

STUDY GUIDE

The Christian Response to Christ's Victory

"Steadfast Labor"

1 Corinthians 15:58

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." — 1 Corinthians 15:58

Big Idea

Because Jesus Christ has won the victory over sin and death (1 Cor. 15:57), Christians are called to respond not with passivity but with steadfast, immovable, abounding labor — fully confident that nothing done for the Lord is wasted.

Context: 1 Corinthians 15

- Vv. 1–11 — The basic truths of the Gospel
- Vv. 12–34 — The resurrection of Christ and of those united to Him
- Vv. 35–53 — The future resurrection of the believer's body and the 2nd Advent
- Vv. 55–57 — The victory of Christ and the efficacy of His mission
- V. 58 — The “therefore”: our response to that victory

Sermon Outline

- I. The Call to Labor
- II. The Call to Commitment
- III. The Call to Confidence

I. The Call to Labor

Scripture never pictures the Christian as idle, inactive, or retired. Every biblical metaphor for a believer — laborer, worker, farmer, soldier, servant, ambassador — assumes activity. Christian inactivity is an oxymoron.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." — Ephesians 2:10

Salvation is not the end of the story but the doorway into pre-ordained labor. We are saved for good works — not saved by them, but saved unto them (Eph. 2:8–9; Titus 2:14; Titus 3:8, 14). This labor is done “in the Lord”: for His purposes, in His strength, for His glory — whether in the home, the workplace, or the local church.

Key Word Study

Greek Term	Meaning	Where It Occurs
<i>kopos</i>	Hard work, toil to the point of exhaustion	1 Thess. 1:3 — “work of faith and labor of love”

Paul's emphasis is not merely the intensity of the labor but the motive behind it — “kupos agape,” labor propelled by love, done joyfully rather than reluctantly (Col. 3:23–24).

II. The Call to Commitment

Paul's charge in verse 58 uses three descriptive words that define what committed labor looks like.

Greek Term	Meaning	Where It Occurs
<i>hedraios</i>	Steadfast — firm, settled, resolute, firmly situated	1 Cor. 15:58; Col. 1:23
<i>ametakinetos</i>	Immovable — unshaken, motionless, without relent or retreat	1 Cor. 15:58
<i>perisseuo</i>	Abounding — to exist in abundance, exceeding what is expected	1 Cor. 15:58; Eph. 1:7–8

Gospel labor is opposed — by discouragement, monotony, persecution, and the pull of our own flesh. Steadfastness is required because the labor is costly (Acts 5:41–42; Acts 20:24). Abounding calls us beyond the minimum — excellence and lavish effort as an offering to Christ, not a bare requirement met.

III. The Call to Confidence

Commitment is sustained by knowledge: we can be steadfast, immovable, and abounding only because we know our labor is not in vain (Gk. *kenos* — empty, without purpose).

Three Reasons Our Labor Is Not Wasted

- The Gospel is inherently effectual — God's Word will not return empty (Isaiah 55:11; Acts 13:48–49).
- The Lord works alongside us — we are not alone in our labor (Mark 16:20; 1 Cor. 3:9).
- God's promises cannot fail — it is impossible for God to lie (Titus 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:20).

Our steadfast labor flows directly from Christ's steadfast victory (1 Cor. 15:57). Those who refuse to labor, in effect, live as though His mission failed.

Memory Verse

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"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." — 1 Corinthians 15:58

Discussion Questions

Reflect

1. What biblical metaphors describe the Christian life (laborer, soldier, ambassador, etc.)? What do they have in common, and what do they rule out?
2. How would you describe the difference between working FOR salvation and working FROM salvation? Why does this distinction matter?
3. Read Ephesians 2:8–10. How does verse 10 change the way you think about verses 8–9?

Examine

4. Which of the three words — steadfast, immovable, abounding — most exposes an area of weakness in your own walk right now? Why?
5. The sermon describes people who begin well in ministry but “fizzle to a flicker.” What tends to erode your own steadfastness — busyness, discouragement, conflict, or something else?
6. Where in your life is God calling you to labor with excellence rather than the bare minimum (Col. 3:23)?

Apply

7. What specific, ongoing labor — in your home, church, or workplace — do you need to recommit to this week?
8. How does knowing “your labor is not in vain” change how you approach a task that currently feels fruitless or thankless?
9. Read Mark 16:20 and 1 Corinthians 3:9. How does it change your labor to know the Lord is working alongside you rather than watching from a distance?

Personal Application

This week, identify one labor “in the Lord” you have been tempted to abandon or perform half-heartedly. Recommit to it — not because the outcome is guaranteed to be visible, but because the promise of verse 58 does not depend on visible fruit. Ask God for grace to be steadfast, immovable, and abounding, resting in the fact that His Word never returns void (Isaiah 55:11).

Closing Thought

“Tis only one life, will soon be past, only that which is done for Christ will last.” — C.T. Studd