

Three Ds of Fruitful Service

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Glib formulas and catch phrases can sometimes oversimplify matters. On the other hand, there is much to be said for reducing a matter to simple, understandable principles. Often a matter that seems overwhelmingly complex can be seen in a truer perspective when its basic elements are revealed. I believe this is true of bearing fruit in the Lord's vineyard. It seems so difficult to many Christians that they do not make a serious attempt at it. Perhaps if we can see the basic requirements of those who excel in serving the Christ we will be encouraged. I suggest the following:

- **Dedication.** No one has ever accomplished much in business, politics, sports, marriage or any other field of endeavor without dedication. Dedication involves sacrificial commitment to a purpose, putting someone and/or something above others. It requires a willingness to be inconvenienced to accomplish one's purpose. Jesus was urging this quality upon His disciples when He said, "But seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Mat. 6:33). This was the Lord's meaning in Luke 9:23: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Until one decides that Christ Jesus and His work are first, one will never bear much fruit for Him.
- **Determination.** This trait proceeds from firm resolve and results in a dogged pursuance of one's dedicated course. The determined person is not easily discouraged, keeps a stiff upper lip, and perseveres to the end. Such a person was Paul. He said, "I am set for the defense of the gospel" (Phi. 1:16). He demonstrated this tenacious spirit time after time in his efforts for Christ. Rather than give up in bitter self-pity as he was driven from one town, he would simply go down the road to the next one and start preaching again. Many souls are not won and many good works not finished for want of this mental toughness.
- **Dependability:** We expect our watches, our vehicles, our telephones, our computers, and other things to be dependable. We become annoyed when they let us down. Think how God must feel when we are not dependable, and we let Him down. Fruitful service to God and His Son requires a steady, regular flow of service. The on-awhile, off-awhile, up-awhile, down-awhile, hot-awhile, cold-awhile Christian will accomplish very little and will do much harm. Thus Paul urged, "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in the January 20, 1977, edition of *Granbury Gospel*, weekly bulletin of the Church of Christ, Granbury, Texas, of which I was editor.]

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