

## PURE RELIGION IS TO VISIT

### INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **James 1:21-27**. From Roy H. Enoch (06-20-1993).
- B. The word "visit" in the Scriptures often refers to serving others as they have need.
  - 1. It means to inspect, i.e. to select; by extension, to go to see, relieve (Mt. 25:35-36; Ac. 15:36).
    - a. The expression "see how they are doing" indicates a discovering of the needs and meeting them.
    - b. Paul was suggesting that they go and strengthen them, not go for a social visit.
- C. Therefore when we talk about a visitation program, we are talking about a work program.
  - 1. Each of us has ability and opportunity to work in some area.
    - a. I remember a prayer once, before I was to preach: "Be with the one who labors among us."
    - b. I was thankful that I was credited with "labor" but was uneasy with the thought that only one "labored."
    - c. It is almost like the prayer "Lord, be w/those who are sick of this church."
    - d. Sometimes the connotative meaning of an expression shouts more loudly than the meaning of the individual words.
  - 2. We are responsible for using our time, abilities and opportunities for the Lord's glory. There is a wide range of interest in the Lord's work.
    - a. Some are willing to work and others just want to watch.
    - b. I read that the church is full of willing people: 10% willing to work, and 90% willing to let the 10% do the work.
    - c. Some are so opposed to working that they will not even attend a class that talks about how to work.

### I. **IT IS OFTEN DIFFICULT TO GET SOME PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE WORK OF THE CHURCH.**

- A. Les Gleaves has written a book entitled *Building Your Bible School*, in which he describes why it seems to be hard to get teachers for Bible classes. Some of these reasons apply to getting people to work in any area.
  - 1. Some are afraid that they will be stuck with the job without relief. (Let people know that they can quit anytime.)
  - 2. Some are burned out or discouraged because they had experienced failure at some time. (Help them regain their confidence by experiencing success, or give training so that they will be more competent as well as confident.)
  - 3. Some do not feel that they are capable. (Same as above)
  - 4. Some just do not want to work. (Continue to encourage them and help them to grow spiritually.)
  - 5. Some have other commitments. (Try to get a commitment from them that they get involved at a later time.)
  - 6. Some say that the request is too vague. (Explain the request and write out some guidelines to help them understand exactly what will be expected of them.)
- B. Many of these are real reasons why people will not work.
  - 1. This is why the class can be so helpful and help us avoid making some of the same mistakes that we have studied.
  - 2. This is one of the greatest challenges to leadership: to lead others in a work and to delegate assignments and to train and equip people for the tasks.
  - 3. The Wednesday evening class on the visitation work has been excellent and very profitable.
    - a. It has focused on what the scriptures teach about our responsibility, and guidelines from those who have experience in this kind of work.
    - b. Medical and counseling professionals have advised how to visit the sick and shut-ins for the greatest benefit.

- c. Those experienced and successful in other areas of the work have advised on things to avoid and what helps.
- 4. Getting people involved takes a lot of planning and dedication.
  - a. There is reason for hesitation when we are inexperienced and apprehensive.
  - b. Guidelines and suggestions by successful workers give us confidence and a greater probability for success.
- 5. It also takes courage on the part of leaders as well as workers.
  - a. It takes courage for leaders to turn an inexperienced worker loose on a task.
  - b. It takes courage for the workers to try something new.
  - c. But this is the way to grow individually and as a church.
- 6. Therefore, much greater organization is needed where there are many working with various levels of experience and confidence. It is much more important to structure the program in considerable detail, and stay with the plan.

## II. **THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS TO AN ORGANIZED PROGRAM OF WORK.**

- A. It gives structure and organization for those unsure of themselves.
  - 1. We have already mentioned some of these advantages.
  - 2. It provides an ongoing training and builds confidence w/success.
- B. It strengthens the church w/ more people served.
  - 1. A few cannot do everything that needs to be done.
  - 2. When only a few are working the urgent often takes precedent over the important.
    - a. The urgent may be someone in the hospital and the more important the preparation for teaching.
    - b. The urgent may be the grass that needs mowing and the more important, a visitor who needs a visit.
- C. People are built up and strengthened when they are active and working .
  - 1. Spectators are never as strong as participants.
  - 2. Spectators are never as interested or intense as participants.
- D. Those who are working are happier than those who want to be served (1Jn. 1:4; 2:3-6).
  - 1. Those who focus on themselves and their problems become depressed and discouraged.
  - 2. Those who focus on the needs of others are more grateful for what they have as they think about themselves less of the time.
  - 3. We have much higher self-esteem when we are helping others than when we are feeling sorry for ourselves.
- E. Those who are active in the Lord's work are more interested in the Lord's worship and praise.
  - 1. The better we feel about ourselves, the greater joy we have in helping others.
  - 2. We are more interested in worshipping when we feel that the Lord accepts our life and service.

## **CONCLUSION.**

- A. Song *To the Work, To the Work* sums up our lesson (p. 593).
- B. If you are not a worker in the Lord's vineyard, you need to come to Him today and become His servant.
- C. The Lord does not call spectators, as the parable of the vine and branches teaches (Jn. 15:1,2).
- D. Let us welcome the opportunity to become more fruitful in the Lord's service.