

## **“Things We Have Learned Serving God”**

Philippians 4:11

Sunday, January 8, 2017

Pastor and Dottie

**Introduction:** In the latter years of his ministry, the apostle Paul made an insightful statement in a letter that he wrote to the church at Philippi. The context of the statement is contentment. But obviously Paul had learned some other things as well. Look with me at Paul’s statement.

**Text:** Philippians 4:11

Dottie, you and I are in the latter years of our ministry. Are you aware of that? Here is the situation.

1. In August, we will have been married 53 years.
2. In November we will complete fifty (50) years as a pastor and wife.
3. Next Sunday we will complete twenty-seven years here.
4. The majority of our marriage and ministry has been here.
5. God has been good to us!!

T.S. We have learned some things about serving God during these years that I think we need to share. My prayer is what we share will honor God, be good for the church and helpful to each of you.

### **1. God’s call is a very real thing.**

- When we married, I was not a preacher.
- Do you remember what you were doing when we married?
- I was in the business world.
- And then God began to “call us” into the ministry.
- You recognized that before I did.

**Application:** The Bible tells us that God has a plan for every person and that God gives the spiritual DNA to do what He has planned. Psalm 37:4 is how I knew for certain that God had called me to be a preacher.

### **2. Following God’s call is not always easy.**

- When I read the call of Abraham in Genesis chapter twelve, I can relate.
- God called Abraham and he had to leave some of his family, his friends, and the place he had lived to go to a place yet unknown.
- The Bible says, “He [Abraham] went out not knowing where he was going’ (Hebrews 11:8).
- Dottie God led us to places that we had never been and where we did not know anybody.

**Illustration:**

1. First there was our first church, Providence Baptist church, where we served while I finished my University work.
2. Then we came Seminary.
3. The Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.
4. Then we went to Tennessee (First Baptist Church, Lenoir City, Tennessee.)
5. From Tennessee back to Texas (First Baptist Church, Sulphur Springs, Texas).
6. Then God led us here.

**Application:** Two things make God's call hard.

1. God's call is a step at the time.
2. God's call involves the unknown.

**3. God's call has sustained us through the hard times (Joshua 1:5).**

- Actually our first hard time came soon after we had shared that we felt God had called us and that we would be leaving our home and family and moving to Fort Worth to do our Seminary work.
- Then we had a "hard time" as a result of something that happened to you.
- Share what happened and what made it hard.

**Application:** God used that to teach us that if He called us that He would do and be for us what he promised Joshua. God promised Joshua that He would be with him and not leave him or forsake him (Joshua 1:5).

**4. The most important thing is our intimacy with God.**

- Many ministers never figure that out.
- Many people never figure that out.

**Illustration:** In the early years of my ministry, I was so busy with things, good things, but intimacy for God was not the most important thing. The most important thing to me is not the growth of our church, but my own spiritual growth.

**Illustration:** Dottie how have you guarded your time to have intimacy with God so consistently?

**Application:** The most important thing for all of you is your personal relationship with God. You get so focused on the present that you think little about the future. We should be concerned about the future because we are going to spend the rest of our lives there!

**Conclusion:** Before you can serve God, you must know God in a personal way. God saves people before He calls people to serve Him.

1. Are you saved?
2. Are you serving God?