

“My Private Life (part 2)”
By Brother Kenneth Ray
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Last week we went over the topic of My Private Life. This week we are going to finish looking into it. By no means is this the end of the subject; please look into it more in detail for yourself.

I—Start with Sunday morning.

My private life is more than preparation for Sunday morning. Ministry is more than Sunday morning worship service or Wednesday evening fellowship. It’s easy to let the minister be more important than God. How often do we do things *for the organization* more than for God?

I’m not Pastor Davis; I’m not Pastor Paine; I’m not going to try to be. God doesn’t take me every where I want to go; He takes me to where He wants me to go. Some of you don’t like some of the things that I do. Sometimes I don’t like having to do those things. Being popular doesn’t really get us anywhere. Daniel prayed three times a day (Daniel 6:10); where did that get him? thrown in the lion’s den (Daniel 6:16).

What drives your private time? Is it feelings? Sometimes my feelings drive my personal time. Did your feelings get hurt because I didn’t call you this week? I can’t call everybody; well, I guess I could, but then it would be routine; it wouldn’t be special when I did call you. Who did call you this week?

The question you really should be asking yourself is, “Am I a minister?” Every single day, we should be ministers. You can be anywhere, doing anything, and pray and ask God who needs prayer. We’re supposed to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17) anyway, right?

We don’t all have the same talents, or the same needs. You know, if you want to see Parrish Lee cry, just let him see a Ford F-150. The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away (Job 1:21). Whatever causes us pain, we can go to God with it. My wife is my helper; whenever I feel grumpy, I tell my wife, and she prays for me, and I can feel it.

Philemon 5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

We’re not talking about obeying the church; we’re not talking about obeying the minister. You notice that it doesn’t say, “...hast toward the church...” or “...hast toward Brother Ray...” or “...hast toward the singers...” No, toward all saints—and even those who aren’t saints. Have you ever invited someone to church and they said no? Have you ever invited someone to church and they said they didn’t want to feel judged? That’s why many people are more comfortable around druggies than around church people—druggies don’t judge. A lot of times when people come to church they find eyes rather than ministers. Seek to have the proper attitude. Remember that without God, we’re God dirt. We are conduits of God’s grace at best.

Philemon 7 ...the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Or sister. See, Philemon knew what it meant to be Christ-like.

Hebrews 2:16-18 ...it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren...

When we do His work, the Holy Ghost flows through us, and souls are saved. It's a whole lot more than Sunday morning worship service. We're supposed to let God flow through us to do things that we can't do, and to help us do the things that we can do. If we make ourselves available, our lives will be so much better. I cast these cares upon Him.

We went on a 3.6 mile walk yesterday. It was cold. We started to turn back at the halfway point, but, we were halfway there; it was the same distance to the end as back to the beginning. We saw some really neat things on the last half of that walk that we wouldn't have seen if we had turned back. Sometimes you have to get to the end of the journey before you find out whether you had a good trip.

II—Getting Back to Basics.

Titus 2:1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

In other words, put your opinions back in your pocket. Stop following a brother or a sister; follow your maker.

Titus 2:7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works...

You may say, "I don't understand why we're doing this." No problem! When I explain it, you should see a pattern of good works. If you have to justify it, then it's probably wrong; there's a good chance that you are in error. Sometimes we let church be too important. Did I call and say, "Why weren't you in church on Sunday?" No, because you know why you weren't in church. I'm in the Air Force reserve; sometimes I'm not here on Sunday, but you know, a little communication really helps out. Just because you're not here doesn't mean that you are in the wrong; you may have a very good reason for not being here, but, if you have to justify it...

Do you remember 4Him? They did a song several years ago called, "The Basics of Life." The song spoke of all the things that we have replaced with something else, and how we've re-arranged what is right and what's wrong. "We need to get back to the basics of life / a heart that is pure and a love that is blind / a faith that is fervently grounded in Christ / the hope that endures for all time." There's also a line that says, "And I know the rock of all ages will stand / through changes of time."

Did you ever feel like, "I can't do this anymore?" I have. You just feel like something has got to give. But He'll never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). He's there with you; He didn't promise it would be cake and ice cream. We don't have to see Him (He's invisible), but we know He's there because He opened our eyes this morning, and he causes us to breathe in and out.

He doesn't like to prove Himself. He talked about the children of Israel that proved Him in the wilderness for forty years (Hebrews 3:9). That doesn't mean you can't talk to Him. Abraham talked Him down from 50 to 10 (Genesis 18:20-32), as far as how many righteous people had to be in Sodom so that God would not destroy it. But don't prove God out of unbelief.

Will you hold on to the Gospel? You remember that bumper sticker, “You can have my gun when you can pry it from my dead, cold, stiff fingers?” We need to have that kind of attitude towards the Gospel. You may feel like things have changed a lot in the last few years. Whether you want to call this a church, or a fellowship, or a military ministry, where did God change? Souls are souls. You can still share with your co-worker, even if they aren’t military. We want quality, not quantity. I’d rather have a few here that really want to do something for God than a whole bunch that don’t. In private time, if we ask God to help us share the Word, then this building won’t be able to hold us.

If someone hired a private investigator to follow you and me around, would they find us to be followers of the Gospel, or followers of ‘that guy?’ Would he find that we are walking around saying, “Do as I say, not as I do?” Do I not want to see what you’ve posted on Facebook? Are you the busybody that asks all kinds of questions? Or are you the sort that exhorts daily (Hebrews 13:3), while it is called today?

In my private life, I am the real me. God knows who you are, and He can work with you. Private time is crucial; you shouldn’t underestimate the value of private time. What you do in private time shapes your inner man, your core values. What goes into a good private life? It’s the little things.

Hebrews 3:14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

Remember where you came from.

—So that, when others come into worship they don’t feel so judged. We don’t want them to feel more comfortable with drug dealers.

Learn from your mistakes.

—use them to help you go forward. Those lessons will turn into ministering opportunities; they will help to improve you.

Your experiences are not for self-promotion.

—they are meant to show others that they are not the only ones that go through those things, and they can overcome. It’s not, “Look at my résumé, and see how much better I am than you.”

God does not follow you.

—You are not in the lead. We are supposed to teach the ways of God to others that, in turn, allow the Holy Ghost to move.

These are just a few.

We simply have to have the right attitude.

Psalms 115:1 Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory,

Does God deal with you? How does God deal with you? Is it with conviction (frying your bacon) or is it with guidance (listen and listening)? He wants you to have convictions so that He can guide you.