

FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY

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Text: Colossians 4:17

“And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it” Col. 4:17 King James Bible

Tell Archippus "See that you complete the ministry you have received from the Lord." Col. 4:17 International Standard Version (©2008)

“And say to Archippus, "Be sure to carry out the ministry the Lord gave you.” Col. 4:17 New Living Translation (©2007)

Introduction: Archippus (archippos) is a name which most resources record as meaning "master of the horse." Paul describes him as our fellow soldier (Philemon 1:2) which suggests that he was willing to suffer hardship (this was the lot of soldiers in Paul's day) and was actively engaged in Christian work, not allowing himself to be sidetracked or entangled in the affairs of everyday life.

Paul's admonition to Archippus is to "take heed" (see that, be sure). This can denote simple voluntary observation and so mean to look at, behold. This term conveys the sense of becoming aware of or taking notice of something, of perceiving or discerning or understanding. Paul, as a fellow soldier and "commanding general" is issuing an order for Archippus to "Keep your eyes open, stay aware, be discerning, and understand your ministry".

Fulfilling one's calling to Christ service is a lifetime commitment. You and I are called to fulfill God's requirements daily; we are to strive to leave nothing undone for His kingdom. At times, we doubt our calling to God's service by asking, "Do I have a ministry?" Yes! You do have a ministry. God has given gift(s) to all believers. We do not all have the same gifts. According to Romans, 12:4, not every member has the same functions. We all have different gifts. The truth is that all gifts of service are important. No Lifebuilder should say that they are unimportant or not needed.

Beloved believers, we are to fulfill our ministries by giving it our undivided attention. Let us learn from Paul's admonition to Archippus to take heed or watch in relation to our call to be diligent in our service to the Lord.

It is interesting to note that Archippus was on the verge of either messing up or giving up so the Colossian church needed to tell him to look carefully at what he is supposed to be doing. The Spirit wanted the church, Christ's body, to point fingers and name names because the Spirit wanted the church to be fruitful. We call this church discipline. We do not know exactly what Archippus' ministry consisted of; what we do know is that his service should be rendered to the church. The church would suffer if Archippus failed; therefore, the church was instructed to warn Archippus.

My brothers and sisters, we are no different from Archippus. From time to time, we all need to hear those words, “*watch the ministry that Christ has given so that you will complete it.*” We must be diligent, careful, give our best to the ministry Christ has graciously given each one of us. Let us not give God our leftovers or our halfhearted service to Him. Archippus had given solid evidence to the local church that he had ministry to fulfill in the Lord. It was given to him and he received it. The Lord called Archippus, and he answered the call. What has the Lord called you to do? What is your ministry? Are you making a difference for Christ in someone’s life? Let us consider the following issues regarding the admonition to fulfill our ministries and not run the risk of ignoring it like Archippus.

THE OBSTACLES WE MUST OVERCOME

There are obstacles that may keep us from fulfilling our ministry, such as:

Apathy

The temptation to do nothing or not to care is called **apathy**. This obstacle can keep us from praying, from fellowship, from service, from witnessing, from giving, from teaching, from encouraging, from being useful in the Kingdom of God.

Self-centeredness

Another obstacle is **self-centeredness**; our plans are contrary from God’s plans. When our plans supersede God’s plans...that is nothing but self-centeredness. Many believers never carry out their ministry because they are too busy pursuing their own agenda, their own pursuits, and their own plans instead of God’s will for their life.

Materialism

Materialism may lead us to neglect spiritual riches for earthly wealth. The rich young ruler was just such a man. He had a desire to do something for God, he had a longing to be used by God, to be right with God, but in the end, his earthly riches were more valuable to him than doing what Jesus asked him to do. Many believers today have traded the temporal for the eternal. They have lost sight of the eternal life that is to come and instead, focusing on building an empire for themselves here on earth, they have forsaken their role in the Kingdom of God. The world defines success in terms of finances; God defines success in terms of faithfulness. Let us remember that in the end, the question we must answer is whose opinion have we lived for, and whom were we trying to please?

Mediocrity

A **mediocre** Christianity that is being satisfied with less than God’s best is never what Jesus intended for His disciples. His standards were high, his call was costly, and the demands upon the disciple were given in terms of taking up one’s cross and following Jesus to Calvary. Many people will settle for a low standard of service to the Lord. **Mediocrity** will lead us to become comfortable, at ease in our places of services, complacent and willing to allow someone else to do the work, or even willing that the work should not be done. It will lead us to become phony, lacking depth and commitment.

THE OBLIGATION TO FULFILL THE MINISTRY

The admonition and imperative given to Archippus is applicable to each of us. You see, it mattered not whether Archippus was a deacon, or a pastor or a layperson, the responsibility to God to fulfill his ministry was the same. Moreover, that means the responsibility each of us have to fulfill our ministry is the same. What we have to see is that our job, whatever it is, is a gift God has given us to enable us to be about the work of His kingdom. Each of us has an obligation to do ministry, to be servants to our Lord.

THE OBJECTIVE OF OUR MINISTRIES

The ultimate end of our service to the Lord is to finish well. That is, to complete the task God has assigned to us. In our service to God, as we seek to fulfill our God-given ministry, it is not how we start that matters, but how we finish.

My fellow believers, let us acknowledge what God has instructed us to do. Let us be intentional and attentive to the ministry God has given us. Remember that we did not receive it from man, but the Lord Himself gave it to us. The objective of our ministries is to be faithful, even when it is painful, or we do not feel like it or if there is, no recognition or nobody is watching us. This requires sacrifice and total dedication to the Lord's will for our lives. The objective of our ministries does not call us to forsake our homes or cities. God wants us to flourish where we are planted (Psalm 1). Wherever He leads us that is where He wants us to serve. Do not delay your response to Him, let us tell Him "yes we are available and we want to get started in fulfilling our ministries right now."

Conclusion: To all of God's faithful men and women, young and old, let us remind ourselves that we should always be ready, always vigilant and willing to fulfill the ministry the Lord has given us. We want to be faithful. Let us remember that this is not a solo mission. God is with us and He wants us to carry out our ministries in our marriages, our homes, in our employment settings, communities and in our churches. Are you willing to recommit yourself to God's call to fulfill the ministry that He has given you?