behavior; less frequently the leaders. Take heart! All of this is part of the Lord's plan for training you in His ways.

For our love to be His love it has to pass through the fires of offense. We simply must learn how to forgive as He does, which is everyone at all times, including flawed fellow workers and failed Christian leaders. He has forgiven you for all that is wrong with you, past and present, hasn't He? He accepts you just as you are, doesn't He? He is willing to use you in ministry, despite your many weaknesses and failings, isn't He? Well, ***He is dead serious about you giving the same grace to others!***

It is for our own good. Not only do we want to become great lovers of humanity like our merciful Lord, but we also want to live in the "joy unspeakable" He makes available. You can't have joy and hold onto unforgiveness at the same time. To be a "happy Pharisee" is constitutionally impossible! So when offense comes (and it will), drag your heart to the cross (as He did) and do all the forgiving, releasing and accepting there that love requires. ***You will grow by leaps and bounds!***

Read about [Freedom through Forgiving](#) at our website!

3) The Lord Our Master

Love to cultivate: love as obedience.
The test of love: *Are you trusting?*

We serve a Leader we can't see. This has unique problems all its own. The One we are meant to

follow in life and in ministry is invisible to us. We "see" Him by faith, but few of us see Him with our own two eyes. If we were walking with Peter and John on those Galilean roads, we would see Jesus turning to the left and immediately realize we have a decision to make: *Will I follow Him there?* If He sent us to the next village with instructions, everyone including ourselves would know if we obeyed His words: *Did you buy the bread?* ***It is not nearly so clear for us in this time and place.***



Playing Hide and Seek

Jesus is the best Leader on the planet, but we can neither see Him directly nor hear Him audibly (most of the time). ***How does He make up for this?*** The short answer is that if you and I really want to know His will in any situation, He has ways of helping us find out. The long answer is that it takes time and trouble to learn how to trust, listen to, and follow ***a leader who keeps playing "Hide and Seek" with you!***

Ok, so why does He do it this way? To grow love in us. Whoa. That's an unexpected answer, but it has to be the right one since His primary command to us is that we learn to love Him at all times and in all situations. That certainly includes ministry. In fact ministry is a great way to grow a genuine love for Him because seeking to be His servant requires us to seek His will.

At every point of decision we have a choice: will I seek His will to do things His way, or will I handle it my way? Love (in God) gives us that choice. Love (in us) takes that choice, turns from self and seeks to obey Jesus. Our primary relationship in ministry is as a servant to a Master. This is the entry level. He will want to raise us into friendship eventually, but ***we must first learn to be disciples (followers).***

We draw close as servants by seeking to follow our Leader in all things. We not only want to do His will, we want to do it His way. This enables Him to work in us and through us whenever we are on track. If we want results, we have to seek Him. If we want to love Him, we must learn to obey Him. He calls obedience love (John 14:15). We have three main ways in which our obedience to Him is enabled and tested.

- 1) His Word.** Do you trust Him enough to obey His Word and live within its boundaries?
- 2) His Spirit.** Do you trust Him enough to allow His Spirit to lift, lead and guide you?
- 3) Earthly authorities.** Do you trust Him enough to obey the ones He has placed over you?

Read the rest of [Preparing for Ministry](#) on our website!

FORERUNNERS4HIM

Forerunners4Him is intended to provide inspiration, encouragement, and humor for entering into the life of freedom, joy and peace that Jesus died to give us. Salvation often "drops in out

of the blue" but real progress living the new life of faith usually requires the hard work of facing God and deep issues, trying to make sense of the scriptures and gain positive guidance under pressure. Let us help you with that!

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Living by faith requires intentional cultivation...

We have five books at Amazon (paperback and Kindle editions): The Missing Peace, Matters of the Heart, An Illustrated Guide to the Spirit Life, Salvation Basics and Rescued from Hell, which tells the incredible story of my late 1960s journey into insanity and the full restoration and healing Jesus brought me into over a decade later. [Books at Amazon](#)

