

### **Question #1:**

Hello Dr Bob,

I'm finding your question and response articles quite interesting. It must have been God that link me up with you. Thanks so much for not being weary of giving response to questions.

While reading about ministry and preparation for ministry, I came across the issue that ministers should get something doing, like Paul did (Act 18:1-4; 20:33; Thessalonian 3-6-13). I have seen few ministers that say God told them to quit their job and focus on ministry. I have also seen ministers who never intended to take a job because they believe they are called into ministry. Those ministers believe that the ministry is the job they must feed, some how, this may have formed the root of false teachings and malpractices. Contrary to this, some ministers are not working and they maintain the truth of the word of God, and live satisfactorily as well. Some ministers that are working have the mindset of being part time ministers while those that are not working have the mindset of being full time ministers.

Now my questions:

Are there some ministers that are not supposed to work due to the nature of their ministry? What is your view of 'part time and full time' ministers?

Your's in Jesus

PS 1: Hello Dr Bob,

RE: Ministry and Preparation for ministry 1: Question #12

Are we really such mavericks in our understanding of water-baptism, the placement of the "rapture", tongues, life at birth instead of conception, etc. that it is unreasonable to ever find a church that agrees with us on these things?

Please can I get detail explanation of the doctrines?

PS 2: Does Ichthys provides the necessary materials for learning Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic outside seminary?

### **Response #1:**

My name is Odichimma Ariwodo. I am called Odi. I am from Abia State. From your name, I imagine that you are from Akwa Ibom, is that correct? I've been studying under Ichthys since 3 October 2017 and I am absolutely delighted to have you join and show this much consistency and commitment. It's always a tremendous joy and encouragement when another believer begins to take things this seriously. There are few enough who do, so every addition to the number is a significant encouragement.

Forgive me for only just weighing in. I wasn't sure what I could possibly add to what Professor Robert said in response. Even now, I worry a little that I am taking a liberty but since I have been invited into the conversation, I figured that I should at least participate.

Regarding your questions, I can't really speak to what people say that God has told them. What I know for sure is that when the Holy Spirit leads us in any direction, we will never find that obedience violates the Word of God. So, the question always is what the Bible says. If it is a matter on which the Bible is silent, then we are best served to follow our conscience.

Bible-teaching is really a full-time job. At least, it has presented itself as such to me. There is a significant demand on your time and energy to develop material and also address questions that come your way. It involves a lot of research and deliberate and consistent production. Then, there is also the deliberate attention given to prayer for those to whom you minister. The Bible calls the job "shepherding". That is a legitimate clue to what exactly it is about.

The shepherd is responsible, first and foremost, to feed the flock. The quality of the food he provides them with will determine their health and productivity. But he is also to watch out tenderly for them to ensure that they are safe and unharmed. It is also to wrestle with whatever attacks them and gently deliver them from such things.

I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2-3 NIV1984

I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

2 Corinthians 11:27-29 NIV 1984

The above passages are very good illustrations of a good shepherd. Then there is the great example of the Good Shepherd Himself:

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

John 10:11 NIV 1984

As we see in the next two verses of John 10, hired hands only flee when there is a sign of trouble. Shepherding is sacrificial.

This is why it requires dedication. So, there is something to say for devoting oneself fully to ministry without seeking any other job or career:

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.

Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them

and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

Acts 6:2-4 NIV1984

But given that there are so few who really care about the Truth and are willing not only to commit themselves to one teaching ministry but also to support it with their own material resources, the Lord's command in Luke 22 is not to be toyed with.

Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?" "Nothing," they answered.

He said to them, "But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one.

It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors' [2] ; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment."

Luke 22:35-37 NIV1984

If one can actually manage it, it is best to focus on the job of pastoring the Lord's sheep. There is great reward in doing the best job of it that one can. But it may not actually be feasible. So, if one has some other means of earning to support oneself and fulfill one's responsibilities and obligations, it may be wise to continue to use that means.

Paul himself did accept material help to allow him to devote himself to ministry too (compare Acts 18:1-5 with 2 Corinthians 11:8-9). So it is not as if his example was that we all should work at a career apart from ministry. If anything, it tells us to properly understand the cost of ministry. Teachers are special targets for the enemy, so we are not only to thoroughly prepare ourselves in the Truth to serve, but we must also possess common sense and use it. Paul had every right to receive support from the churches in Achaia but he chose not to because he understood them to be too weak in the Truth to understand their role correctly and because he wanted to make a clear difference between himself and the opportunists that were spiritually harassing them too (2 Corinthians 11:8-13).

In our days, not only are such opportunists everywhere and ruining the genuine reputation of Bible teaching, there is also the lack of interest on the part of believers to learn the Truth in any depth. These things mean that we are responsible to "take a purse" if we have it. If we do not, for some reason, the Lord is able to provide abundantly for us. But we are not to act irresponsibly about this.

As for being mavericks, spiritual growth is difficult business. This is deliberate on God's part. Each believer has to demonstrate just how much they love the Lord and wish to submit to Him. What better way to demonstrate it than to strive against odds to learn about Him and adapt ourselves to

Him? But we must have alternatives too if this is to be a true choice. Therefore, rather than actually pursuing spiritual growth and production, we do have a real alternative in what I sometimes think of as "Sunday partying". Believers can choose to waste their time tickling their ears and enjoying music and socializing rather than taking the trouble of actually trying to understand Who God is and what He wants from us. And the vast majority in our days have chosen that alternative. In my experience, I have been a pariah all my life for actually treating the Bible both like something that believers should understand and like we should actually try to obey it. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The same is true nearly everywhere you find Christians. They are concerned with just about anything except what the Bible actually teaches. So, you will find that the deeper you go with the Truth, the more unique you are likely to find yourself among other believers. This is the age of Laodicea when the Church is overrun by lukewarm believers who think that loud and exuberant talk and energetic activity is synonymous with spiritual progress.

About your question for language training, you could look at the links on the following page: <http://ichthys.com/Bible-Links.htm>. Ancient Greek Tutorials is at [atticgreek.org](http://atticgreek.org) now. I find it very useful for learning pronunciation. Smyth's Greek Grammar is online. That is very great help. The materials I use were sent to me by a dear brother who also studies Ichthys and they came recommended by Professor Robert as well. They are the Reading Greek volumes (Text and Vocabulary, Grammar and Exercises, and An Independent Study Guide) as well as James T. Allen's The First Year of Greek for Greek. Then I have Lambdin's Introduction to Biblical Hebrew and Weingreen's Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew among others.

I am sure that Professor Robert will cover my lapses here and give you even better answers.

Again, it's very good to know you.

Yours in the Good Shepherd our dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Odi

**Question #2:**

Dear Odi,

Thank you very much for your seasoned response. I'm from Akwa Ibom State, but residing at Nsukka, Enugu State. I felt excited knowing you through Professor Robert. I don't mind arranging for a real life meeting with you anytime soon if will be comfortable with that.

I was wandering around, looking for where to put my head. I left the church I was in November 2018 because I realized they could not help me prepare for ministry. Moreover, activities there was much but less beneficial to the pastor-teacher ministry which I believe God called me into. To the glory of God, I'm not regretting anything being 'alone'. Nevertheless, I'm still open to finding where I can be for the mean time in addition to ichtys.com, if that will be necessary.

I think I will be a better minister if I read and understand all the materials available in this platform.

I'm willing to sign for any available links where truth can be discovered.

Thank you very much and remain blessed.

I love you!

**Response #2:**

I'm very sorry I'm only just replying. These days aren't the easiest for me and I often need time to make meaningful responses. Please bear with me for the delay.

I am currently in Abia State and although I'm more often here than not, I never really know where I will be from one day to the next. I have plans that have me always ready to move. But I think it would be good to meet. As soon as that can be worked out, I will let you know.

I understand how it is when you finally pluck up the courage to move on from brick-and-mortar churches where you don't get much of value. In fact, although my sense of allegiance or affiliation to churches broke around 2004, I didn't really stop trying to "make church work" until 2016 when I

finally gave up trying. Since then I only go to church to avoid giving offence, for example, when I'm with my parents. I find absolutely no value in going and far more danger in looking for any value in it than I would have admitted before.

I have learned not to consider it impossible that physical gatherings exist where the Truth is the focus but I have never actually been in a deliberate one. And in the few instances where accidental meetings have been about the Truth, it was one-off. Perhaps, things will be different for you.

As for Ichthys, you are exactly right. I couldn't recommend it more enthusiastically. If you do give your attention to the teachings here, I am absolutely certain that you will come away "knowing what you know". You will also certainly get invaluable aid in preparing for ministry in multitude ways. I advise that you give it your undivided attention. From my own experience, listening to multiple sources before one has matured spiritually is remarkably detrimental to spiritual growth. It produces enormous confusion and discourages any desire to push forward in the Truth. So, the best thing to do is to test the ministry as rigorously as you wish but as soon as possible make a decision to stick with it once you find that it is endorsed by the Bible and is thus trustworthy. It doesn't matter if it is Ichthys. Wherever you find the Truth being taught, it is best to give your full attention to that ministry until you have found your own spiritual feet and can judge well what else you hear.

In the love of our dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Odi