

9 Keys to Avoiding Casualties in Your Spiritual Life

“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Tim. 4:16).

“In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work” (2 Tim. 2:20-21).

Here are some great keys to moving into an excellence in spiritual things. These keys will sharpen you and greatly aid you in flowing and excelling in your personal priesthood and in the operations of the Spirit in these last days. You will avoid the pitfalls that so many ministers fall into. There are far too many casualties in ministry because of a lack of diligence in these matters.

Here we go:

1. Pray twice.

Pray as a minister for the people and for situations and the vision of what you are doing. But pray also as a child of God, not asking the Father for anything but just loving Him and ministering to Him. Ministry to the Lord will bring you into new places in the Spirit.

2. Give place to fasting.

The power of fasting with prayer cannot be overemphasized. Instances in the Bible where it was done produced miraculous results. Keep your motives pure in the fasting, and you will

accelerate like never before in your life and calling. As an added benefit, addictions and strongholds will be broken off you, your emotions will come under the Spirit's control, and your health will spring forth speedily. Read Isaiah 58 and familiarize yourself with the many benefits of fasting done right with prayer.

3. Be very quick to forgive and repent.

It is difficult to grieve the Holy Spirit for very long when you are in a sensitive place with the Lord. Check your spirit at all times to make sure you are in a clean and clear place before ministering to others. Don't let unforgiveness take root and defile you. And never let the sun go down on your wrath. This is especially true with husband and wife.

Walk in love toward everyone, be tenderhearted and always show mercy.

4. Never exaggerate or diminish the truth.

When you don't tell the truth you offend the "Spirit of truth," who is the Holy Spirit. Don't stretch the truth and say that hundreds of people were saved in your meetings when it was only 50. Don't say that five crippled people and five blind people were healed when all you did was pray for them without verifying their healing. Don't tell people that there are 1,000 people in your church, because that is how many attended on Easter Sunday, when your regular attendance is closer to 400.

5. Stay with the good Word of God.

Avoid getting off into doctrinal tangents, ministry fads and sensationalism. Don't build your ministry on the gifts of the Spirit, as important as they are. Keep the Word first place.

6. Don't let money matters get a grip on you to the degree where you are depending upon some avenue or channel, or source

and means of getting money.

If you're called and chosen by God for ministry, rely and depend solely on the Lord without looking to a man on Earth. Don't try to make a friend of someone with substantial income to get provision. Make a friend of Jesus Christ.

No one but Jesus has chosen you and separated you to the ministry, and no one owes you a penny. No human is responsible for you. You are God's liability totally and completely. If you have this kind of heart of dependency on the Lord you will succeed and all the powers of hell can't shake you or stop you.

7. Stay free of pride and a desire for popularity.

Crucify your desire for popularity among men in the limelight of public ministry. Instead, seek to excel in your private ministry to the Lord in prayer. Keep your motives very pure in this matter, for it is a killer of many ministries. You will be a beautiful vessel for the Lord's purposes if you will keep your heart with all diligence in this most crucial matter.

8. Stay pure in sexual matters.

Sex is one of the greatest driving forces of mankind. Sex is good and wholesome in its rightful place, but if you abuse it, it will destroy you.

David and Samson are still laughed at and mocked 3,000 years later because of failure in this area. There is forgiveness and restoration to those who repent, but the Earth will scorn you if you keep marrying and re-marrying, and falling into sexual sin.

Don't play around sexually with women as you would a toy. Pornography is mental candy for many men, and more women are falling trap to it. Spit that candy out and learn to hate it. God's grace is sufficient to deliver you and keep you free.

Almost everyone who gets in trouble with sex doesn't intend to. They get deceived into it.

9. Stay in love and agreement with your spouse.

I know ministers who are out conquering the world, but they are losing at home. There is no agreement between husband and wife. Your prayers are hindered when things are not right in the marital relationship (1 Pet. 3:1-7). One of the qualifications for leadership in the church is to have your house in order (1 Tim. 3) and that begins with husband and wife.

Pin these nine points to your wall, or better yet, to your spirit. Keep them as frontlets before your eyes and you will stay the course.