

## SERVING WITH FAITH IN MINISTRY

*"I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord."*

(1 Corinthians 7:35 NIV)

Paul wrote this passage to the church in Corinth, which was then experiencing chaos, division, struggles with sin, and confusion regarding ministry. The essence of 1 Corinthians 7:35 is this: The purpose of ministry is not because God "needs" us, but so that we remain "focused" on God. There are three (3) keys in 1 Corinthians 7:35 for "Serving with faith in ministry," namely:

1. **SERVING FOR OUR OWN GOOD.** Note the phrase "for your own good" in this verse. This may sound selfish, but the Apostle Paul's intention was to emphasize that ministry is for our own benefit. Why? Because serving:
  - 1.1 Shapes the character of Christ in the life of the servant of God. Through ministry, we learn to be humble, just as Jesus—our Teacher and Lord—washed His disciples' feet and commanded them to wash one another's feet, or to serve one another with deep humility (John 13:14; Phil. 2:3-4).
  - 1.2 Keeps us close to God. Those who serve God have less time to be distracted by sin and worry.
  - 1.3 Gives purpose to life. Life ceases to be empty because there is "work" in Christ that God has prepared for the lives of His children (Eph. 2:10).

To have faith here means: Believing that God uses ministry to mature us, rather than merely using us as instruments.

2. **SERVING WITH A FOCUS ON GOD.** Note the phrase "serving the Lord without distraction" in this verse. The word "without distraction" in the original language is *\*aperispastos\**, meaning undivided, free from anxiety, and fully attentive. There are three (3) major "distractions" faced by God's servants in these end times, namely:
  - 2.1 Worldly Distractions: Money, career, and prestige (Matt. 6:24).
  - 2.2 Self-Distractions: Emotional wounds, bitterness, and the desire for praise—serving while the heart is not truly fixed on God.
  - 2.3 Spiritual Distractions: Exhaustion and despair.

Exercising faith here means: Believing that the time we dedicate to God is never in vain and will not result in loss (Matt. 6:33; Rom. 8:28). It means serving with a primary focus on God, trusting Him to handle the rest and bring about good for everyone who serves Him.

3. **SERVING IN A RIGHT AND GOOD WAY.** Note the phrase "what is right and good" in this verse. This implies that service is not merely about being "busy at church"; it must be both right and good. Serving "rightly" means serving in accordance with the Word (2 Tim. 3:16), serving according to one's calling and gifts (Rom. 12:6), and serving with accountability (Heb. 13:17). Serving "well" means serving with a motive of love (1 Cor. 13:1), with a servant's attitude (Mark 10:45), and with excellence rather than carelessness (Col. 3:23).

Exercising faith here means: Believing that *how* we serve is just as important as *what* we serve. Let us fully carry out the ministry we have received, and "never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11). Amen, God bless you!

By Ps. Silwanus Obadja