

He may have used them that way. But we know that Paul was not in that category. This word "castaway" only means one who is not approved. Elsewhere in the NT. the word is translated "reprobate" (But you just said it occurs nowhere else in the NT except here!) which I think today is a little stronger sense than the Greek word adokimos ~~xx~~ that is used here. It is a rather strong word but it does not mean that one is lost. It does point to the danger some Christian workers fall into and the danger we must all be thinking about -- the danger that we are thinking of His work so much that we are forgetting our own growth in grace and forgetting to show forth Christian graces in our character.

A great Christian leader said -- who has published a number of very fine Christian books -- said to me the other day, "Book publishers are only interested in making money; that includes Christian publishers too!" I don't know whether he was speaking a little bit extremely or not but I fear that is true of a good many Christian publishers that they are only interested in making money, and it is possible for a Christian minister to be thinking so much of the work, or thinking that he gets into selfish attitudes and he neglects his own personal spiritual growth. This is our first duty as Christian workers, is to think of ourselves as part of the field. Ourselves as part of the building. We can build into ourselves gold, silver, precious stones, or we can build wood, hay stubble. We want to pray God constantly that He will enable us to grow constantly as He wants us too. He knows what we need. We need to study the Word. We need prayer. We need to investigate special problems in our own personal development to see that we are growing in grace, and God is greatly interested in the work that each of us will accomplish for Him, but He is even more interested in each of us ~~xx~~ as an individual as to how we are growing in the knowledge of Christ. That is very essential here as part of the building. We are an important part of the building.

A second part of the building task we have that it is easy for us to overlook, is our family. This I might not have mentioned when I began teaching because perhaps one student in 12 was married at that time. That was our situation in seminary until the second World War. Since that time the great bulk of our students are married, and I think this is a phase that is not spoken of as it ought to be. We are building in our families, and we have a responsibility there. We have a responsibility toward our wives. We are God's ministers to them in a greater sense perhaps than we are to a congregation. I have known ministers who have been so diligent in the Lord's work that they have neglected to bring God's truth to their families. I've known cases where the wife drifted off into wickedness because the husband was not bringing her the truth of Christ as he should be. I knew a very fine minister who a few years ago who was so interested in helping people. He would work at all ~~hours~~ hours and his wife would get a nice dinner for him at 12:30 and he might show up at 3 or 4 p.m. He was busy counselling and helping people. Finally he got home one day at about 4 o'clock and she had a nice dinner she had prepared and she had waited till 3 and she had picked up the children and disappeared. He went to where she lived and her sister met him at the door and said, You will never see your children again. That man is now out of the ministry and he was doing a marvellous work for God there. He ~~xx~~ said, If I had half as much attention to my wife's spiritual welfare and help as I did to counselling people in the congregation, this would never have happened.

I talked to a very fine Christian man the other day, the son of a man who was well known as a great Bible teacher, and this man said,