



Steps to Becoming a Productive Servant of God (Hebrews 12:1-2)

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“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” – Hebrews 12:1-2 (NASB)

- I. We must resolve in our minds that we will be **productive servants of God**. As we look at the testimony of the saints before us, we are to run the race set before us. This race can be defined as the course of life which consists of the pursuit to know Christ, to become like Christ, to be useful to Christ, and to wait on the return and the rewards that come with the return of Christ. (See John 17:3, Ephesians 4:11-21, Ephesians 2:10, Philippians 3:1-21, Colossians 3:1-4, 2 Timothy 4:7-8)
 - A. If we are Christians, we must embrace the fact that we are called to a life– which means we must be committed to a life of **participating in genuine fellowship with God** as we wait on His return and rewards.
 - B. If we are Christians, we must embrace the fact that we are called to a life– which means we must be committed to a life of **pleasing God in all aspects of our lives** as we wait on His return and rewards.
 - C. If we are Christians, we must embrace the fact that we are called to a life– which means we must be committed to a life of **promoting God to others in all ways commanded by God to do so** as we wait on His return and rewards.
- II. If we are going to be **productive servants of God**, we must lay aside every **“encumbrance or weight”** that keeps us from being productive servants of God– to put off or put away anything that makes it hard to run the Christian race because of our connection to it. It is not a sin to be around it, but it weighs us down and makes it burdensome or hard for us to live the life we are called to live for God because of our devotion to it.
 - A. There are certain **perspectives, practices, and pleasures** we need to remove from our lives because they are slowing down our productivity in knowing Jesus Christ, becoming like Jesus Christ, and being useful to Jesus Christ as commanded to do so, as result of our connection to these things.

- B. There are certain **people, places, and products** we need to remove from our lives because they are slowing down our productivity in knowing Jesus Christ, becoming like Jesus Christ, and being useful to Jesus Christ as commanded to do so, as a result of our connection to these people and things.
 - C. There are certain **platforms, pursuits, and positions** we need to remove from our lives because they are slowing down our productivity in knowing Jesus Christ, becoming like Jesus Christ and being useful to Jesus Christ as commanded to do so, as a result of our connection to these things.
- III. If we are going to be **productive servants of God**, we must **lay aside “the sin” that so easily entangles us** from being productive servants for God– to put off or put away the specific sin that controls us tightly; to put off or put away the sin that we are prone to walk in so quickly; to put off or put away the sin that easily distracts us from living the Christian life that God has commanded. This does not mean we ignore other sin issues; it just means we are attacking the root issues that are producing the fruit issues.
- A. There are certain sinful **perspectives and presumptions** we need to put away because they controls us tightly and easily distract us from knowing Jesus Christ, becoming like Jesus Christ, and being useful to Jesus Christ as commanded to do so.
 - B. There are certain sinful **passions** we need to put away because they controls us tightly and easily distract us from knowing Jesus Christ, becoming like Jesus Christ, and being useful to Jesus Christ as commanded to do so.
 - C. There are certain sinful **patterns of speaking, living, relating and serving** we need to put away because they controls us tightly and easily distract us from knowing Jesus Christ, becoming like Jesus Christ, and being useful to Jesus Christ as commanded to do so.
- IV. If we are going to be **productive servants of God**, we must **run with endurance** the race set before us– the ability to stick with it, stay on it, or stay at it in relation to the race set before us; not giving in to the external pressures around us to stop in the race set before us; being steadfast or immovable in running the race set before us.
- A. We must **discipline** our minds in the truth of God’s Word in order to stay consistent in the pursuit of knowing Jesus Christ, becoming like Jesus Christ, and being useful to Jesus Christ as commanded by God to do so.
 - B. We must **devote** our bodies to being instruments of righteousness in order to stay consistent in the pursuit of knowing Jesus Christ, becoming like Jesus Christ, and being useful to Jesus Christ as commanded by God to do so.

- C. We must **do** these things understanding that we will encounter the devil, deceptions, dangers, delays, denials, disruptions, disappointments, devastations, diseases, defilements and death in this life, which could be avenues to entice us to turn away from the pursuit of being **productive servants of God**.

- V. If we are going to be **productive servants of God**, we must **fix our eyes on Jesus Christ**– to put our concentration and focus on Him as our example and motivator for the race set before us. The word “author” suggests that Jesus “pioneered” the path of faith Christians should follow. He also “perfected” the way of faith since He reached its end successfully.¹ Jesus kept His eye on the joy set before Him, the “joy” alluded to in Hebrews 1:9 wherein He obtained an eternal throne. After enduring the cross and scorning its shame, Jesus assumed that triumphant position at the right hand of the throne of God.
 - A. We must focus on the **path** and **product** of the life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ here on earth and the result it brought to Him, as our model in pursuing to be productive servants of God.
 - B. We must focus on the **position of prominence** and the **prizes** we will enjoy that our Lord Jesus Christ promised us at His return in pursuing to be productive servants of God.
 - C. We must focus on the **peace, power, protection, productivity, products, platforms, positions, people and practical pleasures** that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has blessed us with right now in our present situations or circumstances, in pursuing to be productive servants of God. We must remember what we are receiving now is just a prelude of coming attractions of what we will enjoy with God in His presence when we finish the race set before us.

Conclusion:

If we are going to be productive servants of God, we must embrace the Presence of God, along with the Plan and Precepts of God. We must also embrace the Path God has for our lives, His Present Grace in our lives and His Future Grace for our lives. Moreover, we must fix our eyes on the Path and Product of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ’s life, looking into His past, present, and future and being assured and guaranteed of the promised future we have with Jesus Christ at the finish of our race on this side of heaven. Walking in this manner can produce a source of encouragement and hope. We must do these things understanding that we will encounter the devil, deceptions, dangers, delays, denials, disruptions, disappointments, devastations, diseases, defilements and death in this life, which could be avenues to entice us to turn away from the pursuit of being **productive servants of God**.

¹John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), S. 2:809.