

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:58

Describe a time in your life when you were discouraged about a task that meant a lot to you. How did you deal with that discouragement?

Who is Paul addressing these words to? Does this apply to all believers or just pastors and leaders?

Why does Paul begin with the word “therefore”? What is Paul basing this whole exhortation upon? (see vv. 35-57)?

What does it mean to “give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord”? When are we to do this?

What is “the work of the Lord”? Is this talking only about what we might traditionally call “ministry” or does it apply to all that we do? Explain.

What is the reason we are always to do this?

In what sense is our labor not in vain? Have you ever felt your work for the Lord WAS in vain?

Reflect on and discuss the following quote:

*"It is a matter of the greatest encouragement to Christian workers, most of whom are away from the public eye, unsung heroes and heroines, getting on faithfully and quietly with their God-given tasks, that what they do 'in the Lord' during the present time will last, will matter, will stand for all time. How God will take our prayer, our art, our love, our writing, our political action, our music, our honesty, our daily work, our pastoral care, our teaching, our whole selves — how God will take this and weave its varied strands into the glorious tapestry of his new creation, we can at present have no idea. That he will do so is part of the truth of the resurrection, and perhaps one of the most comforting parts of all." N.T. Wright*

Look at the following examples. What can we learn from each about giving ourselves fully to the work of the Lord?

- Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2)
- Pricilla and Aquila (Romans 16:3-4)
- Epaphroditus (Philippians 3:25-30)
- Tabitha (Acts 9:36-39)
- Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:16-17)

Take some time and reflect on your response to this verse. What currently hinders you from "giving yourself fully to the work of the Lord"? What are some steps you can take towards "always" doing that?