

HELPS MINISTRY—PART 3

Lesson 1

The Rewards Of A Kingdom Laborer

- **After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.**
Genesis 15:1

First, and foremost, we serve God because we love Him, but we must also realize there are great rewards for those who labor in God's Kingdom. Just as there are rewards promised for the wicked (2 Samuel 3:39; Psalms 54:5, 91:8; Isaiah 3:11), there are also rewards for the righteous who serve God. This lesson will focus on many of those rewards and promises.

Reward (*misthos*)—*dues paid for work, wages, hire, of the rewards which God bestows*

REWARDS ARE CONDITIONAL

- **For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love (*labor of love*) which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. ¹¹And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹²so that you will not be sluggish (*lazy*), but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. **Hebrews 6:10-12 NASB95****

These verses are the ultimate verses for describing the ministry of helps, its responsibilities, and its rewards. Consider everything these verses say about helps:

1. Helps is work.
2. Helps is a labor of love. This is different than a work.
3. Helps is done as unto the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Helps is ministry to the saints.
5. Helps is perpetual. It doesn't end. Are you still ministering to the saints?
6. Helps requires diligence. Serving isn't always easy. Fatigue can set in. Be diligent.
7. Helps is not for the lazy.
8. Helps can be imitated.
9. Helps requires faith and patience.
10. **Helps inherits the promises!**

REWARDS ARE PROMISED TO THE LABORER

God is our greatest reward. Just knowing Him is a tremendous honor. The wicked don't get to know Him. But there are yet still more rewards for the righteous who serve Him.

- **The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.** **Proverbs 11:18**
- **For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.** **1 Timothy 5:18**

If you're a laborer in the Kingdom, God promises to reward you!

REWARDS NOW AND IN ETERNITY

Praise God the reward system we participate in isn't entirely in heaven, and it isn't entirely in the earth. We can serve God, labor for Him, and receive some rewards now and some rewards in heaven.

- **Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, with His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him and His recompense before Him.**

Isaiah 40:10 NASB95

There are some rewards the Lord will bring "with Him."

- **Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; ¹³Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. ¹⁴If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.** **1 Corinthians 3:12-14**

Some rewards are received upon judgment day when our works will be judged. In this passage, God likens our Gospel labor to "building upon" the foundation of Jesus. God sees our Gospel labors in different categories depending upon our heart, attitude, and motive behind them. Those categories range from gold down to stubble. How many rewards will you have left after the fires of judgment? Will you even have anything to burn?

- **... a faithful ambassador is health.** **Proverbs 13:17b**
- **His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.** **Matthew 25:21**
- **For they that have used the office of a deacon (*diakoneo*) well purchase to themselves a good degree [step up, promotion], and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.** **1 Timothy 3:13**

There are also many rewards that follow us in this life; among them are health, promotion, joy, a step up, and great boldness in the faith.

REWARDS ARE BASED UPON HEART CONDITION

God is looking for more than just raw obedience out of His children. He desires to see a willing heart, coupled with the act of obedience.

- **And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.** **1 Chronicles 28:9**



David exhorted Solomon to not just serve God, but to do so with a willing mind. The reward for this willing attitude in serving God is revealed in **verse 20** of the same chapter: God will be with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you until thou hast finished all the work given you.

- **If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: ²⁰But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.** **Isaiah 1:19-20**

God is looking for a willing heart and attitude, not just an obedient heart. Here, a willing and obedient heart is rewarded by the best of the land.

- **For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation (*a stewardship*) of the gospel is committed to me.** **1 Corinthians 9:17**

Paul recognized that there was only a reward for his labor if his attitude was proper and pleasing to God. But even if his attitude wasn't right, it still didn't change the fact that he had already been entrusted with a Kingdom responsibility. How is your attitude toward your God-assigned responsibility?

REWARDS ARE BASED ON INDIVIDUAL LABOR

If you don't labor, you can't be rewarded. The Kingdom is not like a football team where even the bench-warmer gets a championship ring if his team wins. In the Kingdom, if you don't play, you don't get a ring.

- **Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.** **1 Corinthians 3:8**

Here we see a soul-winning duo. They are on the same team doing two different jobs, but if their team wins, they are rewarded differently. If they labor big, they are rewarded big. If they labor small, they are rewarded small.

Labor for God because you love Him. Labor for God because it is your calling, but never forget that He is faithful to reward those who labor for Him. Expect the reward!!! (**Hebrews 11:26 NASB95**)

HELPS MINISTRY—PART 3

Lesson 2

Catching The Vision

When it comes to building anything in life, it is critical that we learn how to follow the blueprints set before us. If we want to be promoted in life, it is even more critical that we don't just follow the blueprints set before us, but that we also see the bigger picture of what is to be accomplished. In our career, we must follow our boss's blueprints (vision) and see the big picture (catch his heart). This is the same for wives who want to be a great helpmeet to their husband. The same goes for the ministry of helps. Any Christian who wants to finish their race must learn how to catch the vision of their local church and the heart of their pastor.

- **And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.** **Habakkuk 2:2**
 - **The LORD responded: "Write down the message! Record it legibly on tablets, so the one who announces it may read it easily."** **Habakkuk 2:2 NET**
 - **Then the LORD said to me, "Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others."** **Habakkuk 2:2 NLT**

Heavenly Vision → Leader → Clearly Written/Communicated → Saint Reads → Saint Acts

Any vision, revelation, or direction given by God to a local church must be clearly written out and communicated. This is the responsibility of the pastor and leadership. Once the vision is written and established, it becomes the Christian's responsibility to read it and then act on it. God doesn't direct or speak for us to only hear. God's vision always requires some kind of action. Our life is enriched when we get involved in God's plan.

CONNECTION BRINGS RESPONSIBILITY

Once God has assigned us to a church, it becomes our responsibility to learn the vision and catch the heart. We mustn't be afraid to take upon us the flavor, culture, and mindset of the places to which God assigns us. That is part of the reason He has assigned us there. Our lives will be enriched by taking upon ourselves the flavors and disciplines of the local church.

Some things can be taught, but some things can only be caught. Catching the vision isn't just learning how to do the work required. It also involves doing the work with the same heart as the leader. It isn't just taking care of a customer; it's taking care of a customer the same way the boss would. It isn't just building an engine; it's building an engine the way the boss would. It isn't just about the labor at hand; it totally involves the motive, heart, and bigger picture of why we are doing the labor at hand.

DOs AND DON'Ts PAINT A PICTURE

Just like God's holiness is taught to us through His Law, the heart and vision of your leadership will also be communicated through a list of dos and don'ts. There is simply no other way to

begin to communicate a value system or vision. By learning these rules, we can begin to “get the picture.” We must let the rules connect the dots of the bigger picture. The quicker you can get the picture, the greater the asset you will become and the more eligible for promotion you can be.

THE GOSPEL MINISTRY OFFERS MORE

The Gospel ministry and the Gospel minister have more to offer than just teaching and knowledge. There is a culture and legacy being offered from every pulpit and by every church. Because many Christians are oblivious to this fact, they miss out on a beautiful opportunity to catch a spiritual heritage, legacy, and culture.

- **So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.**
1 Thessalonians 2:8

In Paul’s ministry, though the Gospel was paramount, he was also interested in imparting his soul into his disciples. This would have included his views, his hunger, his drive, his humor, his personality, his excellence, etc. A disciple of Paul would have been very different from a disciple of Peter. Their spiritual lineage would have been noticeably different, and this is a good thing. Peter’s disciples were ordained to be like Peter, and Paul’s disciples were ordained to be like Paul. That’s why the disciples were called to their respective disciplers. Are you catching the soul of the leaders God has placed you under?

- **But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. ²⁰For I have no man likeminded (*isopsuchos*), who will naturally (*genuinely*) care for your state. ²¹For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s. ²²But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served me in the gospel.**
Philippians 2:19-22

This passage reveals many realities about catching the vision in a ministry:

1. Leaders don’t necessarily have a lot of disciples they can simply command.
2. For a disciple to be deemed command-worthy, they must have caught their leader’s own mind (*isopsuchos*—same soul).
3. “Same-souled” disciples care for the people just like the leader does.
4. “Same-souled” disciples have learned to genuinely serve God’s people.
5. “Different-souled” disciples still care too much about their stuff and not the Lord’s.
6. When a disciple has caught the vision, it will be evident to all. There will be proof.
7. Catching the vision produces a father/son like impression; that is to say, you begin to take on the flavor of your leadership just like a son does their father’s flavor.

MISSING THE HEART BIRTHS LEGALISM

If we fail to catch the heart of the vision with which we have been tasked, we will begin to grow legalistic in our endeavors. We will perform our duties, blindly going through the motions and failing to see the big picture.

- **Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.**

Matthew 23:24

In this passage, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their legalism. They were so obsessed with the Law of Moses that they tithed on the spices out of their garden (mint, anise, and cumin). Despite this strict adherence to God's vision, they still failed to see the bigger picture of the Law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness (**Matthew 23:23**). They knew the Law but failed to catch the heart of the Law. They were adamant to give God 10% of their parsley but didn't see the point in giving mercy to their neighbor. Legalism will likewise bog us down in the minutiae and rules, while blinding us to the bigger picture.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN VISION CATCHING

Always, always, always try to find the heart or purpose behind every law, rule, protocol, or assignment. Understanding the *why* will help you accomplish the task at hand.

1. What's the heart behind this action, rule, assignment, or protocol? Is it to keep people safe? Save money? Honor the presence of God?
2. What's the purpose of this action, rule, assignment, or protocol? What is leadership trying to accomplish here? Is it to keep order?
3. What's the big picture here and how does this action, rule, assignment, or protocol play into that?

CATCH THE VISION TO SEE PROMOTION

Leaders are eager to promote people under their command. The more a leader can promote, appoint, and delegate the workload of the vision, the more freed up he will be to do other things. When a leader looks to promote someone under them, they will always be drawn to the individual who is the closest reflection of the leader. Consider the testimonies of the following people:

- **Joseph**—He was a master servant, and he knew how to catch a vision. He served his dad to the point of promotion. He served Potiphar to the point of promotion. Then he served the prison warden to the point of promotion. Everywhere he went he caught the heart of his leaders and it brought him promotion.
- **Joshua**—He faithfully served Moses day after day for 40 years. He saw how Moses met with God and handled God's people. God promoted him into Moses' position.
- **David**—He faithfully served King Saul. His service to Saul permitted him close insights into palace intrigue, politics, economics, and military protocol. He was a king in training before he even knew it.
- **Elisha**—He faithfully served Elijah, learning the ins and outs of the prophet's ministry. He learned that there was a big difference between the school of the prophets and the real prophets. His first act as prophet was the spitting image of Elijah's last act. He wasn't afraid to take on the flavor of his mentor.
- **Timothy**—He looked to Paul as the dad he never had, even submitting to circumcision at the apostle's suggestion. Paul praises him more than any other fellow laborer.

Above all, pray that you will catch the heart and vision of the leadership in your life, whether it be church, family, or career. Amen!

HELPS MINISTRY PT.3

Lesson 3

Finding Your Grace

(aka Your Special Function)

The human body is one unit but has many members. The success of that body is dependent on each part functioning at peak design. Anything less than optimal performance is deemed an ailment, malady, sickness, or injury and would benefit from some degree of medical treatment. The goal is to return the body to its optimal designed performance level. So it is with the Body of Christ.

It is established dogma that the Church is a spiritual body (**1 Corinthians 12:12**). As such, we can see that though we are all equally important, we are not equally gifted. Paul uses specific body parts, e.g., foot, hand, ear, eye, etc. to communicate this concept. These are all equally important parts of a body, but they are not equal in ability. So it is with each member of Christ's Body.

- **Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function,⁵ so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. ⁶In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well . . .**
Romans 12:4-6a NLT

Paul goes on to list seven different grace gifts: prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, ruling, and mercy. I believe that this is a complete list, not a partial list. As such, I believe that each of these seven gifts are indicative of categories rather than just a singular or specific gift. Though every believer is commanded to do each of these as part of our Christian walk, Paul reveals that we will be given a specialty grace. Be forewarned, yours may not be the grace gift you want.

- **Prophecy (*prophēteía*)**—In first century AD Greek usage, this term enjoyed a much broader use than the modern Pentecostal understanding. The term refers to anyone communicating with authority (*prophētes*) or any authoritative communication, not just an oracular utterance. Modern iterations of this could include:
 - Heralds
 - Philosophers
 - Poets
 - Orators
 - Singers
 - Songwriters
 - Messengers
- **Ministry (*diakonía*)**—This is the general word for service or servitude. A *diákonos* is “one who does the will of another.” It describes a very broad category of grace. If this is you, you may find yourself constantly noticing burdens around the local church or in the lives of others and then thinking about how to relieve those burdens. Modern iterations of this grace could include:

- Maintenance
 - Hospitality
 - Food services
 - Construction
 - Groundskeeping
 - Deacon's ministry
- **Teaching (*didaskalia*)**—Teaching is a broad category. It is my experience that the graces to teach are just as diverse as the different types of people that need to be taught. If this is you, you may find yourself regularly thinking about how to communicate Gospel truths and doctrines to different types of audiences. As an example, just because someone is gifted to teach the Origins of Christ in the Levitical Law doesn't mean they would be comfortable teaching sixth graders. Modern iterations of this gift could include:
 - Children's Ministry
 - Senior Adult Ministry
 - Special doctrinal teaching, e.g., eschatology, pneumatology, Church history, Old Testament Survey, etc.
 - New Believers Classes
- **Exhortation (*parakalēō*)**—Exhortation enjoys a wide usage in the Greek New Testament as well. It is associated with evangelism (**Acts 2:40**); preaching (**Acts 11:23; 15:32**); discipleship (**Acts 14:22**); comfort (**Acts 16:40; 2 Corinthians 2:7**); to deliver a commandment (**2 Corinthians 9:5**); and even as the work of an epistle (**1 Peter 5:12**). It is the same word associated with the Holy Spirit as Comforter, or paraclete. Those graced to exhort may find themselves eager to bring a believer to a higher place very quickly. The biblical context carries with it the idea of stepping into someone's situation and speaking to them in a way that moves them toward God. Exhortations are usually short bursts of God's comfort and encouragement. Modern iterations of this could include:
 - Barnabas, the son of consolation, always encouraging the believers no matter what their predicament
 - A card or letter writer, sending out the timely word of encouragement
 - A preaching gift that is shallow on theology, but heavy on a simple charge to go on, go up, don't quit, get to church, get to prayer, etc!
 - The eternal optimist
 - It is any act that builds up the Christian believer or community.
 - It has the ability to aid in the restoration of backslidden believers.
- **Giving (*metadidōmī*)**—While we are all called to be givers, just as we are all called to serve, teach, exhort, etc., some are especially graced to finance the Kingdom of God. If this is you, you may regularly find yourself wondering how to obtain more money, not for yourself, but for the next offering, missionary, or church need. Modern iterations of this could include:
 - Offerings above and beyond the norm
 - Commitment to help special projects
 - A manufacturer that supplies his product to a ministry or missionary free-of-charge

- Developing the reputation as a “go-to money person”
 - Some even maintain a line item in their budget called something like “special Kingdom projects.” Money is accumulated there until a need arises.
- **Ruling (*proístēmi*)**—While we are all called to lead some area of our lives, especially husbands and fathers, there is a special grace that equips one for Kingdom leadership. This grace carries with it the ability to multitask and flourish under pressure. Modern iterations of this could include:
 - Department leadership
 - Administrative capacities
 - Eldership
 - Mission team leader
 - **Mercy (*eleéō*)**—To show mercy is a relational response to someone in distress. This grace can manifest in many different ways depending on the need but the heart of it is relieving suffering. The grace itself first recognizes someone’s distress and then moves them with compassion to act on the distress. To show mercy means to relieve someone of suffering even when they have no claim to your help. Modern iterations of this grace can include:
 - Intercessory prayer
 - Praying for and laying hands on the sick
 - Being an advocate/going to bat for someone in need
 - Generosity

It might be apparent that there will readily arise much overlapping of these gifts. Mercy will use generosity and exhortation to accomplish its goal. Leadership will use exhortation and teaching to accomplish its goal. Ideally, we should all strive to improve at all of these.

PETER’S ADDRESS

The apostle Peter addresses the same doctrine in his first epistle. However, he only briefly touches on the subject as he moves from one topic to the next. Consequently, his exposition is far shorter than Paul’s address.

- **Use hospitality one to another without grudging.** ¹⁰As every man hath received the gift (*chárisma*), even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:9-11

Peter briefly touches on the subject of graces and special functions. He describes *chárisma* as multifaceted though he only speaks of three graces. His brief list overlaps with Paul’s list. Peter’s list of grace gifts includes:

- **Hospitality (*philóxenos*)**—The love of strangers. It is my judgment that this falls under the category of ministry. Peter mentions this action as a demonstration of

love towards the saints. It opens his expositions to the larger subject of “**manifold grace.**”

- **Speaking/declaration (*laléō*)**—In context, Peter ties this verb to being an oracle, which indicates Peter is speaking of prophecy. It is my judgment that this is the equivalent as prophecy from **Romans 12**.
- **Minister (*diakonéō*)**—The gift of helping others. This is the same word from **Romans 12**. It is the general category for helping to bear a burden.

To back up in Peter’s epistle, his lead-in to hospitality gives us the motive for the use of these diverse graces.

- **Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹Use hospitality . . .** **1 Peter 4:8 NLT, 9a KJV**

Hospitality is an act of love. As is every grace gift. We are commanded to find our graces and then use them for the benefit of the Body, but the motive above all is that of love. Selfishness withholds the God-given grace that was bestowed to help the Body. It renders that grace into a “vain-grace”—a wasted grace.

- **But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.** **1 Corinthians 15:10**
- **We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.** **2 Corinthians 6:1**

Special functions are given to every believer to aid us in our Christian labor. We are obligated to our God to discover them and use them.

EQUAL IMPORTANCE, UNEQUALLY GIFTED

We are all equally important but not equally gifted. The strength of the local church body depends on each of us doing well what we are gifted to do well. One of the worst things we could do is endeavor to be something God has not graced us to be. A hand makes for a horrible foot, though there are many similarities. Likewise, an eye makes a horrible ear, though they are both located on the head. We must first discover what our graces are, then pursue God to develop them. So how do we find our grace gifts?

1. **You Can’t Steer a Parked Car**—We must start by serving. The local church’s ministry of helps grants us the parking lot with which to begin driving our calling to Christian service. It is here that our special function can begin to make itself known.
2. **Serve with an Excellent Heart**—There are those who serve with a pulse and those who serve with all of their hearts. A mature Christian doesn’t really care where they serve; they just want to serve. They are eager to show themselves faithful over another man’s ministry.
3. **Special Functions Grow**—As a believer serves with excellence and joy where they are assigned, the grace of God upon their life will begin to bud and flourish. Often, giftings unknown to the individual begin to take shape and make themselves known.



- 4. See Promotion with Time**—Promotion will come as motives are proven, excellence is developed, and a faithful attitude is demonstrated. Special functions grow when proper conditions are met. As your special function grows, trust church leadership to recognize both the grace and the place it is needed.

Find your grace and watch God bless your life. Amen!

HELPS MINISTRY PT. 3

Lesson 4

Stay In Your Lane

The New Testament uses several different allegories to describe the Church. While these allegories are different, they simultaneously share a common thread, that is, they are each a single entity comprised of multiple parts under a single leader. These allegories are:

- **A Body**—A single body comprised of multiple body parts under a head
- **A Building**—A single building built of multiple parts under a builder
- **An Army**—A single entity comprised of multiple soldiers under a captain
- **A Family**—A single unit comprised of multiple members under a father
- **A Household**—A single unit comprised of multiple servants under a master
- **A Vineyard**—A single field comprised of multiple vines under a husbandman
- **A Flock**—A single group comprised of multiple sheep under a shepherd

A local church requires the contribution of each and every member doing their part and manifesting their own grace. Each of these allegories demonstrates either a hierarchy of authority (i.e., army, family, and household) or a critical order of created organization (i.e., body and building). Of the previous seven allegories, only the last two (vineyards and flocks) are exempt from these patterns. However, unique to the final two are their innate abilities to grow and produce useful products (viz., wool and grapes).

SUCCESS IS THE SUM OF THE PARTS

The success of the first five allegories is dependent upon the integrity and fidelity of the individual components:

- **A body** needs each part performing its specific function. For example, the hand makes for a bad foot; a lung is a horrible heart; an eye can't hear very much, etc. Each part has their own lane.
- **A building** needs the right part in the right place to fulfill the blueprint. For example, a foundation stone is a dangerous shingle; a beam is a bad window; a door is a futile fireplace, etc. A misused part can cause damage or ruin. Each part has their own lane.
- **An army** needs every member performing their assigned task. Some soldiers must drive supply trucks; other soldiers must run communications networks; while other soldiers must shoot guns, etc. A soldier derelict in their duties can be court-martialed. Each soldier has their own lane.
- **A father** delegates his family's responsibilities and roles as he sees fit. The father does not take the role of the mother, nor vice-versa; the children are not permitted to run the home; and each member has a responsibility given for the day-to-day maintenance of the home. A neglected duty disrupts the family. Each member has their own lane.
- **A household's master** assigns roles to servants. Some servants work in the fields, while others serve in the home. Some handle business transactions, while some manage the finances. A neglected duty disrupts the household and can hurt everyone. Each servant has their own lane.

In all five scenarios, each individual part—whether it be a body part, a building material, a soldier, a child, or a slave—must do that which they have been assigned if their respective allegory is to succeed and thrive. If every member runs their race to their fullest and in their assigned lane, everyone wins, the Church is strengthened, and God is glorified!

However, if a member should become overzealous and overstep their assignment, intruding into someone else’s lane, the result can be very devastating.

- An eye should not intrude into the lung’s domain.
- A beam should not intrude into a stone’s domain.
- A scout should not intrude into an artilleryman’s domain.
- A father should not intrude into the mother’s domain.
- A slave should not intrude into the master’s domain.

Though perhaps well-meaning, such behavior is problematic, especially if the proper entity or person is already performing their role. It is problematic for several reasons:

1. It is intrusive.
2. It can be disruptive.
3. It can be irritating.
4. It can be frustrating.
5. God likes everything done decently and in order.

SCRIPTURES TO HELP

There are several Bible verses that can help us stay in our lane as we run our race for God.

- **If you suffer, however, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people’s affairs.** **1 Peter 4:15 NLT**

“Prying into other people’s affairs” is one big Greek word, *allotriepiskopos*, meaning *one who takes the supervision of affairs pertaining to others and in no wise to himself; a meddler*. It literally means *someone else’s (allótrios) + oversight (epískopos)*. It means one is a busybody and a meddler. The Bible does not present this as a praiseworthy trait. It is a behavior that Peter clearly condemns and acknowledges that people can suffer for when they commit it. We are commanded to leave other peoples’ affairs alone. This applies to the ministry of helps, too.

- **Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before.** **1 Thessalonians 4:11 NLT**

Paul associates minding one’s business with a peace-filled life. This gives us a key to why some people can’t mind their own business: It may be that their souls lack peace somewhere, and they seek to find it by hijacking or meddling in another person’s responsibility. This is also called a busy-body.

- **Yet we hear that some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work and meddling in other people’s business.** **2 Thessalonians 3:11 NLT**

In Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians, the apostle adds another possible source of busybody behavior: idleness. Some busybodies are meddlers because they are bored and need something to do. The solution here is to master your lane first.

- **And if they are on the list, they will learn to be lazy and will spend their time gossiping from house to house, meddling in other people's business and talking about things they shouldn't.** **1 Timothy 5:13 NLT**

Paul's instruction for widows grants us further insight: meddling can be a learned behavior. If a young widow can learn to be meddling, then this behavior can be unlearned as well.

EXAMPLES OF LANE SWERVING

As should be expected, the Bible offers several examples of people who failed to stay in their assigned lanes.

- **The Sons of Zeruiah (2 Samuel 3:39; 16:9-10; 19:22)**—These three men (Joab, Abishai, and Asahel) were David's nephews. Zeruiah was David's sister. Though these men did much to help their king, they were also a frequent headache for David because they often took it upon themselves to do things they were not assigned to do, usually murder. Joab and Abishai killed Abner without permission. Joab also killed Amasa (his cousin) out of job jealousy. Abishai requested permission to murder Shimei for insulting David. To which request David famously responded, **"What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?"** They struggled to stay in their lane because of jealousy.
- **King Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:16-21)**—King Uzziah decided to play priest and burn incense on the altar of incense. This was not his place, his duty, or his lane. Azariah the High Priest confronted him and said, **"It is not for you, Uzziah (note: he was not addressed by his office of king, because he had left it), to burn incense to the LORD. That is the work of the priests alone . . . Get out of the sanctuary, for you have sinned. The LORD God will not honor you for this!"** Uzziah didn't stay in his lane because of pride.
- **Onesimus (Philemon)**—Onesimus was a Roman-era slave that had fled his master, Philemon, who was a Christian convert and co-laborer of Paul. As God's sovereignty had arranged it, Onesimus met the Apostle Paul, got saved under his ministry, and began serving him. Paul eventually discovered their connection and sent Onesimus back to serve Philemon, even though the runaway slave had been very helpful to Paul while the apostle was in prison. Onesimus had to be sent back to his lane.
- **Paul (Acts 9:15; 17:2)**—Paul had three divine lanes, assigned in order by Jesus Christ. He was to bear the name of Christ to: #1—first to the Gentiles, #2—then to kings, and *lastly* #3—to the Jews. Paul regularly got his lanes out of order and usually put the Jews *first*, **"As was Paul's custom (not the Lord's assignment), he went to the synagogue service, and for three Sabbaths in a row he used the Scriptures to reason with the people."** It was the Jews that always tried to murder him or run him out of town, not the Gentiles. Paul's fruit was that while



only “**some**” of the Jews believed, “**a great multitude**” of the Gentiles did. Paul needed to learn which of his lanes took priority.

May God help us find our lane and then stay in it as we run our race for Him! Amen!