1 Corinthians 15:58 *“….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.”***

I had to ask myself if I am giving myself FULLY to the work of the Lord. Am I standing FIRM in doing HIS “perfect and acceptable” will, or am I using my time and energy, even finances, to do my own will, God’s ‘permissive’ will. What does it really mean to see my laboring (work each day) end up – in vain, for nothing, as wood/hay/stubble to be burned up; to turn out as nothing more than an ash heap? I know I will live with my Lord forever, but my concern is for the regrets I would have. I believe there will be a lot of crying on the part of God’s people when we all stand before judgment of Christ our Lord. BUT, He will also wipe away all tears. What a Savior!

Do I really get the importance of what Paul is saying? What Paul is trying to rescue me (us) from? I believe Paul knew better than anyone! Paul, the only Apostle that lived the rest of his life with that *thorn in the flesh*, knew personally and shamefully what kind of labor/work ends up in ashes, in vain, in shame. Paul knew better than anyone what it felt like to look back over his God-fearing life of zealous work and acknowledge that it was all in vain. As we read the writings of Paul we see what the new man (once named Saul) had shamefully discovered about all that he was doing “for God.” His teaching takes us deep into our souls to the roots (true motives and beliefs behind our work); why we believe what we believe, and do what we do, and then lead others in the same.

So then, what is the work that I am giving myself fully to each day? We each need to ask ourselves this question and then do what we need to do about it, so that we will not have to stand before the Lord and see any ash remaining from our labor. Do we really understand that kind of shame that our father Paul is trying to save us from? No wonder Paul spoke so thoroughly about it, and even harshly.

Then, I asked myself if the work that I am doing, that is of the Lord – is sloppy or not priority instead of excellent (doing my best) and foremost (putting it first). I believe the Lord uses our imperfections, but shouldn’t I be striving for excellence in the work of the Lord? I know that what the Lord gives me to do – no one else can do, so shouldn’t I make it a matter of urgency?

Do I cheat, taint or procrastinate the work of the Lord, whether my work is my marriage, my child/children, my book, my praying, my study/research, my field of service, my practice, my testimony, my spiritual growth, etc. – to do something else because it’s self-pleasing, entertaining, customary or expected of me?

Do I complain? (Ouch!) Complaining or expecting pats on the back and praise for doing the work of the Lord, is not doing giving myself FULLY to the work of the Lord. As we know from the Scriptures, our “giving” should be done cheerfully, not grudgingly. When we are looking for something ‘now’ in return for what we do; something from man (our brethren) – then we worse off than if we had never committed to the work of the Lord. I am thankful that we have a Father who understands our weakness and childish ways, and is patient with us; faithful to complete what He started in us.

The word “fully” that Paul uses – really hits me. Its meaning is both internal and external. There are people that will try to limit me in doing the work of the Lord. There are things that I would rather do that will keep me from doing the work of the Lord. And, there are secret motives and wicked strongholds that will blemish me; that will pervert and spoil the work of the Lord. Of course we know that the enemies of the cross are always at work to stop altogether – the work of the Lord through His people, and so we are told “not to be unaware of the devil’s schemes,” but to do what Jesus did. In any case, I need to just do what Jesus did. We have so many examples in the Word of God, and I believe this is where we receive our strongest encouragement and motivation, from the Living Word of God! Thank You Holy Spirit!

There are lots of things we can do with our time, talent and energy, but there’s only one assignment from the Lord. Small things/beginnings and small people (babies/children or new believers) are given to us to develop into great things and great people for the fullness of God’s Kingdom. Just look at what our Lord wholeheartedly accomplished with His boys; look at what those men went on to accomplish as they gave themselves FULLY to the work of the Lord. Like Jesus, they kept the joy before them; the joy of seeing Him again in the fullness of His Kingdom.

So many times I have hurried into doing something good that I later regretted. I have learned the benefit of “keeping to His narrow path.” There are a lot of “good” things we can do, but those things can keep us from fully doing the work of the Lord. I believe that what the Lord is asking us to do – will fit right in with who we are with our gender, age, where we live, our talents, dreams and our spiritual gifts from God. It will involve those that God has put in our lives: spouse, children, parents, friends, neighbors, employers, peers, etc. It will take us places we’ve never been before. The work of the Lord, if we give ourselves fully to it, will stretch us to increase our faith in God’s Word.

We need to continually judge ourselves and our work and then make the necessary changes and adjustments if we need to. Give it to the Lord! He is waiting for His work through you to be finished, or to begin! He will help us to complete it as well so that we are rewarded. God’s desire is that none should perish in their sins, but He has even more desire to reward and crown His faithful sons and daughters for the fullness of His Kingdom coming.

We will never run out of favor, funds, fields, fellowship, fight and fervor in giving ourselves fully to the work of the Lord. Holy Spirit, thank You for all You do in me – so that I give myself fully to the work of the Lord.