

# Five Essential Ingredients for the Lord's Work

## INTRODUCTION:

- I. If I were to ask you to name the greatest problems facing the Lord's church today, what would your answer be?
  - A. I realize this opens up a lot of possibilities. But let's narrow it down by just asking you to list the FIVE greatest problems facing the Lord's church.
    1. Some of you might be thinking the church is facing a huge problem when it comes to keeping worldliness out of the church, and out of the lives of its members.
      - a. I think we would all agree that the gradual influx of worldliness into the body of Christ IS a serious problem.
      - b. It seems that more and more members of the Lord's church have either become COMPLACENT about worldliness, or they have become COMFORTABLE with it in their own lives.
    2. Others might say the church is facing a major challenge to compromise doctrinally.

- a. Let's face it – it's not popular to take a strong conservative stand against the doctrinal error and denominational practices we see creeping into the worship of the Lord's church today.
  3. The list of problems facing the Lord's church could actually be endless.
- B. But most of us would probably agree that one of the greatest problems we face today in the body of Christ is simply a lack of work.
1. The Scriptures teach that good works are a vital part of our lives as Christians.
    - a. **Ephesians 2:10** – *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*
    - b. **Titus 2:14** – Speaking of Jesus Christ, Paul wrote: *...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*
  2. And yet, many times the Lord's work is NOT accomplished simply because we don't have the right attitudes to accomplish it.
- C. So what are some of those attitudes that we should have toward the Lord's work?
1. What are the essential ingredients that each of us need in our own lives to accomplish the Lord's work?

2. I'm sure we could name many, but let's just focus on five essentials that are key to our ability to effectively do the work that the Lord has placed into our hands to perform.

**BODY:**

- I. One of the most important ingredients we need to be effective in doing the Lord's work is a POWERFUL FAITH.
  - A. It's been said that if one believes nothing, he will do nothing.
    1. In other words, if we do NOT think we can do something, then we have just guaranteed our failure – and in most instances we won't even TRY.
    2. This was the SIN of the spies Moses sent into the Land of Canaan to spy out strengths and weaknesses of the cities and the people who lived there.
      - a. When they returned: **Numbers 13:27-33** – *Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28 Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the*

*banks of the Jordan." 30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." 31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." 32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. 33 There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."*

- b. There was absolutely no way they could have gone forth at that moment to conquer the Land of Canaan because they had already lost the battle in their own minds.
- B. However, with a strong faith in God and in the power of God to answer prayers and change circumstances, we can accomplish virtually anything!
- 1. Never underestimate what the Lord can do – especially what the Lord can do with people of faith.

- a. God reminded the people of Israel that He can redeem and deliver anyone, anytime: **Isaiah 50:2** – *Is My hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?*
- b. The disciples of Jesus couldn't heal the young man who was demon possessed, so his father brought him to Jesus and the child was healed that very hour: **Matthew 17:19-21** – *Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. 21 However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."*
- c. Paul simply put it this way: **Philippians 4:13** – *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

- 2. So, the first essential ingredient we need to do the Lord's work is FAITH – the confidence that WE can do all things through Christ who strengthens US.

II. But let me suggest another essential ingredient – a JOYFUL HEART!

- A. Nothing will kill the work of the Lord any quicker than down-hearted, depressed, defeated people.

1. We need to be people who constantly express our thankfulness for all the Lord has done for us.
  - a. We're the CHILDREN OF GOD: **1 John 3:1-3** – *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*
  - b. We're the recipient of EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING:  
**Ephesians 1:3-6** – *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.*
  - c. And when this life is over, we're going to receive the CROWN OF LIFE: **2 Timothy 4:7-8** – *I have fought the good fight, I*

*have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

- B. Therefore, knowing we have all these blessings, we should be the happiest and most positive-minded people on the face of the earth!
1. We need to be expressing JOY and REJOICING in the Lord.
    - a. **Philippians 4:4-7** – *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*
    - b. **1 Peter 1:6-9** – *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy*

*inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith  
— the salvation of your souls.*

2. Just imagine how much MORE we could do for the Lord if we greeted every day with a FAITH that could move mountains, and rejoiced with joy inexpressible and full of glory.
- III. Not only are FAITH and a JOYFUL HEART essential ingredients in doing the work of the Lord, so is a continual RELIANCE ON PRAYER.
- A. There is UNBELIEVABLE POWER in prayer!
    1. Why? Because God ANSWERS PRAYERS.
      - a. **Matthew 7:7-11** – *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"*
  - B. Wouldn't you agree that PRAYER CHANGES THINGS? Of course it does!



1. Therefore, we should pray to the ONE who can CHANGE THINGS.
  - a. We should pray about things that CAN BE CHANGED.
  - b. And, if for some reason God doesn't see fit to change things, then we should pray that OUR DESIRES change to conform to HIS.
  - c. But we should NEVER give up on OUR desire to ASK GOD to CHANGE THINGS that are in keeping with HIS will.
2. In other words, **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** – *Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*
3. Think about this. How many prayers have gone UN-answered simply because we didn't PRAY?
  - a. How many things could God have CHANGED if we had only ASKED Him to change them?
  - b. Never forget: **James 5:16-18** – *...The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.*
  - c. So... pray without ceasing... be fervent in prayer!

IV. But there's another essential ingredient we need to be successful in doing the work of the Lord – a PERSONAL LOVE.

A. If we don't have GENUINE LOVE in OUR HEARTS, then nothing else matters.

1. Right in the middle of his discourse about the proper use of spiritual gifts, the apostle Paul pauses to stress the importance of LOVE in all we do.

a. **1 Corinthians 13:1-3** - *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.*

B. But the BIG question is LOVE WHO?

1. We obviously must FIRST have a real genuine LOVE FOR THE LORD.

a. **Deuteronomy 6:5** – *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*

(1). Jesus repeated this commandment to His disciples.

**(Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27)**

b. **1 Corinthians 16:22** – *If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.*

2. But we must also have a real genuine LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

a. **Philippians 2:1-4** – *Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

b. **1 John 4:20-21** – *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.*

3. But most of all we must have a real genuine LOVE FOR THE LOST. If we TRULY love the LORD, then we will ALSO love those whom the LORD LOVES.

a. **John 3:16-17** – *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not*

*perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

- b. **Matthew 9:36-38** – *But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*

4. Think about this.

- a. If we loved OUR OWN SOULS enough to come to come to Christ in complete obedience, then how are we going to stand before the Lord on the day of judgment and explain that we DIDN'T love the souls of THE LOST enough to lead THEM to Christ?
- b. And if we DON'T LOVE THE LOST enough to lead THEM to Christ, can we really claim to love the CHRIST who DIED for THE LOST?

5. Keep in mind that we will NEVER be effective in doing the work of the Lord WITHOUT love – love for the Lord, love for our brothers and sisters in Christ, and especially love for the LOST!

V. But let me suggest one more essential ingredient to be effective in doing the work of the Lord – and that is a PERSISTENT EFFORT.

A. It's so easy to get discouraged when we don't see results.

1. But we need to remember that the Lord doesn't judge us on the basis of our RESULTS, but on the basis of our EFFORT.

a. We can be absolutely certain that NO EFFORT will ALWAYS produce NO RESULTS.

b. If we're expecting people to just WALK THROUGH THE DOORS and ask to be baptized, or express a desire to place membership here, we're simply DELUDING OURSELVES.

c. Although that has HAPPENS, it happens so RARELY.

2. Therefore, if there are going to any RESULTS in leading others to Christ, or in helping this church grow, those RESULTS will be produced by our EFFORT.

B. A PERSISTENT EFFORT is the REAL secret to success.

1. Jesus taught the value of a persistent effort in two parables.

a. **Luke 11:5-8** – *And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 7 and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise*

*and give to you'? 8 I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.*

- b. **Luke 18:1-5** – *Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, 2 saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. 3 Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' 4 And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, 5 yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'"*

2. How many times have you heard someone say, "Well, we tried that, but didn't get any results"?
- a. That's really nothing more than an excuse for NOT having made a PERSISTENT EFFORT.
- b. Advertisers know the only way you are going to buy their product is through a process known as BRANDING.
- (1). They constantly remind you of their product, the benefits of their product, and why you really want their product.
3. The same is true for us.

- a. We need to constantly be putting the Lord's church before the public, reminding them of the benefits of being a member of the Lord's church, and why they really want to be a member of the Lord's church.
4. How do you suppose the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons have such success in converting people to their brand of religious error?  
A persistent effort!
5. Our results may not be IMMEDIATE, but there will be NO RESULTS without a PERSISTENT EFFORT.
  - a. Therefore, we need to think of the task before US in the same way as Noah thought of the task before HIM.
  - b. How did Noah build the ark? One board and one peg at a time – day after day after day, for 120 years – one board and one peg at a time.
  - c. How are we going to build this church? One soul at a time – day after day after day – one soul at a time.
- C. Have we NEGLECTED making a PERSISTENT EFFORT? Of course we have. So what are we going to do about it?
  1. We can either sit here and think we're just a bunch of failures and nobody will ever be interested in becoming a part of this church.
  2. Or we can do what the apostle Paul did when his past mistakes kept popping up to discourage him from continuing.

- a. **Philippians 3:12-14** – *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*
3. Let's face it. We haven't done all that much to save souls. In fact, we've done precious little.
  - a. We've depended on "transfer growth" to fill the pews of this auditorium – families who transfer to Anchorage as members of the military, or as contract employees from the lower 48, or other forms of transfer.
  - b. Now, we're seeing all those families that we have loved so much, and who have made such a contribution to this church, leave.
- D. So, what are we going to do to change all this? What are we going to do to be effective in doing the Lord's work? Hopefully, from this moment on:
  1. We will develop a POWERFUL FAITH to believe that all things are possible because nothing is too great for God to accomplish



2. We will lift ourselves out of being despondent and down-hearted by our past failures, and express be thankful for all God has done for us, and reflect that thanksgiving from a JOYFUL HEART.
3. We will learn to develop CONTINUAL RELIANCE ON PRAYER because we know that prayer changes things, and that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.
4. We will foster a PERSONAL LOVE for God, for our brothers and sisters in Christ, and especially for the lost souls all around us. We will love those whom the Lord loves.
5. And finally we will put forth a PERSISTENT EFFORT to do the work of the Lord in this community, not worrying about immediate results, but consistently putting forth the effort we need to bring the lost to Christ.

**CONCLUSION:**

- I. Just imagine the dynamic change that would happen in this church if each of us did these things.
  - A. Just think of the awesome things the Lord could do with this congregation if each of us did everything in our power to foster just these five ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS in our lives.

1. If the work of the Lord is going to be accomplished here, it will be done by those who are FAITHFUL, JOYFUL, PRAYERFUL, LOVING, and PERSISTENT.
  2. But these ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS aren't simply necessary to do the Lord's work, they are ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS in the lives of everyone who wants heaven to be their home.
- B. Are you FAITHFUL, JOYFUL, PRAYERFUL, LOVING and PERSISTENT?
1. Heaven will not be your home if you never come to Christ in obedience to the gospel of Christ.
    - a. You may be joyful, prayerful, loving and persistent, but if you're not faithful in obeying the Lord, none of the rest will matter on the day of judgment.
  2. And for those of us who are disciples of Christ, heaven will not be our home unless we are:
    - a. Faithful until death.
    - b. Joyful for all the spiritual blessing we have in Christ.
    - c. Prayerful in trusting in the power of God to accomplish great things.
    - d. Loving the Lord with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength.

- e. And finally, persistent in pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
3. If you want heaven to be your home, and you want the Lord to be able to use you in doing His work in this community, then begin now to foster these ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS in your life.