

Preparation is an important part of faithful service to Christ

In our fast-paced world, the need for preparation is often minimized, and sometimes completely overlooked. We'd rather have things that are quick and easy than those that require a long period of diligent effort. If something requires more than a little bit of preparation, it usually has a hard time getting to the top of our "to do" list.

But think of the years of preparation that often preceded the great works done by heroes of the faith in the Bible. Consider, for example, Moses. He spent eighty years (forty in Pharaoh's household and an additional forty tending sheep in Midian) before he was ready to lead Israel out of their Egyptian bondage. His leadership of Israel lasted only another forty years before he passed away at the age of 120. So it took eighty years of preparation to do forty years of work. The proportion of preparation-time to work-time was even greater in the case of the Lord Himself. He was about thirty years of age before He was prepared to begin a ministry which lasted only about three years. Clearly, the time of preparation was important to His mission.

In our own service to the Lord, we dare not leave out the necessary element of preparation. ***Preparation is an important part of faithful service to Christ.*** If we neglect this step, we risk lessening the effectiveness of what we do, and we will certainly make our work much harder. Solomon wisely observed, "If the iron is blunt, and one does not sharpen the edge, he must use more strength, but wisdom helps one to succeed" (**Eccl. 10:10**). It's only the fool who thinks he doesn't have time to prepare his work adequately. Time in preparation is never wasted or lost. If we cut that time short, we find later on that we have to spend more time in our work than if we had prepared that work properly to start with.

But in regard to preparation there is also one other thing to keep in mind: whatever we may be prepared to do today, we need to be preparing to do even more tomorrow. Throughout the coming week, let's identify some things in the Lord's work that we either can't do or can't do as well as we'd like. And then let's lay out a plan of preparation, so we can be vessels "for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work" (**2 Tim. 2:21**).

Monday: Ecclesiastes 10:10

Key Idea: Wisdom teaches that preparation makes our work easier and more effective.

Questions for Family Growth: What happens if the woodcutter is so busy chopping wood that he doesn't take the time to sharpen his ax? What does this verse say wisdom does? How does this verse apply to our work as Christians?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 6:20-29.**

Tuesday: Ephesians 4:11-16

Key Idea: To serve Christ and others as we should, we must be “equipped” for service.

Questions for Family Growth: According to v.12, for what purpose are the saints to be “equipped”? What then is to be the outcome or result of the “work of ministry”? What are some ways we can better equip ourselves?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 6:30-35.

Wednesday: Colossians 1:9-12

Key Idea: We can't be fruitful in good works if we don't grow in our knowledge of God's word.

Questions for Family Growth: In v.9, what did Paul pray for his brethren? For what practical purpose did they need these things, according to v.10? Why are knowledge and wisdom so important in our spiritual preparation?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 7:1-5.

Thursday: 2 Timothy 2:20,21

Key Idea: To be useful for the Master, we must be prepared to engage in good works.

Questions for Family Growth: In regard to the Lord's work, why do we need to “cleanse” ourselves? What does it mean when Paul says that we should be “sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work” (v.21 NKJV)?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 7:6-27.

Friday: 2 Timothy 2:15

Key Idea: We should diligently work at becoming more effective servants of Christ.

Questions for Family Growth: What must be done if we expect to present ourselves approved to God as workers who don't need to be ashamed? What are some practical ways we can be more diligent in our work in Christ?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 8:1-11.

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